

Qx21 – Ludicrous Ideas & Policies Promoted by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) – 1

Dear: According to estimates available at many internet sites,¹ among the ~6 billion people now on Earth, there are about 2 billion Christians, 1.3 billion Muslims, 1 billion “naturalists” (i.e., those who reject all supernaturalism, also labeled “Brights”), 0.9 billion Hindus, 0.5 billion people in “other religions” (including Chinese folk religions and philosophies), 0.4 billion Buddhists (although Buddhism, in its original form, was more a philosophy than a religion), 20 million Jews, and about 10 million Mormons – although, as you probably know, many members of this latter group don’t like to be called Mormons.

I had guessed that the origin of their dislike of the name ‘Mormon’ is that it’s too easily shortened to ‘moron’ (as I’ve heard: “One too many m’s!”), but maybe their aversion to the name is from the derivation of the word ‘mormon’, itself. Thus, according to the 1834 book by E.D. Howe entitled *Mormonism Unveiled*:²

The word ‘Mormon’ ... is the English termination of the Greek word *Mormoo*, which we find defined in an old, obsolete Dictionary, to mean “bug-bear, hob-goblin, raw-head, and bloody-bones.”

In case some of those words that Howe quotes aren’t familiar to you, Dear, then let me quote from an article³ written in 2003 entitled *A Linguist Looks at Mormonism* by Richard Packham:

The word ‘mormo’ or ‘mormon’ can be found in any dictionary of classical Greek. It means “scarecrow, bugbear, ghost, demon.”

I find Packham’s reference to “classical Greece” particularly interesting, because I try to stay alert to any references to what Socrates might have said and I recently found the following in *The Meditations* by “the (Roman) emperor-philosopher” Marcus Aurelius (121–180):⁴

¹ For example at <http://www.religioustolerance.org/worldrel.htm>.

² Dear: notice that this book was published very early (only 4 years after the publication of the Book of Mormon!) and that the spelling of ‘veil’ as ‘vail’ is now obsolete. You can find electronic copies of this book at, e.g., <http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/1834howb.htm#cont>.

³ Available at <http://home.teleport.com/~packham/linguist.htm>.

⁴ Available at www.classics.mit.edu.

Socrates used to call the opinions of the many by the name of *Lamiae* [Mormons?], bugbears to frighten children.

Incidentally, Dear, in the 1902 book written by William A. Linn entitled *The Story of the Mormons*,⁵ you can find that the word ‘mormon’ in zoology is a generic name for certain animals including the mandrill or *Mandrillus sphinx*, a large West African baboon.

In contrast to the above, in the 15 May 1843 issue of the Mormon periodical *Times and Season*, “the Prophet” Joseph Smith, Jr., informed his followers that Mormon is derived from the English word ‘more’ and the Egyptian word ‘mon’, meaning ‘good’, so that, Smith claimed, Mormon means ‘more good’. There are, however, some major problems with that “explanation” (as pointed out by an anonymous reader of the book *Changes in Joseph Smith’s History*):⁶ there is no Egyptian word ‘mon’ meaning ‘good’, and when the word ‘mormon’ was allegedly created (i.e., when the Book of Mormon was allegedly written, in about 400 BCE) there was no English word ‘more’ – because English didn’t develop until the Middle Ages!

More likely, I suspect, is that the author of the “original” Book of Mormon (I’ll identify this “original” book later, where I’ll also suggest that the author of this “original” was probably the “classic scholar” Solomon Spaulding) concocted the word Mormon in a manner similar to how all novelists concoct fictitious names. In particular, as you can find on the internet,⁷ many of the strange names in the Book of Mormon are found to be similar to names that could be found on early 19th century maps of areas surrounding Upstate New York!

Anyway, and as you know, Mormons prefer to be called “members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints” or “members of the LDS Church” or just “Latter-day Saints”. As you also know, this “Latter-day” business refers to the “hobgoblin” (i.e., “a source of fear or worry”) or “bugbear” (i.e., “a source of obsessive or groundless fear” or “a monster invented to frighten children, traditionally in the form of a bear that eats those who misbehave”) that the world was about to end. Thus, as the “prophet” (or more appropriately “profit”) Joseph Smith claimed in 1835 (as recorded in the *History of the Church, Vol. 2*, p. 182): “the coming of the

⁵ Available at, e.g., <http://thedigitalvoice.com/enigma/1902LinB.htm#pg023a>.

⁶ See <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/mormonkingdomvol1ch13masonicinfluence.htm>.

⁷ At, e.g., <http://mormonskeptic.blogspot.com/2007/04/great-lakes-limited-geography-theory.html>.

Lord, which was nigh – even 56 years should wind up the scene.”⁸ After ~2,000 years of such claims of “the last days” (a claim that seems to have originated from the insane “Saint” Paul, apparently because otherwise he couldn’t “understand” why Jesus had been put to death), one might have thought that such a silly “prophecy” would have been abandoned!

In any event, Dear, although I can’t supply you with relevant information about why the “Latter-Day Saints” call themselves “Saints” (as I’ll be showing you, their early leaders were anything but!) and although I don’t vouch for the membership numbers mentioned above,⁹ yet, if even the relative ratios in membership are anywhere near correct (i.e., if the number of Mormons is less than one percent of the number of Christians or Muslims) and if this “excursion” **Qx** were a “fair and balanced report” on policies promoted in these religions, then in this chapter I’d write on Mormonism only about one percent of what I’ve written in previous chapters on Christianity. But I’ve never advertised that this would be “a fair and balanced report” (☺), and whereas certain grandchildren that I happen to know have been indoctrinated with Mormonism ever since they were babies, I intend to allocate what I hope will be sufficient space so that you’ll conclude that most of the core ideas and policies advocated in Mormonism are ludicrous.

And yes, Dear, I wouldn’t be surprised if you objected to my labeling any LDS idea or policy as ludicrous. I know that you’ve been taught to respect other people’s religions – even while you’ve been simultaneously taught that those other people and their “holy books” are wrong. Of course I agree with what you’ve been taught about their “holy books” (all “holy books” are silly concoctions by backward and/or conniving minds), but I strongly disagree with the suggestion that all (or any!) ideas should be “respected”. Of course I hope that you’ll respect all people, Dear (they have as much right to their ideas as you do, yours), but I also hope that you’ll never “respect” any ideas (of course including all religious ideas).

⁸ Incidentally, Dear, if you want to see some of the many false prophecies made by Smith, then you may want to start by looking at those referenced at <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/falseprophecies.htm>.

⁹ For example, Dear, all those “membership numbers” should be reduced by a factor of two or three or even more, because (as others have said) it’s inappropriate to claim membership in any organization for children (and even some adults) who have not yet reached “the age of discrimination”, which typically occurs for people somewhere between the age of 10 and 20. Thus, Dear, more accurate than to identify my grandchildren as “Mormons” would be identify you as being indoctrinated in Mormonism as a child.

Instead, Dear, please be skeptical of all ideas (of course including all ideas in this book!), simultaneously feeling totally free to subject all ideas to a never-ending series of strenuous tests (of their ability to summarize a substantial quantity of reliable data, of their consistency with well-established scientific principles such as those of logic, of their ability to provide testable predictions, and of the validity of their predictions as found through a never-ending series of experiments). As H.L. Mencken said in 1916: “The most curious social convention of the great age in which we live is the one to the effect that religious opinions should be respected.” He added: “There is, in fact, nothing about religious opinions that entitles them to any more respect than other opinions get. On the contrary, they tend to be noticeably silly.”

To illustrate the silliness of some of the core ideas in Mormonism, let me provide a brief outline of Mormon theology. (And of course I know that I needn't outline Mormon theology for you, Dear, but there's a chance that some other youngsters will read this chapter who haven't been similarly indoctrinated.) Such an outline is available in a survey article that I recently “bumped into” on the internet¹⁰ and to which (in the following) I've added some notes in “square brackets”. It was written by T.A. McMahan; it starts as follows (I'll quote more, later):

Mormonism teaches [specifically in their “holy book” entitled The Book of Abraham] that God has a physical body and lives on a planet near a star called Kolob. He is but one of an infinite number of Gods, each ruling over his own world located somewhere in the universe. Supposedly, each God has untold numbers of goddess wives who produce millions of spirit children. Amazingly, these spiritual offspring of God and his goddesses must then be birthed through physical beings (non-gods) on Earth. This obtains for them the physical bodies necessary to become Gods and goddesses, who create and rule over their own worlds...

Sorry if the above doesn't sound silly to you, Dear, but when I encounter claims that don't have a single scrap of data to support them, I tend to consider them silly. Of course, when we humans finally travel to Kolob and get some data, then...

Actually, though, many of the core ideas in Mormonism go beyond “silly” to ludicrous. In the dictionary associated with this “word processor” in which I'm typing (i.e., Microsoft's **Word**), ‘ludicrous’ is defined as “utterly ridiculous because of being absurd, incongruous, impractical, or unsuitable”,

¹⁰ At <http://www.theberean.org/newsletters/aug03/article.htm>.

but I admit that I prefer Webster's definition for 'ludicrous', which includes "laughably absurd", consistent with the origin of the word 'ludicrous', namely the Indo-European base *leid* meaning "to play, tease", whence Greek *loidorein*, "to rail at, rebuke".

And though I know from experience that it's very difficult to laugh at the absurdities in Mormonism when you simultaneously realize how much harm this stupidity has done to so many people (including certain grandchildren), yet how I hope, Dear, that someday you'll be able to look back at it all – maybe after you successfully sue the Mormon Church for perpetrating such a horrible hoax – have yourself a prolonged belly laugh, clean the mud and gunk of Mormonism off your shoes, and set off on life feeling free to laugh at any ideas that you conclude are ludicrous. But that's an envisioned future, happy state, and to get there from here, first it seems to be necessary to slog through the quagmire of the "holy books" of Mormonism in which you've been indoctrinated.

Before starting on the trek, however, I should admit that I plan to cheat a bit. At the outset of this **Qx**, I advertised that my plan was to focus on the policies promoted in the "holy books" of the principal "revealed religions" of our culture and to delay examining these "holy books" from an historical perspective until **Yx**. I admit that, in earlier chapters, I already cheated a bit (and in later **Qx** chapters, I'll cheat some more, because for the case of Islam, I expect that you know little about the "settings" for the Muslim "stories"). In the case of the Bible, I felt that I had to give you at least a few historical hints, because some of the policies examined were so bizarre that I saw no other way to try to make some sense of them for you.

For the Bible, a case in point was associated with the otherwise weird policy advocated by Moses to go ahead and slaughter so many people, even though it would be to no avail. I hinted that this craziness was understandable by realizing that such a policy almost certainly wasn't advocated by Moses but instead was concocted by the clerics who were writing the Old Testament, ~700 years after Moses was dead. Another case was associated with the bizarre idea promoted by Paul about Jesus' execution being an atonement for our sins (because Adam ate the apple); I hinted that this craziness was at least partially understandable by realizing that the (insane) "Saint" Paul was trying to figure out why Jesus died. Similarly, Dear, in these chapters on Mormonism, I plan to "cheat" some more – in fact, quite a bit more!

* Go to other chapters *via*

There are a number of reasons why I intend to “slip in” some history in what follows.

- My first reason (for including some historical evidence in what follows) is the same reason offered earlier in this **Qx**: as I’ll try to show you, some of the policies advocated in Mormonism are so bizarre that I think it helps substantially to at least “peek” at their historical origins.
- Second, because Mormonism was concocted relatively recently and when relatively good records were kept (compared to when Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were concocted), fairly reliable information is therefore available, revealing how the entire hoax was promoted; in contrast, when trying to understand the other listed religions from an historical perspective, then as I’ll show you in **Yx**, most speculations must rely on scanty evidence of questionable reliability.
- Third, I admit that I plan to slip in some history in this investigation of Mormon policies, because thereby, maybe I can entice you to take the “excursion” **Yx**: if you see at least some of the “shenanigans” that went on, perpetrating the Mormon hoax, maybe that “enlightenment” will stimulate to ask something similar to: “Are other religions built on similar shams?” (And the answer to that question, Dear, as I’ll show you in **Yx**, is: “Absolutely, definitely, yes!”).
- And finally, my fourth and foremost reason for slipping in some history in what follows is that I want to do my best to try to “reveal” to you what was behind the “revealed religion” known as Mormonism – because I’m most interested in your knowing details about the junk that your parents decided to dump on your developing mind. Further, I admit the possibility that you’ll find **Yx** to be so burdensome to read (but not nearly so burdensome to read as it was to write!) that you may abandon it before you get to its outline of how the con artists concocted Mormonism.

So anyway, Dear, if you’ll permit the possibility that there may be some reasonable method in your grandfather’s apparent madness, let me get this show on the road – or at least, start shuffling through the mud and guck of what’s known as Mormonism.

As you know, the Mormon “holy books” are the Bible and three other books, namely, the Book of Mormon (BoM), the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C),

and the Pearl of Great Price (PGP), the latter containing the Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham. In what follows, I don't plan to review anything more about the Bible; I would be very pleased if, during the rest of my life, I never cracked that horrible book again! Therefore, I'll now start on the BoM, the D&C, and the PGP (and its contained books, especially the Book of Abraham), and I'll start with some summary statements.

First, I should state that I really don't have much more against the Book of Mormon (BoM) than I do the Bible – and the BoM has the added attraction that, because it was written relatively recently, it provides more opportunity than does the Bible to see how such “priestly fabrications” were concocted to hoodwink the gullible. Further and more so than the Quran, the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C) provides opportunity to see how priests manipulate people to accept the evils of a theocracy. As for the Pearl of Great Price (PGP), I don't know how to summarize it other than to say: “Somebody's gotta be kidding!” As I'll show you, Dear (and as you can easily find on the internet by yourself), the PGP's Book of Moses and Book of Abraham are such stupid contrivances that they insult the intelligence of even a moron!

But enough generalities. To dig deeper, Dear, it would be good if you obtained your own copies of these three books, so that you can mark them up as you read them. If obtaining hard-copy versions of these books is inconvenient for you, you get them in electronic form from the “official LDS website” (<http://www.lds.org/>) or you can download the complete BoM from <http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/mormon/>. Yet, be careful about which version of these books that you obtain: as I'll be showing you and in spite of what others might have told you, there have been major policy changes in these books, from one edition to the next. If you want to see the original (1830) version of the BoM, see <http://www.irr.org/mit/BoM/1830bom-books.html>; some of the many changes among different editions of the BoM are summarized at <http://www.irr.org/mit/changingscrips.html>.

Here, I'll start on the version of the BoM that's copyrighted in 1981 and that (as far as I know) is currently advertised as “the truth”. It starts with a short opening page that's usually called its *Title Page*, which apparently was written by Joseph Smith, Jr., (and in what follows, I'll skip the “Jr.”, cause it's a pain to include). In the *Title Page* of the 1830 edition you can see that Joseph Smith (or just “Smith”) claimed to be the “Author and Proprietor” (of the BoM) – apparently so that he could benefit from existing copyright laws.

In contrast, more recent editions of the *Title Page* claim only “Translated by Joseph Smith, Jun.” (where, of course it is I who added the underlining).

But ignoring that obvious “mistake” in this book that (you’ll soon see) Smith describes as “the most correct of any book on earth...” (and, as I’ll be showing you, it’s a mistake in both editions!), you can then find in the *Title Page* (in both editions of the BoM):

- 1) The BoM contains “an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites... Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile...” and “An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven...”
- 2) The purposes of the book are “to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers...” and for “convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD...”

Now, Dear, I know only too well that you’ve been repeatedly exposed to “the story line” of the BoM, but whereas maybe even you don’t appreciate some of its subtleties and whereas there may be some readers of this chapter besides my grandchildren, let me try to show you some of the ideas promoted in the above two points, starting with the strange names identified.

Later in the BoM we’re told that Nephites, Lamanites, and Jaredites refer to attributed names of different groups of Native Americans, named after their respective patriarchs Nephi, Laman, and Jared. To remind you of “the story line” (and provide an outline for other readers), let me quote more from the survey article written by T.A. McMahon already referenced [and to which I’ve again added a few notes in “square brackets”].

The Book of Mormon claims to be a record of two migrations of ancient people to the Americas: the family of Jared around 2,000 B.C. [BCE] and, [around] 1,500 years later, the family of Lehi. The first migration supposedly took place when the Tower of Babel [Babylon] was being constructed. A central character, curiously referred to only as the “brother of Jared”, is instructed by God to build eight watertight, rudderless “barges” [more like barrels] to carry people and animals (including bees and fish) to the promised land... This rather implausible sea journey... took nearly a

year and delivered the people to the uninhabited Americas. There the Jaredites grew from 30-or-so to multiple thousands and then perished because of their wickedness.

In the second migration to the promised land, Israelites left Jerusalem around 600 B.C. [BCE] on a single vessel guided by a supernaturally provided “brass ball”. Soon after their arrival, Lehi’s sons, Laman and Lemuel, rebelled against God; they and their followers were cursed by God, which resulted in “a skin of blackness to come upon them.” They were called Lamanites, and Mormonism claims that these dark-skinned Hebrews are the original ancestors of the Native Americans of the Western Hemisphere. The followers of Nephi [i.e., the father of the two rebellious sons] remained “white, exceedingly fair and delightsome” and throughout their history these groups were at enmity with each other.

Shortly after his resurrection, the Book of Mormon claims that Jesus came to America, where he taught the Nephites the gospel... ordained disciples, and gave instructions concerning the sacraments of communion and baptism.

Around the fifth century A.D. [CE], the Lamanites [i.e., followers of the rebellious sons] finally destroyed all the Nephites [followers of the father] so that only the dark-skinned people remained in the Americas. Following the final battle, the last surviving Nephite, Moroni, finished recording on plates the events of his people and hid them beneath a rock on the Hill Cumorah (located in upstate New York). Approximately 1,400 years later [the angel] Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith, Jr., giving him the location of the “gold plates” and instructing him to translate them into English...

There are, however, both minor and major problems with this “story line”. Among the minor problems is that there are many reasonable explanations for the existence of multiple languages in the world – and the scattering of people by some giant Jabberwock in the sky (because the people built the Tower of Babylon) isn’t one of them! Put differently, Dear, if the cause of multiple languages in the world were that God scattered the people from Babylon in about 2000 BCE (because they built the Tower), then pray tell: how come there were already different languages in the world (e.g., in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China...) thousands of years earlier? Further, the reason for building this Tower was not (as the BoM claims) “to get to heaven”, not only because in about 2000 BCE the Babylonians apparently hadn’t been conned into the idea that they could get to any “heaven” but also because the purpose of the Tower (as recorded on clay tablets of the Babylonian myth that I reviewed in the “excursion” **Ix**) was both to construct a “resting place” for the gods when they dropped in to visit their “heavenly city” of Babylon and to serve as an observatory of the “heavenly gods” (i.e., the stars).

Still another “minor problem” with this “story line” is the silliness that ~2000 BCE (or even 500 BCE) groups of Hebrews would set off on ocean voyages to get to some promised land on the other side of the world, rather than just wander off to another land location. The Phoenicians (and earlier, maybe the Egyptians and later, certainly the Greeks) were great sailors and undertook major sea-faring adventures, but it’s highly doubtful that even they would have attempted such a stunt: the most famous sea voyage was by the Phoenicians, who may have sailed around Africa in ~600 BCE, although as you can find on the internet, “the world’s first historian”, Herodotus, doubted this story’s validity. But even if the Phoenicians and Greeks might have had sufficient sea-faring experience to undertake an expedition around Africa (always with land in sight, thank you very much!), I’m essentially certain that no self-respecting Hebrew (famous not as sailors but as shepherds and priests!) would be so foolish as to set off on such an ocean voyage, knowing with certainty that the world was a flat plate – and being quite reluctant to risk falling off the edge!

But setting such minor problems aside, you’ll encounter major problems with the idea that “Hebrews are the original ancestors of the Native Americans of the Western Hemisphere.” First, as you can find by searching on the internet or by reading essentially any archaeology textbook, linguistic and DNA studies conclusively show that the first Americans weren’t Hebrews from the Near East but were from Central Asia. To illustrate, let me quote from a source that in turn is quoting Simon Southerton.¹¹

In early August 1998, the life I had known as a Mormon came to an abrupt end. It doesn’t matter that I have given my heart to Mormonism for three decades. This will count for naught to Mormons. I am married to Jane and we are the parents of five children aged between 6 and 15 years. We left the Church together towards the end of 1998. At the time I was a bishop in Brisbane, Australia. To my surprise I have found that most ex-mormons I have communicated with since then were once committed believers like me and not the moral bankrupts depicted by the Church.

I believed the Book of Mormon was true and that Hebrew civilization had occurred on the American continent. I firmly believed that there was a connection between the Old and the New World; however, I had never taken the time to seriously examine this. I was confident that somewhere in the scientific literature there must be some reliable research that supported this. There is an abundance of Mormon literature that claims strong links between the two worlds. With this in mind I decided to look for

¹¹ Copied from http://www.exmormon.org/journey/journey_e.htm.

myself for research that supported Old World migrations to the Americas. I began searching for research papers having some connection with American Indians or Polynesians. Because I was familiar with plant genetics I became interested in recent research on the DNA of American Indians. The principles of DNA analysis are applicable to all living things, so it was relatively easy to jump from the plant to the animal kingdom.

I rapidly accumulated many scientific papers comparing the mitochondrial DNA of American Indians from numerous tribes with the mitochondrial DNA of other populations around the world. Mitochondrial DNA is passed from mother to child each generation. It is essentially a female genealogical lineage, or a maiden name if you like, stored in the mitochondrial DNA sequence. This part of the total DNA genome is used for population studies in many animal species. It is very simple to study because the mitochondrial genes don't get rearranged each generation like most genes, which are inherited as a mixed bag from previous generations. I was equally interested in more recent Y-chromosome DNA studies. Male lineages, much like DNA surnames, are passed from father to son and clearly reveal male genealogical lineages.

In the last decade scientists from several research groups have tested the mitochondrial DNA of over 2,000 American Indians from about a hundred tribes scattered over the length of the Americas. It soon became apparent that about 99% of their female lineages were brought into the Americas in excess of 12,000 years ago. Almost all of these lineages are most closely related to those of people in Asia, particularly in southern Siberia near Mongolia. Several tribes in Mesoamerica (which included Aztecs and Mayans) had been tested and all but a couple of individuals out of about 500 had mitochondrial DNA of Asian origin. The small fraction of Native American lineages that were not from Asia appeared to originate in Europe, most likely Spain. DNA studies also showed that the female ancestors of the Polynesians came from South East Asia and not the Americas. Y-chromosome studies, which trace male migrations, strongly support the mitochondrial work, except that the European influence is higher (about 10% in the Americas).

For several weeks I wrestled with this research. I collected more and more research papers but failed to find anything that supported migration of Jewish or Middle Eastern people before Columbus. Enough is known about the DNA lineages of Semitic people to be very confident that they are clearly distinguishable from Asian lineages. They would also be easily identifiable if they were present in the Americas in significant numbers. I struggled with the complete discrepancy between the research and my understanding of The Book of Mormon and the doctrine regarding the Lamanites. The Book of Mormon describes the occurrence of Hebrew civilizations in the Americas numbering in the millions. It is clear that the victorious Lamanites would have numbered in the millions in about 400 AD [CE]. I could not understand how such large numbers of people could have completely escaped detection.

Further, Dear, as you can easily find on the internet by yourself, there is physical archaeological evidence of people living in America since before 10,000 BCE, i.e., ~10,000 years before the BoM claims that the first Americans arrived! Potatoes and beans were cultivated in South America as long ago as 8000 BCE, roughly the same time as cultivations started in Egypt and Mesopotamia – and ~6,000 years before the first “Hebrew” tribe existed (in Mesopotamia)! In Central America, from the Valdivia “culture” of ~3500-1700 BCE, ceramic “fertility figurines” have been found – and it’s at the end of this “culture” that the BoM claims that the Jaderites became the “first” Americans! In addition, anthropologists and linguists suggest that by about 2000 BCE, the Mayan language divided into three divisions (“Husatecan, Yucatecan, and southern variants”), not because of migrations from Babylon but because of migrations within what’s now Mexico.

I’ll leave it you, Dear, to investigate the archaeological data in more detail. If you do, I’m certain that you’ll conclude that the “story line” in the BoM is pure bunk. It would be more defensible to suggest that the Hebrews (i.e., the tribe whose patriarch was Abraham, who seems to have lived ~1800 BCE) were descendants of the Native Americans! For example, other descendants of the same people who became the first Americans might have wandered over to Mesopotamia and then, tens of thousands of years later, some of their ancestors were called Hebrews (i.e., “wanderers”) – the exact opposite of the theory promoted in the BoM!

How this idea (that Native Americans or “Indians” were descendants of the “lost tribes of Israel”) ever got started is a long and complicated story. Here, I’ll provide you with a few glimpses of the idea’s origin. One such glimpse is available in the following, written by Clark Braden (1831-1915) as a small part of his “Third Speech” in the 1884 “Braden-Kelley Debate”:¹²

Ever since the European missionaries began to labor among the Indians, as early as the year 1500, Spanish, French, English and Portuguese Missionaries had observed certain things among the Indians that led some of them to believe that the Indians were of Israelite origin, descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Such ideas can be found in the writings of the Spanish, Portuguese, and French Monks, and in the writings of Elliott, Cotton Mather and scores of American writers, before the commencement of the present [19th] century [i.e., during the 1700s]...

¹² Available at <http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/braden/1884BnKa.htm>.

Another glimpse of the origin of the idea that Native Americans were descendants of “the lost tribes of Israel” is available from a book entitled *View of the Hebrews*,¹³ which was written by the “pastor” Ethan Smith (no relation to Joseph Smith) and which was published in 1823 (seven years before the BoM was published) – and published at a location just a few miles from where Joseph Smith lived. In the quotation from *View of the Hebrews* that follows I’ve not only added a few notes [in square brackets] but also taken the liberty to make some of the punctuation more modern.

Men have been gradually perceiving this evidence [for the Native Americans being descendants of the Hebrews] for more than a half a century; and a new light has been, from time to time, shed on the subject, as will appear... Manasses Ben Israel, in a work entitled *The Hope of Israel*, has written to show that the American Indians are the ten tribes of Israel. But as we have access to his authors [maybe he means “references”] we may consult them for ourselves. The main pillar of his evidence is James Adair, Esq. Mr. Adair was a man of established character, as appears from good authority. He lived as a trader among the Indians, in the south of North America, for 40 years. He... returned to England in 1774, and there published his *History of the American Indians*; and his reason for being persuaded that they are the ten tribes of Israel. Remarking on their descent and origin, he concludes thus:

“From the most accurate observations I could make, in the long time I traded among the Indian Americans, I was forced to believe them lineally descended from the Israelites. Had the nine tribes and a half of Israel, that were carried off by Shalmanezer, and settled in Media, continued there long, it is very probable by intermarrying with the natives, and from their natural fickleness and proneness to idolatry [written when it was considered acceptable to so criticize all Jews!] and also from the force of example, that they would have adopted and bowed before the gods of Media and Assyria; and would have carried them along with them. But there is not a trace of this idolatry among the Indians.”

Mr. Adair gives his opinion that the ten tribes, soon after their banishment from the land of Israel, left Media, and reached this continent from the north-west, probably before the carrying away of the Jews of Babylon.

From various authors and travelers among the Indians, the fact that the American Indians are the ten tribes of Israel will be attempted to be proved by the following arguments:

1. The American natives have one origin.
2. Their language appears to have been Hebrew.
3. They have had their imitation of the ark of the covenant in ancient Israel.
4. They have been in practice of circumcision.

¹³ Available at <http://www.angelfire.com/az2/arizonadry/truth/hebrews.html>.

5. They have acknowledged one and only one God.
6. Their variety of traditions, historical and religious, go to evince that they are the ten tribes of Israel.
7. The celebrated William Penn gives account of the natives of Pennsylvania, which go to corroborate the same point.
8. Their having a tribe, answering in various respects, to the tribe of Levi, sheds further light on this subject.
9. Several prophetic traits of character given to the Hebrews, do accurately apply to the aborigines of America.
10. The Indians being in tribes, with their heads and names of tribes, affords further light upon this subject.
11. Their having an imitation of ancient city of refuge, evinces... the truth of our subject.
12. Other Indian rites, and various other considerations, go to evince the fact that this people are the ten tribes of Israel.

Now, Dear, maybe the above is enough (maybe even too much!) to give you a glimpse of the origin of the theory that Native Americans were descendants of the “lost tribes of Israel” and to support the suggestion that this theory was common in the U.S. during the early 1800s. Yet, let me add that it really shouldn’t be too surprising that such a theory was proposed, given the way our minds seem to work: faced with an unknown, we try to understand it in terms of what we know. In the case of many people in the early U.S., they were primarily “educated” via reading or just hearing the Bible. When they were then faced with an obvious unknown (namely: Where did all these “Indians” come from?), they relied on their “knowledge” that there were “ten lost tribes of Israel”, and then managed to put together one plus one to get ten! Meanwhile, though, it was a most unfortunate blunder of the author of the BoM to use this tentative theory as a “story line” to promote some religious themes (for the purpose of promoting a new religion), because when this theory of the origin of the Native Americans was found to be silly, the religious themes promoted in the BoM were found to be built on a foundation resting on quicksand!

But more significant than the silly idea in the BoM’s *Title Page* that Native Americans are descendents of the Hebrews is its hideous idea that people have dark skin because “they and their followers were cursed by God, which resulted in ‘a skin of blackness to come upon them’ [quoting an earlier edition of the BoM]”, whereas “followers of Nephi remained ‘white,

exceedingly fair and delightful.’”¹⁴ Such an idea not only demonstrates zero knowledge about the reasons for different skin colors (dark skin results from a wonderful mechanism, developed through evolution, for protecting against damaging ultraviolet radiation of the tropics; white skin results from an equally wonderful mechanism, also developed through evolution, for absorbing more of the sun’s radiation, needed for the body’s production of Vitamin D at higher latitudes) but also demonstrates racism at its worst, “sanctifying” racism with religious stupidity, in effect saying: “My race is better than yours; God cursed you.” Maybe suitable punishment for anyone convicted of promoting such “white-supremacist filth” would be to have the person’s skin color and other superficial features modified to conform to those of the people insulted!

Similar to the idea that American Natives were Hebrews, the white-supremacist filth promoted in the BoM was also quite common in America during the 1700s and early 1800s, when the enslavement of black people was at its peak. Of course many people considered slavery to be wrong, but simultaneously, many white Americans apparently considered enslavement of black Africans to be “right”, i.e., approved by God. For example, the following is Smith’s statement on slavery,¹⁵ to which I’ve added a few notes in square brackets and in which he claims that slavery is “God’s will” and “a lasting monument to the decree of Jehovah”.

If slavery is an evil who could we expect should first learn it? [Answer: someone with his head screwed on properly!] Would the people of the Free States or would the Slave States? [And why, pray tell, are those the only options?! How about asking the people who are slaves!] All must admit that the latter [the Slave States] would first learn this fact. [That statement is doubly crazy! “All” needn’t admit such a claim and further, data support the observation that among the nonslaves, the idea “first” found wide support in the “Free States”!] It is my privilege then [I guess that

¹⁴ Dear: At <http://www.irr.org/mit/changingscrips.html>, you can see the following illustrative change in the BoM. In its first (1830) edition, there is the statement (chapter and verse were not identified in this edition): “...and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white and a delightful people.” In the 1840 edition, the statement was the same (at 2 *Nephi* 30, 6): “... and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white pure and a delightful people.” This same “white and delightful” phrase continued until 1981, but in the 1981 edition of the BoM, the statement became “pure and delightful.” It sure was kind of the Dear Lord Jesus to drop down to Salt Lake City to inform the leaders of the Mormon Church to change the BoM – just in time to avert a law suit against them for leading a racist organization!

¹⁵ The quote is from the April 1836 issue of the Mormon “newspaper” *The Messenger and Advocate*; it was published again in the Mormon “magazine” *The Millennial Star*, vol.15, pp. 739-741; you can find more details about Smith’s position on slavery at, e.g., <http://www.waltermartin.org/slavery.html#slave>.

means: “whereas I’m living in ‘slave state’, I get to be among the first to determine if slavery is evil.”] to name certain passages from the Bible and examine the teachings of the ancients upon the matter [What a terrible mistake, repeated millions of times: to use the Bible to ascertain what is right vs. wrong!], as the fact is incontrovertible, that the first mention we have of slavery is found in the Holy Bible [which, by the way Dear, isn’t so: as I’ll show you in **Yx**, slavery is described on Ancient Sumerian clay tablets created at least 2,000 years before the Bible was written], pronounced by a man who was perfect in his generation, and walked with God. [Riiiiight. Smith is referring to the drunken lout Noah, who cursed his grandson (that he would become a slave) because not Noah’s grandson but Noah’s son had seen or reported that he had seen Noah naked!] And so far from that prediction being averse from the mind of God, it remains as a lasting monument to the decree of Jehovah to the shame and confusion of all who have cried against the South, in consequence of their holding the sons of Ham [i.e., black people] in servitude, and he said: “Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall be he unto his brethren... Blessed be the Lord of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.” The curse is not taken off the sons of Canaan. [Punish the descendants for a noncrime by a remote ancestor! What kind of crazy “justice” is that!] The scripture stands for itself and I believe that these men were better qualified to teach the will of God than the abolitionists in the world. [Riiiiight – save for one minor little point: there ain’t no gods and there never were!!]

Given such stupid assessments by the “profit” Smith about the “righteousness” of the enslavement of black people, it’s unsurprising to find such ideas in a “religious book” written in the early 1800s (as was the BoM, in spite of its claims that it was a record from more than 1,000 years earlier).

But meanwhile, it strains credulity beyond the breaking point to try to imagine that such ideas were created when the BoM was allegedly written, as a record of events between about ~2000 BCE and 500 CE. In those days, slavery wasn’t based on skin color but on outcomes of wars. Thus, for example, the Egyptians rarely had black Ethiopian slaves (because the Ethiopians rarely lost wars!) whereas the Egyptians may have had “white” Hebrew slaves, because before the military leader Moses organized the Israelites, apparently they were incompetent warriors.

As for the second point identified in the *Title Page* of the BoM, dealing with the purpose of the book, surely somebody’s gotta be kidding. One purpose is stated to be “to show unto the remnant [remnants?] of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers...” Yet, the “story line” of the BoM is that the dark-skinned Lamanites (those allegedly cursed by God) survived to become the Native American “Indians”, whereas the “good” Nephites (those who were “white, exceedingly fair and delightsome”

* Go to other chapters *via*

and who allegedly tried to follow the teachings of the allegedly resurrected Jesus) all died out, leaving only a record in the form of this BoM!

These are some of the “great things the Lord hath done for [them]”? That the “bad guys” survived and the “good guys” didn’t?! That all that’s left of the “good guys” is a book buried in the ground?! If you follow the Book of Mormon, all that will be left of your “race” is a book buried in the ground?! That’s quite a message! And actually, I’m confident that, eventually, it’ll be found to be the only prophecy ever made by any Mormon leader that’s worth a damn: eventually, surely the only thing that will survive Mormonism is their ludicrous “holy books”, with copies buried away in libraries, classified along with other “primitive myths”, “illustrations of religious errors”, or “classic con games”!

As for the second listed purpose from the *Title Page* of the BoM (i.e., for “convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD...”), first let me quote from Chapter 10 of the 1920 book entitled *Forty Years in the Mormon Church – Why I left it!* by R.C. Evans.¹⁶

So far as convincing the Jews is concerned, that people [i.e., the Jews] look upon the story [i.e., the BoM] as a huge joke. Personally we have been associated with the church for over forty years, we recall but one Jew that ever joined the church, and he left it. We also knew of one Jewish lady who married a Gentile and came into the church. The Book of Mormon has been on its mission for about ninety years [in 1920]; the Reorganized [Mormon] Church sent missionaries to Jerusalem some years ago, they saw the country, took pictures, held some meetings, baptized three or four, and the mission failed. One Jewish Rabbi coming to Toronto from Jerusalem told me that the man whom our Elders baptized in Jordan was dead drunk the next day, and is now dead. So in the first ninety years the object of the book has failed.

Further, relative to this purpose of convincing anyone that “JESUS is the CHRIST” (i.e., anointed by God), “the ETERNAL GOD”, that purpose reveals multiple levels of misunderstanding. 1) According to the Gnostic gospels, Jesus never said that he was a god (let alone “the eternal God”); instead, as I started to show you in earlier **Qx** chapters, such silliness seems to have been started by the insane “Saint” Paul trying to figure out why Jesus died. 2) As I also already started to shown you in an earlier **Qx** chapter and will show you more in **Yx**, the decision to proclaim that Jesus was a god was purely a political move made by the Roman Emperor Constantine (“the butcher”), who earlier had proclaimed his own father to be

¹⁶ Available at <http://www.biblebelievers.net/Cults/Mormonism/FortyYears/kjcforty.htm>.

a god – which thereby made him, Constantine, similar to Jesus, a son of a god! 3) As I'll show you in **Yx**, the whole business about some savior being the “anointed one” seems to be derived from mistranslations and misunderstandings of the original Hebrew text: the “anointed one” was not to be born from a virgin in some future date but was to be born from a girl who was then pregnant – and the anointed one was the one who saved the Hebrews from their Babylonian captivity, namely, Cyrus the Great! It therefore seems to be a highly dubious enterprise to attempt to convince “Jew and Gentile” (which is a long-winded way of saying “everyone”) that “JESUS is the CHRIST” (i.e., anointed by God), “the ETERNAL GOD”, not only because it's never been done successfully before [because the concept of gods is just the product of primitive imaginations unconstrained by data and used by clerics (to promote their con games) and politicians (to promote their power mongering)] but also because the “story line” of the BoM is that all those who “believed” such nonsense (i.e., the Nephites) died out!

Anyway, Dear, moving on from the *Title Page*, let me now turn to the *Preface*, which states that it was written by “The Author” (Smith) – a statement that appears in the 1830 edition of the BoM but not in its most-current edition. I expect that this *Preface* isn't included in the current editions, Dear, because if you'll read it,¹⁷ then surely you, too, would predict that a novice's reaction would be something similar to: “What the devil is this?!” I suspect that later Church leaders saw that this *Preface* just stimulated readers to inquire about the history of the Church (and therefore of the BoM) – and these leaders learned from experience that stimulating people to examine the Church's history is a great way to lose potential, paying customers!

Be that as it may, understanding the *Preface* seems to require some knowledge about the history of Mormonism, and although my plan is not to dig into this history very deeply until **Yx** (and even there, I'll not dig very deeply – because so many people already have – and there's now such a huge pile of literature to dig through!), yet let me provide you with the following, summary comments. And because these comments are quite extensive, Dear, I feel the need to add a request for a double dose of your patience.

¹⁷ Again, it's available at <http://www.irr.org/mit/BoM/1830bom-books.html>.

On the one hand, I'm not providing the list of comments solely to help you understand the *Preface* but also because I plan to refer to them later, when I'll be showing you other (strange!) features of the BoM. And on the other hand, I request your patience because I won't be trying to justify these comments until **Yx**. Perhaps it's needless to add that the following "historical outline" doesn't conform to the "history" taught you by the LDS Church, Dear, but on the other hand, it does seem to conform to the majority of the evidence that I've examined.

- To attempt to discover who produced the BoM, the most reliable evidence is within the BoM, itself, and within the other "holy books" of Mormonism (D&C and PGP). Other potential sources of information, such as from a huge number of affidavits and other statements made by many "witnesses" and collected during the time period ~1830–1870, unfortunately suffer from (or, at a minimum, are significantly complicated by) the existence of a substantial number of forgeries and other lies perpetrated by both Mormon supporters and detractors.
- As shown in many books (including the 1834 book by Howe and the 1902 book by Linn, both already referenced), the evidence is overwhelming that the BoM wasn't written by descendants of any ancient Hebrews who had braved the ocean to reach the Americas, but instead, was produced by someone who was intimately familiar with all the most recent peculiarities (including their most recent twists and turns between 1827 through 1829!) of the religious doctrines taught in Sidney Rigdon's version of the "Campbellite" or "Disciples of Christ" church in Mentor, Ohio.
- This Sidney Rigdon (1793–1876) was an excommunicated Baptist pastor, who subsequently became a preacher in an offshoot of the Baptist Church identified as "The Disciples of Christ" or "The Disciple's Church" or "Campbellites" (a group with whose doctrines Rigdon mostly agreed – until its leader, Alexander Campbell, refused to accept that "believers" should still be able to perform miracles and that church members should hold their property in common, i.e., a limited communist society); still later, Rigdon became the first important "convert" to Mormonism (along with most of his congregation, thereby providing the new Mormon Church with its original "core congregation") and was quickly "promoted" to be one of the "trinity" of the "First Presidency" of the new "church" and the one to "interpret" all of Smith's "revelations".

- As shown in an amazingly thorough 1891 book by William Heth Whitsitt entitled *Sidney Rigdon, The Real Founder of Mormonism*,¹⁸ and as earlier described in substantial detail by the Disciples preacher Clark Braden in his “Third Speech” of the “Braden-Kelley Debate”,¹⁹ the most compelling evidence that Sidney Rigdon (or someone who knew Rigdon’s doctrines intimately) produced the BoM is contained within the BoM itself: Rigdon’s peculiar doctrines (dealing with baptism for “remission” of sins, laying on of hands to gain “the holy spirit”, communism, infant baptism, etc.) can be found on literally hundreds of pages of the BoM (as well in much of the D&C and PGP).
- Although Whitsitt (and earlier authors) concluded that Sidney Rigdon produced the BoM, to me the evidence contained within the BoM establishes only that it was produced by someone who was intimately familiar with Rigdon’s peculiar version of Disciple doctrines. Potential “candidate producers” of the BoM therefore include not only Rigdon but also the following members of the Disciples’ Church who quickly converted to Mormonism as soon as the BoM was published: Parley Pratt (the first of the Disciples to become a Mormon), Orson Pratt (Parley’s brother), Orson Hyde (who “lived for some time in Rigdon’s Mentor [Ohio] home”), Frederick G. Williams (who in 1833, along with Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith, became one of the three of the “trinity” who ruled the Mormon Church), Lyman Wight, and Edward Partridge.
- It’s therefore not at all clear (at least to me!) who produced the BoM. If I were a betting man (and I am!) and would be tempted to bet on very uncertain odds (which generally I’m not – but sometimes I do it anyway, e.g., to placate grandchildren!), then my first “guesstimates” (for percentage probabilities of who was primarily responsible for producing the BoM) would be: ~70% chance that it was Rigdon, ~10% chance that it was another member of the Disciple’s Church (my first guess would be Parley Pratt and my second guess would be Frederick Williams), ~10% chance that it was produced by Joseph Smith (with substantial help from Oliver Cowdery), and I’d leave the remaining ~10% chance for the possibility that the BoM was produced by someone else – but of course I’d set the probability to be essentially zero that it was written by anyone

¹⁸ Whitsitt’s book is available at <http://sidneyrigdon.com/wht/1891WhtB.htm>.

¹⁹ Much of this debate is available at <http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/braden/1884BnKa.htm>.

before the 1827–1829 time period – and effectively zero that it was written by any fictitious ancient Israelites such as Mormon and Moroni!

- With the BoM being ~90% devoted to a fake history of the Americas and ~10% copied directly from the King James Version of the Bible (and, in particular, those parts of the Bible in which Rigdon’s peculiar doctrines were emphasized!), then the prime producer of the BoM must have been intimately familiar with 1) The speculation that Native Americas were Ancient Israelites, 2) The Bible, and 3) Rigdon’s peculiar doctrines. Further, as shown in studies such as those by Dale Broadhurst (which I’ll be referencing later and which are available on the internet), whoever concocted the “historical” part of the BoM was clearly a “classic scholar”, with knowledge of Greek and Roman literature and some of Shakespeare’s plays (particularly Hamlet) – but with essentially zero knowledge of science or science history.
- With the undeniable fact that the producer of the BoM plagiarized the King James Version of the Bible (complete with some of its known errors!)²⁰, thereby guaranteeing that the BoM was produced after the KJV was published (in 1611), it then wouldn’t be inconsistent for the producer (or producers) of the BoM to also plagiarize one or more descriptions (or “popularizations”) of the speculation that Native Americans were Israelite descendants. Two of these “descriptions” that were likely candidate targets for such plagiarisms are Ethan Smith’s *View of the Hebrews* (already referenced) and an unpublished manuscript by Solomon Spalding.²¹

²⁰ As given at http://r.hotbot.com/r/af_member_hotbot_img/http://www.hotbot.com, illustrations of such errors are the following: “Compare 2 Nephi 14, 5 to Isaiah 4, 5: the correct translation of the Hebrew word *chuppah* is ‘canopy’ not ‘defense’. Compare 2 Nephi 15, 25 with Isaiah 5, 25: the correct translation for the word *suchah* is ‘refuse’ not ‘torn’.” Other errors include perpetuating the silliness of God parting the Red Sea (which should be translated as Reed Sea) and that “the savior” would be born from a ‘virgin’ (which should have been translated as “young girl”); many other errors are given in Richard Packham’s article, referenced in an earlier footnote.

²¹ Quoting the 1977 book entitled *Who Really Wrote The Book of Mormon?* by Wayne L. Cowdrey, Donald R. Scales, and Howard A. Davis (later in this chapter referenced as the book by H.A. Davis *et al.*) and available on the internet (at least partially) at <http://thedigitalvoice.com/enigma/wrw/1977DavB.htm>: “Solomon and his immediate family spelled their name Spalding, while other relatives, acquaintances, and descendants spelled it Spaulding.”

- Since at least 1831, many people have promoted the theory and provided evidence (including various “testimonies”) that Sidney Rigdon produced the BoM by adding religious material to the manuscript of an “historical romance” written by Spalding, after Spalding had died and the publishing firm that had his manuscript went bankrupt. In turn, Solomon Spalding (1761–1816) probably conceived the ideas for his manuscripts from communications with his friend and fellow Dartmouth College graduate Ethan Smith, whose *View of the Hebrews* I quoted earlier in this chapter. Spalding’s “classic education” at Dartmouth College is consistent with the observation that the author of the BoM was “well acquainted with the classics” (including Shakespeare), whereas Rigdon apparently studied little beyond the Bible (and in the 1820s, Smith could barely read or write).
- Possible titles of Spalding’s unpublished and then stolen manuscript include: 1) *The Book of Mormon*, 2) *Manuscript Found*, and 3) *The Manuscript Found in the Wilds of Mormon; or Unearthed Records of the Nephites*. This “second manuscript by Spalding” (of which there may have been at least two copies, the second containing revisions) apparently followed his first attempt to account for the “Indian mounds” found in New England, which he began describing in an earlier manuscript that has been found (entitled *Manuscript Story* and which clearly wasn’t ready to be submitted for publication).²² It’s assumed that Rigdon destroyed Spalding’s *Manuscript Found* after he had finished plagiarizing it, although there are some hints that some pages of it are still stored in one of the LDS vaults in Salt Lake City.²³
- If I were pushed further to estimate more probabilities, then within my ~70% “guesstimate” for the probability that Rigdon produced the BoM,

²² A copy of this “Manuscript Story” is at <http://www.angelfire.com/az2/arizonadry/truth/spalding.html>; one way you can see that it wasn’t ready to be submitted to a publisher, Dear, is to look at its Chapter VIII: Spalding switched the name of the community’s “Moses” from Baska to Lobaska – but then left the original start of Chapter VIII!

²³ One way to pursue some of those hints, Dear, is to start either from the book by Davis *et al.* referenced in an earlier footnote or use Google to search on the internet using “Book of Mormon” + “unidentified scribe”. Thereby you’ll find hints that Rigdon gave Smith some pages from Spalding’s original manuscript and then Smith just passed these on to the printer – because Smith’s prime directive from Rigdon probably was to obliterate evidence of Rigdon’s handwriting, not Spalding’s, and Smith always opted for the easiest option! Other ways to pursue some of the hints of multiple copies of Spalding’s *Manuscript Found* are to begin Google searches with “Book of Mormon” + “missing 116 pages” and with “Book of Mormon” + “Hurlbut”.

I'd give a ~80% chance to the probability that Rigdon did so by adding copious quantities of the King James Version of the Bible to Spalding's missing manuscript, and within the ~10% chance that Joseph Smith (and Cowdery) were the producers of the BoM, I'd give a ~20% chance to the possibility that he (and Cowdery) concocted it by adding to the story-line in Ethan Smith's book both KJV text and Disciple doctrines. I put that combined probability (that Smith produced the BoM) so low (i.e., $10\% \times 20\% = 2\%$), because it seems highly unlikely that Smith and Cowdery were aware of the intricacies of Rigdon's doctrines (without the involvement of Rigdon or someone whom Rigdon had tutored).

- The motive or motives driving the entire hoax are of course unclear. If the prime mover was Rigdon, his motive may primarily have been vanity (to promote his religious views), but in turn, his vanity may have been driven by 1) his sincere desire to “save” people (he apparently was a religious fanatic, apparently with serious mental problems, who was convinced that following his extension of the ideas of “The Disciples” provided the “only way” to prepare, in those “latter days”, for the imminent return of Jesus) or by 2) his reaction to the humiliations he received, both from being “booted out” of his first pastoral position (when he was a Baptist) and from having his ideas rejected by Campbell (when he was a member of the Disciple's Church). If the prime mover was Parley Pratt (or another member of the Disciple's Church), perhaps the prime motive was to gain control of the “communal” (or communist) church enterprise that Rigdon had established (with this motive in turn, driven by envy, greed, poverty, or similar). If the prime mover was Joseph Smith (along with help from his parents, his bother, most of the Whitmer family, Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery), then it seems the prime motive was “simply” avarice, starting with gaining control of Rigdon's communal enterprise. If any or all of those were the motives, the perpetrator or perpetrators were amazingly successful – although if Rigdon was the prime mover, then as you can find from investigations of his fate, Dear, you'll see that he overlooked (or misjudged) how badly his enterprise would hurt his finances, reputation, and mental health.
- Although it's difficult (if not impossible) to determine how the entire hoax was perpetrated (i.e., the hoax that the BoM was found on “golden plates” written in “reformed Egyptian” and then magically translated), I would put that probability as greater than 50% that it was concocted and led by Sidney Rigdon (who preached that such “miracles” were to be

expected during those “latter days”). I furthermore suspect that the hoax was spread by the part-time peddler and part-time preacher Parley Pratt (trained as a preacher by Rigdon) and then to the fellow-peddler Oliver Cowdery (second-cousin to Smith), and finally to the well known and convicted “money-digger” Joseph Smith,²⁴ who eventually gained control of the entire con game, by first engaging the financial and writing services of the farmer (and fellow swindler) Martin Harris and then engaging the services and support of the fellow “money digger” David Whitmer (and family) as well as other members of the Smith family.

- From what I’ve read about the history of Mormonism (which is far more than I ever wanted to!), I get the impression that Martin Harris’ role may have been inadequately assessed: few farmers (and even fewer successful farmers) are as dumb as Martin Harris is depicted; normally it requires substantial mental agility to stay ahead of Nature’s vagaries! In particular, with respect to the “missing 116 pages” of the original BoM (a subject to be addressed in later paragraphs), I wouldn’t be surprised if crafty Marty just tucked those pages away (maybe at the home of his mistress!) as “collateral” for the money he advanced Smith, just in case the con artist Smith attempted to con the con-artist Harris! Another alternative (which I’m rather surprised no historian seems to have addressed) is the possibility that all or part of those “missing pages” incriminated Rigdon (e.g., the pages might have contained some of Spalding’s original pages, possibly with Rigdon’s revisions), and then Smith and Harris collaborated to sequester the “missing” 116 pages so that, if they felt it necessary in the future, they’d be able to blackmail Rigdon.

If Rigdon was the prime mover of the entire BoM production (which I expect), the details of how he obtained Spalding’s manuscript and what it contained will probably never be known – which, actually, doesn’t really matter! Nonetheless, just to illustrate current ideas, let me just quote from a 2001 MA thesis by B.E. Ready, who in turn reviews Whitsitt’s speculations.²⁵

²⁴ Dear: You can find information about Smith’s arrest and conviction for “money digging” at <http://www.realmormonhistory.com/newpage13.htm>, complete with a copy of the court document at <http://www.realmormonhistory.com/1826.htm>.

²⁵ Ready’s thesis, entitled *William H. Whitsitt: Insights into Early Mormonism* and submitted to the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is at <http://sidneyrigdon.com/books/2001Read.htm#pg018a>.

Whitsitt traces the origin of the Book of Mormon back to the writings of Solomon Spalding. In 1810, Spalding began writing a manuscript which he intended to publish in order to raise money to pay his debts. Whitsitt believes that he [Spalding] produced at least three distinct works all under the title of *Manuscript Found*. The first of these works Whitsitt refers to as *The Honolulu Manuscript*. In 1885 this manuscript was rediscovered in Honolulu, Hawaii, among papers which formerly belonged to E. D. Howe. This manuscript is 177 pages long. It tells the story of a group [of] Romans who had set sail for Britain. During their voyage, a violent storm blew them off-course and they landed in North America. According to all who have seen the manuscript it bears absolutely no resemblance to the Book of Mormon. Whitsitt concedes this point. However, he goes on to cite Howe who had witnesses claiming Spalding was working on another *Manuscript Found*. Spalding “told them that he had altered his first plan of writing, by going farther back with dates, and writing in the old scripture style, in order that it might appear more ancient.”

According to Whitsitt, Spaulding’s attempt at this “more ancient” document (the second *Manuscript Found*) was the *Book of Ether*, which would later be incorporated into his third work, *The Book of Mormon*. Once the manuscripts were finished, Spaulding set out to publish them. Some time before his death in 1816, he presented the manuscripts to the foreman of Robert Patterson’s printing office, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to be considered for publication. Patterson wanted Spalding to pay for the costs of printing the manuscript. Since Spalding could not afford that, the plan was apparently abandoned.

Patterson's firm went bankrupt in 1818 and was reorganized that same year under the name Patterson & Lambdin. The firm operated out of a printing office named Butler & Lambdin. This point is significant. Rigdon, in his later denials of being connected with the Spalding manuscript, said that he did not know Patterson. But he never denied knowing Lambdin. Whitsitt cites two sources which say that Rigdon and Lambdin were good friends and Rigdon spent a great deal of time at the printing office while pastoring in Pittsburgh from 1822-1824. One can only speculate how Rigdon came to possess the manuscript. Whitsitt suggests that Lambdin may have given it to him or Rigdon may have bought it.

Whitsitt’s belief that Spalding was the author of the Book of Mormon (minus the religious interpolations) is based upon three primary sources. First there are the interviews of witnesses which report seeing similarities of plot, names of people and cities, between some of Spalding’s writings and the Book of Mormon, which were published in E. D. Howe’s *Mormonism Unveiled*. The second is *Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?*, by Robert Patterson, Jr., son of the aforementioned printer. In this book, Patterson acknowledges that his father had the manuscript and discusses ways Rigdon might have had access to it. His third source could better be described as a peculiarity in the Book of Mormon. Namely, at the end of the Book of Mormon, evil prevails. The righteous Nephites are totally destroyed by the wicked, unrighteous Lamanites. Whitsitt writes that if this book were written by an individual seeking to

advance the claims of Christianity it is highly unlikely that the unrighteous group would have prevailed. However, if the individual writing this book was antagonistic toward religion, as Spalding was toward the end of his life, such an ending would be logical.

Further, with respect to the witnesses who recognized Spalding's authorship of the "historical" portion of the BoM, let me quote R.G. McNiece's book entitled *Mormonism: Its Origin, Characteristics, and Doctrines*:²⁶

Now there are ten, intelligent witnesses, who stated over their affidavit in 1833, when the subject was fresh in mind, that about 1811–12, they heard Solomon Spaulding reading a religious story from the *Manuscript Found*, trying to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Lost Tribes. They remembered the quaint phraseology, and the queer names, Lehi, Nephi, Jarom, Moroni, and the rest. The expression, "and it came to pass", occurred so often, the boys nick-named Spaulding, "Old Come-to-Pass." When the Book of Mormon was published these witnesses identified at once the queer names and phraseology. When Esquire Wright heard the Book of Mormon read in Conneaut he exclaimed, "Old Come-to-Pass has come to life again!"

Should you be interested, Dear, the testimonies of all these witnesses are given in the book by Howe, already referenced.²⁷

Finally, let me add the following testimony reported by Braden at the 1884 Braden-Kelley debate²⁸ – but as with all testimonies, it's essentially impossible to discern if this testimony is "true":

The Reverend John Winter, M.D., a member of Rigdon's congregation in Pittsburgh, testified as follows: "In 1822 or 3, Rigdon took out of his desk in his study a large MS [manuscript], stating that it was a Bible romance purporting to be a history of the American Indians. That it was written by one Spaulding, a Presbyterian preacher whose health had failed and who had taken it to the printers to see if it would pay to publish it. And that he (Rigdon) had borrowed it from the printer as a curiosity."

Other investigators argue that Joseph Smith used Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*, to produce the BoM, but this thesis explains neither how Rigdon's views permeate the BoM nor how someone so poorly educated as Joseph Smith could have produced the BoM. I consider it more likely that Spalding used Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* as background material for his

²⁶ Available at <http://www.biblebelievers.net/Cults/Mormonism/kjcmormd.htm>.

²⁷ Available at <http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/1834howb.htm#cont>.

²⁸ Available at <http://www.solomonspalding.com/docs/braden/1884BnKa.htm>.

“romance”, that Rigdon then purloined Spalding’s manuscript, and that Rigdon (via Pratt) then enlisted the “services” of Joseph Smith.

In the “historical perspective” of **Yx**, I’ll attempt to justify most of the above summary statements. In this **Qx**, especially in this and the next chapter, please proceed with the assumption that the above statements are a fair representation of what actually occurred. Nonetheless, when in the following you find statements such as “Rigdon must have...” or “Smith apparently...” or similar, then please realize, Dear, that I make such statements only as shorthand for something similar to “Assuming that there’s a 70% chance that Rigdon produced the BoM, then he must have...” or “Assuming with ~70% probability that Rigdon arranged for Smith to perpetrate the hoax, then Smith apparently...”, or similar. If you will then accept these assumptions (with their implied caveats), then, Dear, I’m fairly confident that you’ll find what’s written in the BoM becomes more understandable – except perhaps for its *Preface*!

That is, Dear, no matter which way you look at this *Preface* (which, again, doesn’t appear in more recent editions of the BoM), I suspect that you’ll conclude that it’s weird: it seems to suggest that, during the production of the BoM, God was rather short on miracles and therefore resorted to some cunning!

In more detail, the “story” that you can find on the internet (and that appears to be “approved” by the LDS hierarchy) is that the wife of Smith’s first “scribe” (i.e., Martin Harris’ wife) got a hold of the first 116 pages of the manuscript and (convinced that her husband had bought into a con game) she probably burned them. In any event, Smith (so the story goes) didn’t know what happened to those pages, and in the *Preface* Smith basically states that he was then stuck: he argues that if he proceeded to duplicate the original, the “evil designing persons” who had stolen the first version could change what they had – leading to different versions of the first 116 pages.

I find that story doubtful. Upon reading Lucy Harris’ description of how her husband (her first cousin) beat her, I doubt that she would be so bold as to purloin those 116 pages from her husband. In a sworn statement (for whatever it’s worth) she claimed that she didn’t steal them. Further, given that Smith was no stranger to confrontations, I doubt that he would shrink from potential confrontation resulting from two versions of those 116 pages; I can easily imagine he would have been quite willing to claim that the

thieves had just changed what he had earlier dictated. Instead, I suspect that Smith claimed that he wasn't going to re-dictate the 116 pages because he no longer could: I expect that, within those 116 pages were some of Spalding's original pages (now gone!), and even Rigdon couldn't reproduce them; so, they just gave up!

Another possibility is pointed out in Ready's MA thesis, referenced above, and who in turn relays Whitsitt's speculation:

Whitsitt points out that this [the missing 116 pages] really should not have been a problem if Smith had only been transcribing the manuscript. He could simply start over again. However, Whitsitt believes Smith added his own comments to the Rigdon manuscript. For instance *2 Nephi 3: 6-21* contains a prophecy of a great seer named Joseph.

It appears that Rigdon and Smith decided to stop their project for a little while to let things calm down. Whitsitt writes,

“Under the excitement and even consternation that was occasioned by the tidings of the loss of the *Book of Lehi*, it would be natural for Rigdon to suggest that it might be safer for him to reclaim and preserve the manuscript till such time as they could have an opportunity to satisfy their minds regarding the extent and the effects of the accident. The manuscript was returned to Smith the following September.”

Eventually another amanuensis [i.e., transcriber] of Smith, Oliver Cowdery, would re-transcribe the lost 116 pages and Smith simply renamed them first and second Nephi, instead of Lehi. This would prevent anyone from producing the lost pages and finding inconsistencies between the two manuscripts.

But be that as it may, let me now (finally!) quote the *Preface* (of the 1830 edition of the BoM) in full. I've added some notes in “square brackets”, and because these became rather extensive [sorry about that, Dear, but this *Preface* is soooooo stupid!], I've attempted to make the whole easier to read by putting the quoted text in italics.

To The Reader –

As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work [Which “false reports”? That it was derived from gold plates found in the ground or that it was concocted by a bunch of con artists?!], and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work [If that were true, Joseph, then why didn't you present your case to the police, as court records show you did when Hulbert threatened you? Are you worried that the police would conclude that

the greater “evil” would be to allow certain con artists to get their con game up and running?!, *I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God* [Hello? Why does God need the help of a mere human to translate any message he might want to convey? Hasn’t God been able to keep up with all the languages since he played his Tower-of-Babel card?! Wow, I bet poor old God is embarrassed by the outcome of that one!], *and caused to be written* [I mean, I didn’t actually do the writing, cause – doncha know – I barely know how to write] *one hundred and sixteen pages, the which* [“the which” – it seems that you also barely know how to dictate!] *I took from the Book of Lehi, which was [is?] an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon* [who lived in the land of Gog on the planet Palob...]; *which said account* [will this sentence never end?!], *some person or persons have stolen and kept from me* [I mean, I wouldn’t have minded, so much, if they had stolen the “said account” and then returned it, but these “evil-designing people” stole it and then kept it from me! – not of course suggesting that Martin Harris stole these 116 pages, cause I gave them to him!], *notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again* [that is, as I report elsewhere, I almost wore out the floor, pacing back and forth!] – *and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again* [that is, Sydney said not to!], *for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God* [Joseph, me boy – or is that you, Sidney, doing the writing? – are you quite sure that their Lord isn’t Satan? I mean: you claim that they are “evil-designing persons”...], *by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written*; [although Satan, I presume, was in control of the punctuation]; *and if I should bring forth the same words again* [still without a new sentence, of course], *or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold* [I’ve found this new type of punctuation called a ‘colon’ – and what a treat it is; with its help, this sentence could go on forever!], *the Lord said unto me, I will* [shall?] *not suffer that Satan shall* [Will?! Doesn’t the Lord-your-God know the difference between ‘shall’ and ‘will’?! An omnipotent god would never say “I will” – meaning that he or she must do something (by compulsion or obligation or necessity)! That is, whereas rumor has it that God gets to do pretty-much-anything she bloody-well pleases (except to change the past, doncha know, cause the rewind on her remote control in on the fritz), therefore all God’s statement would always state “simple futurity in the first person”, i.e., “I shall...” Stated differently, Sidney old boy, if you ever again say that God said “I will...”, then she ain’t ever gonna forgive you! Meanwhile, however, only if God has control over the devil (which we’re told isn’t the case!) would God say “Satan shall...” (by compulsion); otherwise, whereas Satan also apparently does what he damn-well pleases (at least, so the story goes!), therefore God would say “Satan will not...”] *accomplish his evil design in this* [maybe it means that God lets Satan get away with all his other evil stuff!]; *therefore* [now that I see how neat this colon is, permitting me, perhaps, to break the record for the world’s longest sentence] *thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye* [Hello? Sydney or Joseph or whoever wrote this crap, check out your Elizabethan English! Let me put it this way: if ever God addresses you as “ye” (as in “Ye are a bunch of blackguards!”), then run for cover – and stay there until you hear her say

something similar to “Now **thou** art better!”] *come to that which ye [!] have translated, which ye have retained* [“Which ye have retained”]? Do you mean, Sidney, that the clown Joseph let Marty take away some pages of Spalding original manuscript, and now, of course, even you can’t duplicate what Spalding wrote?!]; *and behold* [I can still use a semi-colon] *ye [!] shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words.* [Period! Finally an end to the sentence!] *I will [NO! Shall!] not suffer that they shall [No! Will!] destroy my word* [They could destroy your word? My god, God, are you really such a wimp that Marty Harris had you whipped?!]; *yea, I will shew unto them* [Who? Harris and his mistress?] *that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil.* [Or that your cunning is greater than his wisdom?!] *Wherefore* [“Wherefore”? How about “Therefore”?], *to be obedient unto the commandments of God* [and wanting to get this show on the road], *I have, through his grace and mercy* [and the prompting of the man pulling my strings, i.e., Sidney Rigdon], *accomplished that which he [Sidney] hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario country, New-York* [that my dog’s name is ‘Bowser’, that I especially like mince-meat pie, and that I prefer cash – no checks or money-orders, if you please].

The Author

Sorry for all the notes, Dear, but ya gotta admit that’s it’s gotta be one of the craziest Prefaces ever written!

Anyway, Dear, apparently the missing 116 pages caused Rigdon and Smith considerable difficulty, the solution to which (as described in the *Preface*) was not to attempt to re-write those pages exactly but to incorporate the material from *The Book of Lehi* into *The Book of Nephi*. And thus “I [God] will [shall!] shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil” – which is rather interesting for several reasons:

- 1) Wouldn’t it be rather dishonest of God to promote publishing material from *The Book of Lehi* as part of *The Book of Nephi*? Does this mean that God approves of plagiarism – such as plagiarizing Spalding’s manuscript and the Bible and calling it the Book of Mormon? Hmmm...
- 2) Why is God’s cunning called ‘wisdom’ and the Devil’s wisdom called ‘cunning’? I mean, God [aka Rigdon aka Smith] obviously displayed quite impressive cunning, out-foxing the fox that purloined the pages!
- 3) If it really were the case that God’s “wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil”, then why does God seem to be always playing “catch up”? Why, for example, didn’t God use a little of his attributed ability to

foresee the future to prevent the purloining in the first place? And for that matter, if God's so powerful, how come he doesn't prevent the Devil from causing so much evil in the world?

- 4) How are we to know that Smith was dealing with God rather than with Satan? As I'll show you later, Dear, Smith informs the world that some revelations are from God and some are from the Devil – but Smith neglected to mention how to discern those different origins, which (as someone else wrote) rather subverts the entire “revelation process”!

And I wrote in an earlier paragraph that God must have been “rather short on miracles”, Dear, because obviously the omnipotent creator of the universe could have easily extricated Smith from his predicament in other ways (e.g., make it impossible for changes to be made to the stolen pages, cause them to vanish, or if that was too difficult, make just the ink vanish, or whatever), but apparently all that transpired (as I'll show you in **Yx**) is that Rigdon became furious at Smith's incompetence for losing the first 116 pages!

Now, Dear, maybe you wonder why I allotted so much space to musings about those “missing” 116 pages. Believe it or not, I do have a reason, and it's this: because those 116 pages disappeared, it appears that the plans for Mormonism changed dramatically. Prior to the disappearance of those pages, it appears that Rigdon's planned role for the notorious and convicted “money-digger” Smith was simply to display that “miracles” were still possible: Smith was to be the magical “discoverer” and “translator” of the “plates”. Then, however, in a tactical blunder from which he never recovered, Rigdon decided that Smith would become, in addition, a “revelator”, i.e., to speak for God.

Thus, soon after the disappearance of the 116 pages, Smith revealed the first of his huge number of “revelations”, which have been collected as the Mormon's “holy book” originally called *Commandments* but subsequently called *The Doctrine and Covenants* (D&C). No doubt this first “revelation” was written by Rigdon (as no doubt were most of “Smith's” later “revelations”). This “revelation” appears as Section 3 of the D&C, but its date clearly identifies it as the first such “revelation”. Some of its contents include the following:

“...repent [God allegedly says, speaking to Smith – or so Smith says – although it would be interesting to see the original, to see if it's in Rigdon's handwriting!] *of that*

which thou hast done [i.e., repent for letting Harris have the first 116 pages] which is contrary to the commandment which I [God, aka Rigdon] gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work [to transcribe Rigdon's notes, so that his handwriting won't be recognized!]; Except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift. And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred [Rigdon's version of Spalding's manuscript was "sacred"?! My but we do have a high opinion of our work, don't we?!] into the hands of a wicked man [Harris], Who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. And this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season [i.e., the "translation" will need to stop for awhile, while I (Rigdon) figure out what to do next]. For thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director [i.e., Rigdon!] to be trampled upon from the beginning."

True enough: it wasn't much of a "revelation". But as I'll show you in later chapters in this **Qx** and in **Yx**, Dear, once Smith got the hang of speaking for God, then nothing or no one could stop him, including Rigdon. For example, in spite of Rigdon's vehement objections, Smith later introduced the practice of polygamy as a "revelation from God", claiming that Mormons were required to practice polygamy – just as Smith already had been doing for years (he already had several "celestial wives"), before he announced his "revelation".

But more of such "revelations" later; for now, let me go back to the *Preface* and comment on some general policies revealed therein, policies that are at the core of Mormonism (and similar policies are at the core of all "revealed religions"). These policies are derived from many premisses, including the following:

- 1) Some all-powerful (omnipotent), all-knowing (omniscient) giant Jabberwock in the sky created the universe and everything in it. Yet, this alleged creator's alleged omnipotence and omniscience notwithstanding,
- 2) This Giant Jabberwock in the sky not only can't control his arch-enemy ("the evil one") but doesn't know what his enemy is planning – and (rather surprisingly) can't even communicate with people. But not to worry, because fortunately,
- 3) The con-artist clerics (who assess tithes and pass around the collection plates) are in direct communication with this omnipotent, omniscient

creator of the universe, and thereby know his desires. Therefore, faced with the Giant Jabberwock's incompetence in communicating,

- 4) The omnipotent ruler of the universe enlists the services of the con artists to relay his messages to the people, and thereby, when the con-artist clerics communicate some "revelation" to the people, they should realize that such communications don't originate from the clerics, themselves, but is only relayed by them from the ruler of the universe to his "chosen people". And thus and in general,
- 5) What this creator most wants his chosen people to do is to pray, pay, and obey – the con-artist clerics – and, of course,
- 6) Those people who do pray, pay, and obey as the clerics dictate will be rewarded for being "good"; whereas those "evil-designing people" who don't do what the clerics demand and are thereby under the influence of "the evil one", will be damned.

Tell me if I missed something, Dear, and tell me if you can imagine a con game more lucrative – or anything more ludicrous.

Please, Dear, think of what's being promoted. To start, once again I invite you to place in the space allotted at the end of this sentence all data that support the premiss that some omnipotent, omniscient giant Jabberwock in the sky created this universe: . I trust I allotted sufficient space! And yes, Dear, of course I know that such an idea has been around for thousands of years – it was left to us by those amazing intellectuals who swore on stacks of their "holy books" that the world was a flat plate!

Instead, Dear, as I've hinted in earlier chapters and will show you more in later chapters, all available evidence suggests that this universe created itself, out of a total void, by spontaneously creating equal and opposite "positives and negatives" (of charge, momentum, spin, energy, etc.). Thereby, Dear, as much as I can guarantee you anything, I guarantee that there is no omnipotent, omniscient creator of the universe (alleged to be at constant war with his arch enemy and therefore in constant need of your financial support), and therefore, no such giant Jabberwock who solicits and engages the services of a bunch of con-artist clerics in an attempt to communicate with you. Their "revelations" reveal only that the clerics are

engaged in humongous con games designed to gain control over you and your property.

Secondly, Dear, if lack of data supporting the con-artists' claims doesn't impress you, then think about the illogic of their claims. Their omnipotent, omniscient god allegedly created the universe by a mere snap of her fingers (or whatever), and then these con artists claim that she can't figure out how to communicate with you directly. The clerics claim that they represent the all-powerful creator of the universe, and then without so much as cracking a smile, they proceed to demonstrate how astoundingly incompetent their God is, requiring the services of the con artists!

In contrast (and to keep their story believable by sane humans), then in the case promoted by Mormon con artists, if God wanted to tell people that Jesus was about to return to Earth and that she wanted all God-fearing Americans to do as dictated by the latest doctrinal details of the Disciple's Church and to assemble in a new Zion to prepare for Christ's return, then why in hell would she enlist the services of the convicted "money digger" Smith? Why not write the message in the sky using stars? Why not zap TVs into every home in the country and interrupt the evening news with her message? Why not send her message digitally to every computer on Earth? Why not pick up the phone and give you a call?

And of course the con artists will respond with something similar to: "Because God wants to test people to identify the 'true believers'." Really? God favors those who accept statements by murders (Moses), "those possessed", schizophrenics, epileptics, or "mad" (Moses, Jesus, Paul, Muhammad, Sidney Rigdon), and convicted "money diggers" (Joseph Smith) rather than those who demand more reliable evidence? God favors those who are easily duped? And the evidence for that assertion is what?!

Instead, Dear, would you believe that when I talked to God a couple of days ago, she said that she's pleased to permit the con artists to continue to play their con games? She said that she uses their hot air to winnow the chaff of all those stupid enough to fall for their shenanigans. She said her motto was: "If people don't demand to see the data, then like chaff winnowed by a con-artists' hot air, their names are blown off my list – and onto the list of the losers!"

That is, Dear, if the Mormon bunk were true (that God was testing people to see who was worthy of become a ruler of their own world), then would God really require that you demonstrate faith and trust in (and obedience to) a bunch of con artists? If a candidate did that, then isn't it rather more likely that the candidate just failed the test to become a god? Didn't the candidate just finish demonstrating inability even to govern his or her own life, let alone govern a new world? Isn't it rather more likely that God would choose those who have the gumption to tell such con artists to blow it out their ears?

Sorry, Dear, I gotta take a break from this ludicrousness. I suggest that you do similar – and get some exercise!