A Study of the Book of Abraham

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A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

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the Faculty of the Division of Religion
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

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ABBREVIATIONS

Standard abbreviations and reference symbols are used for the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and Pearl of Great Price. Others are listed below.

c. ---------------------- copyright date
comp. --------------------- compiler
ed. ----------------------- editor or edition
enl. ----------------------- enlarged
ibid. ---------------------- in the same place
Loc. Cit. ------------------ in the place cited
n.d. ---------------------- no date
n.n. ----------------------- no name of publisher given
p. ------------------------ page
pp. ----------------------- pages
p.d. ----------------------- preface date
pseud. --------------------- pseudonym
rev. ----------------------- revised
viz. ----------------------- namely
A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

What the Book Purports to Be.

The Book of Abraham is a part of the small volume of Mormon scripture which is denominated The Pearl of Great Price. Latter-day Saints believe that this book contains a record of the Patriarch Abraham and that it was translated by Joseph Smith through the gift and power of God. The text contains 5,470\(^1\) words and is divided into five chapters. Three facsimiles purporting to be from the original papyri may be found in most editions of the work.

Chapter one relates that Abraham sought for and received the priesthood in Ur of the Chaldees. The record goes on to state that Abraham's fathers were idolaters and that the priests of his home city offered human sacrifices. Unluckily the Patriarch aroused their ire, and the priest of Elkenah attempted to offer him as a sacrifice. In answer to his prayer, an angel of God delivered Abraham and slew the officiating priest. The record then states that Egypt was settled by Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and by her children. The eldest of these was named

Pharoah who became the first ruler of the land of the Nile.

In chapter two, Abraham leaves Chaldea to escape a famine and after making a covenant with God, he went down to Egypt. Chapter three deals primarily with a system of astronomy and with the doctrine of a pre-existence. In chapters four and five appears an account of the creation essentially as found in the first and second chapters of Genesis.

Facsimile one purports to show "The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice." Illustration number two represents certain astronomical facts, and number three claims to portray "Abraham sitting upon Pharoah's throne... reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king's court." Purpose of This Study.

That the many elements affecting this book may be studied, it is the purpose of this thesis:

1. To give the essentials points in the history of the Book of Abraham;
2. To present certain problems dealing with the translation;
3. To review certain criticisms and apologetics of

3. Abraham, Facsimile 2.
the book;

4. To ascertain its major teachings - historical, theological and philosophical.

Previous Studies in the Field.

In reviewing the studies that have been made relative to the Book of Abraham, it is convenient to classify the writers as anti-Mormon or as pro-Mormon, and to list their works in a chronological sequence. Only books which make a definite point to treat the subject are considered in this enumeration. Likewise, only the most important periodical articles are mentioned.

The earliest definite printed attempt to deal at any length with the Book of Abraham was made by M. Theodule Deveria. He was the first major anti-Mormon writer on the subject. His criticism appears in A Journey to Great Salt Lake City by Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley published in 1861. This account gives a brief history of how Joseph Smith came into possession of the mummies and papyri and a few sentences as to the contents of the record. Then appears in parallel columns Joseph Smith's and Deveria's explanations of the three facsimiles. There is a plate only of facsimile 3.

There is no critic of major importance between Deveria

and Spalding. For a period of fifty-one years the Book of Abraham was practically forgotten by the non-Mormons, but this calm was not to endure.

In 1912 Rt. Rev. F. S. Spalding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, published a pamphlet titled: *Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator.* In this were printed the opinions of eight scholars who testified that Joseph Smith's alleged translation of the three facsimiles was a fraud. This caused one of the greatest storms of anti-Mormon publicity in the twentieth century. Numerous articles appeared in newspapers and periodicals from coast to coast. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these articles is one by Samuel A. B. Mercer titled "Joseph Smith as an Interpreter and Translator of Egyptian".

More recently La Rue reviewed briefly the arguments of the opposition; and Martin's book: *The Mystery of*
Mormonism, adds other witnesses against the Book of Abraham. Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of the critics' position since the Spalding controversy may be found in Arbaugh's Revelation in Mormonism.10

Of the pro-Mormon writers, the first to be mentioned is George Reynolds who in 1879 published a pamphlet called The Book of Abraham.11 In this he listed certain claims for the Abrahamic record and quoted copiously from ancient writers to substantiate those claims. He also made a rebuttal to Deveria. As Deveria was a pioneer in the opposition so also was Reynolds a pioneer among the apologists.

From 1879 to 1912 the field of apologetics was barren, but with the Spalding controversy came a host of defenders for the Book of Abraham. The Deseret News and Improvement Era were filled with articles vindicating the Latter-day Saint point of view. The first important article of the defense was written by B. H. Roberts in the Salt Lake Tribune.12 His example was followed by other important Mormon writers of the day.

There was one non-Mormon who came to the defense of the Book of Abraham. This was J. E. Homans who wrote under the pseudonym of Robert C. Webb Ph. D. The first of his

writings was titled "A Critical Examination of the Fac-
similes in the Book of Abraham". In this and subsequent
articles he attempted to show that the critics had not
taken all the facts into consideration and that the Mormon
claims were entirely reasonable.

Nothing more appeared for two decades. Then in April
of 1935 Dr. Sidney B. Sperry of the Brigham Young Universi-
ity published in the Deseret News a lengthy article:
"Joseph Smith as an Egyptologist." In this same year
James R. Clark wrote an article on "The Records of Enoch." Clark and the author have each done considerable independ-
ent work in the field, but to Dr. Sperry goes the credit
for supplying renewed impetus in this line of research.

In 1938 Sperry wrote the M..I..A.. manual, Ancient
Records Testify in Papyrus and Stone. The first eight
chapters of this book dealt with the Book of Abraham.
Herein appeared for the first time many important source
materials. The history of the Abrahamic record was hand-
led in some detail. There was also a brief discussion of
the Spalding controversy, translation phenomena, teachings

13. R. C. Webb, "A Critical Examination of the Fac-Similes
14. S. B. Sperry, "Joseph Smith as an Egyptologist," Des-
eret News, April 6, 1935.
(Church Section), November 16, 1935.
16. S. B. Sperry, Ancient Records Testify in Papyrus and
Salt Lake City: Published by the General Boards of M.I.A. 1938.
In addition to the foregoing works, it may be well to mention a later book by Webb17 and a history by Berrett.18 They represent the group of 1913 apologists. Joseph Smith as a Translator by Webb appeared in 1936. This book is so complicated by references to Egyptian that the average reader is soon lost in a maze of linguistic details. Berrett's history was also published in 1936. In this volume he gave a short history of the mummies and papyri and referred briefly to the translation of the record.

Relationship of This to Previous Studies.

This study aims to give an over-all view of the Book of Abraham rather than in magnifying any one aspect. It presents the essential facts of the history of the book but does not quote as copiously as some works. In and of themselves the source materials are intensely interesting; and while they have a definite place in certain studies, it is not the object of this thesis to present more than the factual material gleaned from such sources. The facsimiles have been the focus of intense criticism; as a result, they have been singled out for special attention.

The translation problems from a Mormon point of view are here treated at some length, nevertheless, the writer makes no claim to completeness. Sperry dealt briefly with

the use of "and" in the text, and with the words Kolob, Kokob, Kokaubeam, gnolaum and Shinehah; but no one has written at any length on the problem. No attempt is made to deal with the Egyptian linguistic aspects of the problem.

Criticism of the Book of Abraham reached its peak in the second decade of the Twentieth Century. From the first publication of the record in 1842, the appraisals of Joseph Smith's translation have been adverse, but at no time did they reach such intensity as in the Spalding controversy in 1912 and 1913. Since all major criticisms tie in with this controversy, the writer treats it at greater length in this thesis. Except for the apologists of 1913 including Webb there has been little done to analyze the criticism of the Spalding Group.

On the other hand, there has been no previous attempt to analyze the defense of the Book of Abraham. Reynolds, the apologists of 1913 and later scholars are considered and their contributions are noted.

So far as the writer has observed no one has attempted to ascertain the contributions of the Book of Abraham as such. Truly, Sperry has touched this field in his manual, but the treatment here is more extensive.

Limitations of the Study.

To properly evaluate a religious document it is
necessary, first of all, to consider the problems of its origin. Secondly, the text must be analyzed and classified in order to see its component parts and to find its distinctive features. This has been attempted by the writer.

It may be well, however, to reiterate that this study does not aim at completeness, for there is much material now being gathered that will fill in many gaps which still exist.

Sources Consulted.

Every attempt has been made to consult the primary sources both in the history of the Abrahamic record and in attempting to establish the original text. In addition numerous secondary sources are employed. They are especially valuable in the evaluation of the criticism and the defense of the Book of Abraham during the last century. The bibliography will reveal more minutely the sources of this thesis.
CHAPTER 11

HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

Perhaps no religious document in Mormon history, excepting the Book of Mormon, has had such a unique career as the Book of Abraham. Students who do not regard Joseph Smith's translation as being generally genuine, have little doubt that Mr. Smith had four mummies and some rolls or fragments of papyri. The Latter-day Saints claim that he translated from these documents what is now known to the world as the Book of Abraham.

From the record of Joseph Smith\(^1\) it would appear that a certain "French traveler" by the name of Antonio Sebolo was the one who discovered the mummies with which the Abrahamic papyri were found. This gentleman is also referred to as Lebolo in certain documents published by the Latter-day Saints.

In the year, 1828, Mr. Sebolo acting under the protection of Chevalier Drovetti, the French Consul; secured a license from Mehemet Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, to excavate some of the tombs in the Nile valley. However, it was not until about the first of February, 1831 that he began operations in the vicinity of Thebes, Egypt. He employed

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\(^1\) This account is based largely on The History of the Church, Vol. 11 edited by B. H. Roberts. This source is often called the Documentary History of the Church and will hereafter be designated by the abbreviation: D. H. C.
some four hundred and thirty-three Egyptian or Turkish soldiers for approximately four months and two days in this work. The pay was from four to six cents per day for each man. On June 7, 1831 he gained entrance to the tomb and removed eleven mummies which were embalmed after the first order, which type of embalming was very expensive and could be afforded only by the rich. Speaking of the mummies; Joseph Smith records:

There were several hundred mummies in the same catacomb; about one hundred embalmed after the first order, and placed in niches, and two or three hundred after the second and third orders, and laid upon the floor or bottom of the grand cavity. The two last orders of embalmed were so decayed, that they could not be removed, and only eleven of the first found in the niches.2

Sometime in 1832 Mr. Sebolo sailed from Alexandria, Egypt, with the eleven mummies aboard ship. The destination was Paris, but the ship which was probably a trading vessel sailed up the Adriatic Sea to Trieste, Austria, where Mr. Sebolo went ashore. Here he became ill and after ten days he died in that port.

Previous to his death Mr. Sebolo made a will in which he bequeathed the mummies to his nephew, Michael H. Chandler whom he thought lived in Dublin, Ireland. According to the terms of the will, the mummies were then shipped to Ireland. In the meantime, Mr. Chandler had emigrated

to America and was residing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Some of Chandler's friends in Dublin forwarded the mummies to America where they were received at the New York Custom House in the winter of 1832 or the spring of 1833. In April, 1933, Mr. Chandler paid the duties and took possession of the mummies.

Upon opening the mummy cases, Chandler discovered at least two rolls of linen attached to two of the bodies. Richard Savary\(^3\) mentions that a roll was on the left side of one of the mummies. Possibly this one was the female referred to in several other documents. Joseph Smith said that the linen was saturated with the same bitumen as the bodies. Besides the two rolls, there were found with other of the mummies two or three small pieces of papyri on which were written "astronomical calculations, epitaphs, etc."

Mr. Chandler exhibited the mummies in New York; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Philadelphia, Baltimore and other cities of the eastern seaboard. In the meantime he sold seven of the eleven mummies to gentlemen for private museums. Dr. Sidney B. Sperry\(^4\), notes that Chandler probably used placards or possibly handbills to advertise his exhibits instead of employing the medium of the news-

\(^3\) The Prophet, (New York), June 1, 1844.
paper. One of these placards was reprinted in the *Messenger and Advocate* in Kirtland, Ohio, December of 1835. The notice is signed by seven men who held the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Of the seven Doctors, Sperry has identified two viz., W. E. Horner M.D. and J. Pancoast M.D. The statement calls attention to the facts of the discovery of the mummies near Thebes Egypt, of the remarkable preservation of the features of the bodies, and of the papyri. The Doctors then state that they have voluntarily signed the notice. The exhibition was held in the Philadelphia Arcade on Chestnut and Carpenter streets, Philadelphia.

On the third of July, 1835, Chandler arrived in Kirtland Ohio which was then on the frontier. As he had been told that Joseph Smith could translate ancient languages, he decided to give the Mormon Prophet a trial at decipherment. According to Latter-day Saint history Chandler was somewhat surprised to find that Joseph's translation equaled that given by the most learned who had seen the papyri. As a result Mr. Chandler gave the Prophet a signed statement to this effect.

Kirtland, July 6, 1835.

This is to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr.:

5. The *Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, 11 (December, 1835), 235.
Joseph Smith, Jun., in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, showed to the most learned; and from the information that I could ever learn, or meet with, I find that of Mr. Joseph Smith, Jun., to correspond in the most minute matters.

Michael H. Chandler,

Traveling with, and proprietor of, Egyptian Mummies.6

The mummies were purchased and given to the Prophet Joseph by some of the saints at Kirtland. There are conflicting statements about this transaction. Josiah Quincy7 records that Joseph said his mother purchased the mummies with $6,000 of her own money. An account in the Millennial Star8 of October 17, 1840, states that the purchase was made by some "gentlemen in the neighborhood, not connected with the saints." Orson Pratt9 related that Joseph, himself, bought the mummies. The preponderance of evidence, however, points to the saints as the real purchasers.

In early July, 1835, Joseph Smith with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes commenced translating the Egyptian papyri. They were greatly delighted to find that "one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc." As Joseph

8. Millennial Star, 111 (July 1842), 46f.
translated, he arranged an alphabet or grammar of the "Egyptian language." The papyri were kept for a time in Joseph's home and were later transferred to the temple. Many, both Mormon and non-Mormons, called to see the curios and none were denied the privilege. When Joshua Seixas, who was employed by the Saints to teach Hebrew to the Mormon leaders at Kirtland, examined the record of Abraham, he said that in his opinion it was an original Egyptian document.

Phinehas Richards and Reuben Hedlock were appointed by the First Presidency and sustained by the Church at Kirtland on Nov. 2, 1837 to "transact business for the Church in procuring means to translate and print the records taken from the Catacombs of Egypt." But this project was never completed for a storm of intense persecution forced the Prophet Joseph to flee to Missouri.

With the economic depression of 1837 came many reverses for the Church. Many of the General Authorities had subscribed to stock in the new Kirtland Safety Society Bank and when it failed the blame for the failure was attributed to Smith. These gentlemen "pledged themselves to be responsible for the redemption of all the notes of the institution in proportion to the amount of stock subscribed."  

10. D. H. C., 11, 520-521
Joseph was sued for debt and an amount of fifty dollars was levied upon the mummies. The enemies of the Prophet vowed that they would take the Egyptian curios and burn them. "But," says Joseph's mother, "by various stratagems, we succeeded in keeping them out of their hands." The mummies were concealed in the house of one of the saints until they could be taken from Kirtland.

The records are remarkably silent about the mummies and papyri during the years of 1838 and 1839. This was a period of intense hardship and persecution. The saints were driven from Kirtland, Ohio, to Missouri where only more trouble awaited them. Finally, sick and despondent they found a haven on the east bank of the Mississippi River in the little town of Commerce, Illinois, which they re-christened, Nauvoo, the Beautiful.

In 1840 the Quincy Whig carried an extract from the Alexandria Gazette about the Mormons. The writer of the article visited Nauvoo and among other things was shown the mummies and the papyri. During this interview Joseph stated: "My time has been hitherto too much taken up to translate the whole of them (the papyri)...." As noted above, the Missouri persecutions had necessitated the postponing of this translation.

13. The Quincy Whig, October 17, 1840.
The records reveal that the Prophet finished his translation of the papyri by February 1842. Wilford Woodruff in his Daily Journal and History records that on February 19, of that year, he assisted in setting the type for the first part of the Book of Abraham. Between February 21 and 27 the staff of workers at the Times and Seasons office prepared a plate for making a cut to be used at the beginning of the record. Reuben Hedlock, a Mormon convert from Canada, was appointed on February 23 to make a cut of the figure that is now facsimile one in the text. On Thursday March 1, Joseph corrected this cut which Hedlock had prepared. The following day, the Prophet read proof of the Times and Seasons, Volume 111, Number 9, as editor of that paper for the first time. On March 4, Joseph exhibited the original manuscript again to Hedlock that he might measure the size of the illustrations preparatory to making the cuts for facsimiles two and three.14 The tenth number of the Times and Seasons like the ninth number was not printed on time, for Woodruff's journal for March 19, 1842 reveals that on that day they printed about 500 copies of the paper.

The publication of the Book of Abraham caused considerable notice in several papers. Facsimile one and part of the text appeared in the New York Herald, the

14. Facsimile three was not printed until May 16, 1842.
Dollar Weekly Bostonian, the Boston Daily Ledger, and the Millennial Star. Among other periodicals and newspapers which mention the publication are the New York State Mechanic, New York Churchman, Missouri Whig, Warsaw Signal and The Wasp. The eastern publications mentioned were largely favorable toward the Mormons; whereas the Missouri and Illinois papers were derogatory in their comments. It is highly probably that the publication of the record made many curious to see the Egyptian relics. Among those who visited Nauvoo and viewed these things in 1842 were Josiah Quincy, Mayor of Boston, Rev. Henry Caswell, and Daniel P. Kidder.

Joseph's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, had the mummies and papyri in her custody at least as early as the spring of 1842 and she kept them until probably 1845. William Smith got them from his mother and went on a lecturing tour. He became stranded by the Illinois River and sold the relics with the privilege of repurchasing them, which was never done. Certain sources maintain that Isaac Sheen got the mummies from William and sold them but this has not been verified. At least part of the collection found its way into a St. Louis museum. This was in turn purchased by the Chicago Museum which was sometimes called "Wood's

15. The writer is indebted to Mr. A. B. Phillips; historian of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for much of this information. See also S. B. Sperry, Op. Cit. pp. 66-67.
Museum". So far as the records reveal, only two of the mummies and one roll, or perhaps a fragment of the papyri, were taken to Chicago \(^{16}\) where they were presumably destroyed in the great Chicago fire of 1871. There were at least two rolls of papyri plus four mummies in the original collection. What became of the other two mummies and the roll of papyri that did not get to Chicago? Available sources are silent on this point.

That all of the Book of Abraham was not printed is attested by a note in the *Times and Seasons* February 1, 1843 which reads: "We would further state that we had the promise of Br. Joseph, to furnish us with further extracts from the Book of Abraham". \(^{17}\) All of the text which is found in Mormon publications had already been printed in March of 1842, therefore any "further extracts" would be in addition to the present text.

Further evidence that all of the record was not published is found in the following quotations:

> Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth; these personages, according to *Abraham's record*, are called God the first, the Creator; God the second, the Redeemer; and God the third, the

\(^{16}\) Lucy Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations*. Plano, Illinois: Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1880. p. 91.

\(^{17}\) *Times and Seasons*, 1V, (February 1, 1843), 95.
Witness or Testator. 18

In a letter dated December 25, 1844,.W..W..Phelps,. one of Joseph's scribes writes to William Smith, the Prophet's brother, as follows:

...Well now Brother William,.when the house of Israel begin to come into the glorious mysteries of the kingdom,.and find that Jesus Christ,.whose goings forth,.as the prophets said,.have been from Old,.from eternity: and that eternity,.agreeably to the records found in the catacombs of Egypt,.has been going on in this system,.(not this world) almost two thousand five hundred and fifty-five millions of years: and to know at the same time,.that deists,.geologists,.and others are trying to prove that matter must have existed hundreds of thousands of years: --- it almost tempts the flesh to fly to God,.or muster faith like Enoch to be translated and see and know as we are seen and known!:

The complete text of the Book of Abraham as it now exists was published in both the Times and Seasons,. and the Millennial Star.. Then it became a part of the Pearl of Great Price,. the first edition of which appeared in Liverpool,. England,. in 1851,. under the editorship of Franklin D. Richards.. The four basic editions of that volume are: (1) the Liverpool edition of 1851; (2) the first American edition of 1878; (3) the 1902 revision by James E..Talmage,. and (4) the 1921 edition.. All other editions and versions are based on one of these four..

The Book of Abraham has been under almost constant fire of criticism since its first publication in March of 1842. From Thomas Sharp, editor of the Warsaw Signal to George B. Arbaugh in his Revelation in Mormonism the record has been pronounced an imposture. The high water mark of criticism was the great Spalding controversy of 1912 and 1913 in which the scholars in Egyptology pronounced the translation of Joseph Smith a fraud. The history of this criticism will be considered in greater detail in another chapter.

The Utah Mormons are the only ones who officially accept the Book of Abraham as an inspired document. The "Cutlerites", "Hedrickites", and "Bickertonites" gave an emphatic "No" to the question: "Do you accept the Book of Abraham as inspired and binding upon your church?" The "Strangites" have never accepted it officially, yet at least some of them accept it individually as inspired. The "Reorganized Church" maintains that Joseph Smith never presented it to the Church for acceptance; as a result, they do not accept it either as inspired or as binding.

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20. The material for this paragraph was secured in answer to letters sent to these various Mormon groups. The writer is grateful for their cooperation.
CHAPTER 111

THE THREE FACSIMILES

History of the Facsimiles

As the Book of Abraham was being prepared for publication in the Times and Seasons which was printed in Nauvoo, Illinois; Reuben Hedlock, a convert from Canada, was appointed by Joseph Smith on February 23, 1842\(^1\) to make the cuts which are now known as facsimiles one, two and three. He began work and finished illustration number one by March 1; and on that day the Prophet "corrected" this cut. On March 4, Joseph exhibited the original manuscript again to Hedlock that he might measure the size of the illustrations preparatory to making the cuts for facsimiles two and three.

Hedlock was a wood-carver, but he was not trained for the minute details involved in exact reproductions of linguistic documents as unusual as those in the Book of Abraham. Therefore, one must expect certain imperfections which would be apparent to a linguist. Since the first reproduction of the three facsimiles in 1842, there have been certain changes and certain omissions in the figures and characters or signs in the illustrations. As time elapsed, the facsimiles have been reduced in size, in clarity and in exactness. It is small wonder that the Spalding critics could not read the characters. There has not been an exact

\(^1\)D. H. C., IV, 518.
reproduction of any of the Times and Seasons cuts since 1891 and there has not been a perfect copy of number one since 1842. The facsimiles since 1902 are based on the 1888 edition of the Pearl of Great Price which in turn used those of the 1878 edition in which certain of the alterations first appeared.

It may be said that the facsimiles are not sufficiently correct and clear in any of the later reproductions to enable anyone to interpret them with exactness. Spalding claimed to have had "original copies" but the 1907 edition which he used has only inaccurate reproductions of earlier facsimiles--never originals.

Facsimile One.

Facsimile one purports to show "The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice". It is the only illustration referred to in the text of the Book of Abraham and it does not claim to be an Egyptian scene. Instead it has its setting in Ur of Chaldea. This was first printed in the Times and Seasons March 1, 1842. Later in the same year it presumably appeared in the New York Herald, in the Dollar Weekly Bostonian, and in the Boston Daily Ledger. The Millennial Star reproduced it in

July of 1842. Since that time this illustration has been altered in certain respects.

Fig. 1. The head of the bird has been shifted to the left of the body.

Fig. 2. Certain changes have been made about the ear, eye and mouth. The head is more rounding than the 1842 one. Alterations have also been made on lines near the ankles and on the right leg of the reclining figure.

Fig. 3. Changes were made about the eye and ear of the priest.

Fig. 4. The tail of the animal or alter did not originally have such a spear like point and the head has been changed.

Fig. 9. Originally this looked more like an animal with distinct forelegs and hind legs. The head has been altered and the ears have disappeared.

Slight changes have appeared in the other figures in this illustration. There is no writing in the facsimile.

Facsimile Two.

This illustration is called a hypocephalus by Egyptologists. It has not been translated by the scholars, but Joseph Smith claims that it reveals certain astronomical data and certain things about the priesthood. It was first published in the *Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1842; the next
printing was in the *Pearl of Great Price* in 1851. Certain alterations appeared in 1878 and after 1891 there has been no exact reproduction of this illustration.

The writing has been altered in many instances and the characters have become less legible with each basic edition. There are but few figures which are exactly the same as the 1842 illustrations. Only major alterations will be enumerated.

Fig. 3. Certain writing on the left side of the figure has been omitted.

Fig. 7. The arm on the figure which is sitting has been omitted.

Facsimile two is not mentioned in the text of Abraham and differs in certain respects from the document proper. The words employed to designate certain heavenly bodies are different from those used in chapter three of the book. Furthermore, this illustration brings in material not mentioned elsewhere in the record.

**Facsimile Three.**

Like facsimile two, this illustration is not mentioned in the text. It portrays a scene which, it is stated, took place in Egypt. The cut claims to represent "Abraham sitting upon Pharoah's throne... reasoning upon principles of astronomy, in the king's court." This was first published May 16, 1842 in the *Times and Seasons* and did not
appear again until 1851 in the *Pearl of Great Price*. An exact reproduction has not appeared since 1891.

The present facsimiles may be traced to the 1878 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. The writing has become increasingly illegible and minor alterations have been made in both the writing and the figures, especially figures four and five.
CHAPTER IV

JOSEPH SMITH AND CONTEMPORARY EGYPTOLOGY

In attempting to explain Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Abraham some have asked: Could he have translated the papyri in his possession by employing what had already been discovered concerning the Egyptian language by his contemporaries? One can easily dismiss the proposition with a negative or an affirmative answer, but that is unsatisfactory. What are the facts relative to the status of Egyptology between 1830 and 1842?

To properly evaluate the problem one must have (1) an understanding of the nature of the Egyptian language and (2) a knowledge of the history of its decipherment. These facts are briefly summarized in the following account.

The Egyptian Systems of Writing.

Scholars have found that the Egyptian language has developed through four stages, three of which are merely modifications of the same fundamental script. These scripts chronologically speaking are the hieroglyphic, the hieratic and the demotic. The fourth script, Coptic, is known as a linguistic hybrid.

The hieroglyphic writing is an offshoot of pictorial art, a very early and important function of which was to provide a visible record of facts and occurrences, accessible to those who for one reason or another were beyond the range of the spoken word.¹

¹ A. H. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1927, p. 6. The writer is indebted primarily to this source for the following account.
Hieroglyphic owes its name to the fact that in the latest times it was employed almost exclusively for 'sacred' (Greek hieros) inscriptions 'sculptured' (Greek glupho) on temple-walls or on public monuments.²

Hieroglyphic was used for all purposes in early Egyptian history, but as time elapsed the more cursive hieratic and demotic forms replaced it for practical purposes.

Many of the hieroglyphics, especially those used in the tombs, were very elaborate in detail and highly coloured. Due to the fact that so much time and effort had to be used either in writing or sculpturing these characters, the script gradually became more and more restricted to monumental purposes and to religious texts.

Hieratic, so called because in the Graeco-Roman age it was the usual script employed by the priests (Greek hieratikos 'priestly'), is the name now given to all the earlier styles of writing cursive enough for the original pictorial forms of the signs to be no longer clearly recognizable. Hieratic was nothing more, in the beginning, than hieroglyphic in the summary and rounded forms resulting from the rapid manipulation of a reed-pen as contrasted with the angular and precise shapes arising from the use of the chisel.³

This form was an improvement on the hieroglyphic so far as the writing process was concerned; but, when compared with the alphabetic scripts, it is rather unwieldy. Hieratic was widely used in writing religious texts.

². Ibid. p. 9.
³. Ibid. p. 10.
Sperry notes that at least part of the Abrahamic papyri was written in this script. 4

Demotic (Greek demotikos 'popular'), or enhorial (Greek enkhorphos 'native'), as some of the earliest decipherers called it, is a very rapid form of hieratic that made its first appearance about the time of the Ethiopian Dynasty. Throughout the Ptolemaic and Roman ages it was the ordinary writing of daily life, and is occasionally found even upon stelae of stone. 5

Demotic as well as the two older scripts fell into disuse and were gradually forgotten, however a fourth script, Coptic, a combination of the Greek alphabet with supplementary special characters that were derived from Egyptian, survived until modern times.

History of the Decipherment of Egyptian.

The fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A. D. marked also the twilight of the Egyptian language. For centuries it was lost to the world, though a few attempts were made at decipherment of the scripts. In the latter part of the eighteenth century De Guignes discovered that "groups with determinative characters existed in Egyptian". During this same period, Zoega found "that the hieroglyphics were letters", and "that each cartouche contained a royal name." 6

Though these steps were in the right direction, it was not until after the discovery of the Rosetta Stone that any real progress was made in the decipherment of Egyptian.

In 1799 Boussard, while excavating at Fort St. Julien, near Rosetta, discovered a black basalt stone containing a tri-lingular inscription. This stone was presented to the French Institute of Cairo; but with the victory of the English over Napoleon it passed into British hands and was presented by George III to the British Museum. On the stones were hieroglyphic, demotic and Greek inscriptions. There were fourteen lines of hieroglyphic, thirty-two lines of demotic, and fifty four lines of Greek. Part of the hieroglyphic section had been broken off. A translation of the Greek portion proved the writing to be a "decree in honor of the young king Ptolemy Epiphanes, which the priests of Egypt caused to be erected in all the temples of the land (196 B.C.)."

Silvestre de Sacy, the celebrated French orientalist received a copy of the Rosetta inscriptions and attempted to translate them. Failing at this, he gave the copy to the Swedish diplomat, Akerbald, who was doing oriental research in Paris. By a comparison of the Greek and demotic texts, Akerbald succeeded within two months time,

in identifying all the proper names in addition to the

words 'temples', and Greeks', and the pronominal suffix for 'him' and 'his'. In 1802, he published his Lettre a' Mr. de Sacy thus marking a real step of progress in the translation of Egyptian. He failed, however, to make other contributions due to the fact that he thought demotic was exclusively alphabetic. This belief arose from the decipherment of the proper names which were alphabetically written.

To Thomas Young, the great English physicist, goes the credit for the next important advancement in this field. In 1814 a copy of the Rosetta-stone fell into his hands and he set to work on the language. While he approved of Akerbald's results so far as they went he soon realized that many demotic characters could not be explained as being alphabetic. In addition, he observed that there was a close relationship between the demotic and hieroglyphic texts. Though he failed in his attempts to indicate the sounds for the words, he did succeed in establishing a Greek-demotic vocabulary of eighty-six groups being in the main correct. By working with papyri he was able in 1816 to announce still further discoveries. He found that both the demotic and hieroglyphic were composed largely of phonetic elements. Even though Young made many mistakes, the discoveries mentioned above in addition

to many others entitle him to much credit in the process of decipherment of Egyptian.\textsuperscript{10}

The next important figure is Jean Francois Champollion, who from his earliest years, had been interested in Egypt. As the years went by he became a student at Grenoble where he steeped himself in ancient history, in addition to Coptic and many alphabets and systems of writing. After he left Grenoble he continued to follow his interest in Egyptian. He became convinced that the three forms of script were mere modifications of one another. In 1821 he printed a pamphlet on the hieratic script and in 1824 he published his famous \textit{Precis du systeme hieroglyphes phonetiques}. Though only his most important writings have been mentioned here, he established the first sound basis for the translation of Egyptian. He died in 1832 at the age of forty-one years. His grammar and dictionary, edited by his elder brother, was begun in 1836 and did not appear until 1841 and 1844.

Richard Lepsius, the German scholar, subjected Champollion's decipherment to a penetrating re-examination and pronounced the foundations to be sound. He published his \textit{Lettre a' M. professeur H. Rosellini} in Rome in 1837. His more monumental works were to appear later. Samuel

\textsuperscript{10} Thomas Young, \textit{An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature, and Egyptian Antiquities}. London: John Murray, 1823.
Birch, an Englishman whose first publication appeared in 1838 was a tireless translator and editor of Egyptian texts. Brugsch made many contributions especially in demotic and Goodwin in England and Chabas in France each contributed to the advancement of our knowledge of hieratic. Emanuel de Rouge added much in the translation of hieroglyphics. The host of later Egyptologists cannot be mentioned here.

Now what was the status of Egyptology in the period 1830-1842? From the foregoing account it is evident that there was not sufficient reliable material prior to Champollion's *Precis du systeme hieroglyphes phonetiques* to enable even scholars to adequately translate hieratic and hieroglyphic in which the Abrahamic papyri were presumably written. But Champollion's work was not yet widely accepted by scholars. As late as 1837 Lepsius had some doubts about it. The published work of Lepsius in 1837 and of Birch in 1838 were so elementary that they would have been of little or no value so far as Joseph Smith's translation was concerned. Though Champollion's grammar appeared in 1841 there is no reason to believe that it had yet reached America.

Except for Young's and Birch's works the others were in a foreign language which Joseph Smith could not read. It may be well to mention, however, that Champollion's
"Essay on the Hieroglyphic System" had appeared in an American periodical as early as 1831. The fact, that neither Joseph Smith nor any of his colleagues ever mentioned these scholars, tends to throw doubt on the assumption that he may have used their works.

Egyptology has made many advancements since 1900, but even now scholars must be careful. The language is still full of difficulties as the famous Egyptologist T. E. Peet states:

One is often asked this very simple question: Is it possible to read a piece of Egyptian as easily, as quickly, and as certainly as a piece of Greek or Latin? The answer to this must certainly be No. For one thing the clumsy nature of Egyptian writing, with its mixture of phonetic and pictographic signs, must tell against ease and rapidity of reading. Even when the initial problems of decipherment have been overcome there are still difficulties almost undreamed of in Greek or Latin. The omission of vowels, the chaotic variety of spelling due to the vagaries of the scribes or the fashion of the times, the dozens of comparatively common words whose meaning is either unknown or only vaguely known to us—all these tend to our discomfiture. In an inscription of everyday content or a simply told story we may make our way fairly rapidly, though even here an occasional crux will hold us up. But when we come to a love poem or a collection of proverbs, the text has to be wrestled with sentence by sentence, may phrase by phrase, and the translator constantly comes off second best. Such texts often present continuous difficulties with which those of a Platonic dialogue or even an Aeschylean chorus are hardly to be compared. 12

Albright has summarized the present position of Egyptological philology as follows:

We must distinguish sharply between the earlier and the more recent periods of philological research in our field, since the translations of documents written in different languages depend for accuracy on the progress of grammatical and lexical knowledge. Thus it is unsafe to rely on any translations of Egyptian historical texts which appeared before Breasted's *Ancient Records* (1906), since Breasted was the first historian to take full advantage of the tremendous progress in the knowledge of Egyptian achieved by Erman and Sethe after 1880. It is equally unsafe to depend on any translations of Egyptian religious texts made before about 1925, since that year marked the publication of the first volume of the great Berlin dictionary of Egyptian, while the year 1927 saw the appearance of Gardiner's monumental *Egyptian Grammar*. The first reliable English translations of Egyptian religious texts appeared in Blackman's *Literature of the Ancient Egyptians* (1927) and Breasted's *Dawn of Conscience* (1933).

Dr. James H. Breasted, one of Joseph Smith's critics, has summarized the problem in relation to the Mormon Prophet rather adequately.

In 1822 Champollion published the first successful steps in the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It was only very gradually after this that he gained the ability to read the simpler and clearer sentences in hieroglyphic records. Little of the language, comparatively speaking, was understood when he died in 1832. He left in manuscript an elementary grammar, which was published by the government, beginning in 1836, and reaching completion in 1841. It would have been impossible

for any American scholar to know enough about Egyptian inscriptions to read them before the publication of Champollion's grammar. It will be seen, then, that if Joseph Smith could read ancient Egyptian writing, his ability to do so had no connection with the decipherment of hieroglyphics by European scholars.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} F. S. Spalding, 	extit{Joseph Smith, Jr....as a Translator}. New York: Presiding Bishop and Council Department of Missions, 1922. pp. 24-25.
CERTAIN PROBLEMS CONCERNING JOSEPH SMITH'S TRANSLATION

From the Mormon point of view there are several problems which are connected with the translation of the Abrahamic papyri. One of these deals with the method of translation; another with the linguistic characteristics of the text. No attempt will be made to cover all such problems.

**Means of Translation.**

Fundamentally there are two theories among the Latter-day Saints regarding the means of translating the papyri. The one of longest standing is that Joseph Smith did the translation not by the use of sacred instruments but by means of his own knowledge possibly aided by inspiration from God. Elder B. H. Roberts was one of the early proponents of this theory. In his *Comprehensive History of the Church* he writes:

Then he (Joseph) took up the study of the letters and grammar of the Egyptian language. In his research he found himself virtually on pioneer ground, but like Champollion, he had an almost intuitive linguistic sense. The work, however, proceeded slowly. It was begun in 1835. Not until seven years later, in 1842, could he begin the publication, and it was never finished.†

William E. Berrett² of the Utah Mormons and A. B. Phillips,³ historian of the Reorganized Church concur

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with Elder Roberts. The first shortcoming of this theory is that it ignores certain basic source materials. These will be treated later. The second defect lies in the fact that Joseph Smith was not a linguist in the generally accepted meaning of the word. Truly he had superficial knowledge of a few languages, but his training in any of these was at best very elementary. He probably never had beyond what is now first year Hebrew in a college curriculum, and his Greek, German, etc., were more elementary still.

If Joseph Smith translated any ancient language he could have done it only by a power beyond his own native ability.

The second theory holds that Joseph employed the Urim and Thummim in his translation of the Abrahamic papyri. Sperry and Clark favor this opinion. The opposition maintains that the Urim and Thummim were returned to Moroni in 1829. This is largely supposition based on the following statement by the Prophet:

...But by the wisdom of God, they (the sacred objects) remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight. 4

As long as more than one object was returned to the

4. The Pearl of Great Price: Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1941. p. 54.
sacred archives, the requirement of the word "things" is fulfilled. Granting, however, that it was returned, there is no valid reason from the Mormon point of view why Joseph could not have received them again.

Wilford Woodruff, fourth president of the Church, recorded in his journal of February 19, 1842 the following:

The Lord is blessing Joseph with power to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of God; to translate through the Urim and Thummim ancient records and hieroglyphics old as Abraham or Adam which caused our hearts to burn within us while we behold their glorious truths opened unto us.5

Parley P. Pratt of the Council of the Twelve and editor of the Millennial Star voiced the same thought:

The record (Book of Abraham) is now in course of translation by means of the Urim and Thummim, and proves to be a record written partly by the father of the faithful Abraham, and finished by Joseph when in Egypt.6

There are some who attempt to explain away the foregoing quotations by saying that they refer to the "Seer Stone". Surely there are few Mormons who would infer that President Woodruff and Elder Pratt didn't know the difference between the Urim and Thummim and the "Seer Stone". Cowley in his biography of Wilford Woodruff says:

On Christmas day of 1841 Elder Woodruff says that he and other members of the Twelve

visited the home of Hyrum Kimball, who, before
they left, presented each of the Twelve with a
lot to which he gave them the deed. On the
26th and 27th the Twelve visited the home of
the Prophet, and on one of these days Elder
Woodruff says in his journal that the Prophet
showed him and others for the first time the
Urim and Thummim.

The Urim and Thummim

What was the Urim and Thummim? According to certain
Mormon sources, this instrument consisted in two trans-
parent stones, possibly of celestial material, set in a
silver bow similar to an old fashioned pair of spectacles.
Many writers of the past have interpreted these names to
mean "lights and perfections" or "oracles and spells".
Another explanation may be found in the Book of Mormon
where Ammon told King Limhi that he who possesses the
"Urim and Thummim is a seer". "A seer", he said, "is a
revelator and a prophet also..." Perhaps, then, in Latter-
day Saint Theology the name means "revelation and prophecy".

The question now arises: How did Joseph Smith use the
Urim and Thummim? The theory advanced by B. H. Roberts
is perhaps the most satisfactory. This theory holds that
Joseph would look into the transparent stones at the

7. M.F. Cowley, Wilford Woodruff. Salt Lake City: The
Deseret News 1909, p. 157. See also: The Historical Record
8. Mosiah 8:6. See also Alexander Harkavy, Students' Hebrew
and Chaldee Dictionary to the Old Testament (Third Ed-
9. B. H. Roberts, New Witness for God. Salt Lake City: The
characters on the record, and by concentrating great spiritual and mental effort the meaning of the particular sign or signs under observation would come to him. If the thought pattern were clearly formed, the Prophet would ask the Lord if it were true. Providing it were true, Joseph's bosom would "burn" within him, but if it were not true he would have no such feeling—only a stupor of thought. Even though Joseph was enabled by some power beyond himself to get the thought patterns, he was left to express those thoughts in the best English at his command. This accounts for the many grammatical errors which appeared in certain of the Prophet's translations. Some Mormons believe that his fear of violating the essentials of the thought patterns caused him to give a rather literal translation of the characters thus producing what is known as translation literature.

The Prophet's Egyptian Grammar.

While translating, the Prophet compiled what he termed an "alphabet" and "grammar" of the Egyptian language as recorded on the Abrahamic papyri. This was not a grammar in the general accepted sense of the word. The parts of speech, sentence structure, etc., were not treated as such. Any grammatical explanation probably occurred in

connection with the signs. Dr. Sperry suggests that
the probable arrangement of this "alphabet" or word list
was as follows:

On the extreme left of the page the signs
in question would be written down in a vertical
column. To the right of this column would appear
the sounds of the Egyptian sign or hieroglyphic
in English letters together with an interpretation
of the character in question.\[12\]

With this list at hand, Joseph Smith could refresh
his mind as often as he desired. This so called grammar
was never published and given to the world.

*Language of the Papyri.*

In the past both Mormon and non-Mormon writers have
approached the Book of Abraham with the hypothesis that
it was written in Egyptian. There is sufficient evidence,
however, to throw considerable doubt on this assumption.
It is possible that Egyptian symbols were used to cover
Semitic thought patterns. Of course the anti-Mormons
never took the document seriously, but Sperry was the first
of the Mormons to seriously doubt the Egyptian hypothesis.

Excepting the three facsimiles in the Book of Abraham
there is no evidence to support the belief that the
hieroglyphic script was used in more than a few instances.

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12. S. B. Sperry, *Ancient Records Testify in Papyrus and
Stone.* Course of Study. Adult Department M. I. A. Salt
Lake City: Published by the General Boards of M. I. A.
1938. P. 69.
According to Sperry the hieratic was one of the most common of the Egyptian scripts in the Abrahamic papyri. But all of the writing was not in Egyptian as we know it. Oliver Cowdery states that a number of the signs on the Abrahamic papyri were similar to those which had been copied from the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon it is claimed was written in a script called reformed Egyptian, that is, Egyptian characters which had been adapted to the Hebrew type of speech. This writing was used to convey Hebrew thought patterns and not Egyptian. Some hold that after one thousand years of isolation the Nephites would have so altered the Egyptian script that an Egyptologist could not have read it even if it were Hebrew as well as Egyptian signs on the papyri.

The record of Abraham and Joseph, found with the mummies, is beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red ink or paint, in perfect preservation. The characters are such as you find upon the coffins of mummies—hieroglyphics, etc.; with many characters or letters like the present (though probably not quite so square) form of the Hebrew without points.

That Joseph Smith found Hebrew on the papyri would

15. One of the nations whose history is treated extensively in the Book of Mormon.
indicate that the writing was probably adapted to the Semitic idiom, the Hebrew letters being employed for certain expressions for which the Egyptian script was not adequate. One would naturally expect the language of Abraham to be Semitic; and, while it would be etymologically related to Hebrew, it would undoubtedly deviate in many instances from Hebrew as it is now known. The "Shepherd Kings" who may have been ruling Egypt in Abraham's day would probably have used a Semitic dialect too.


The Semitic elements of the Book of Abraham are to the Mormons rather obvious. Hebrew, for instance, is an "and-loving" language. Of the total of 5,470 words in that document, 363 are "ands", or a total of 6.6 per cent. The percentage of "ands" for the five chapters of the book are as follows: Chapter 1, 5.1 per cent; Chapter 11, 6.8 per cent; Chapter 111, 5.1 per cent; Chapter 1V 9.3 per cent; and Chapter V, 8.4 per cent. From samples of Joseph Smith's writings chosen at random, the percentage was 3.5 thus revealing that in his translation of purported Semitic documents as the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham his use of "and" is nearly double that of his ordinary usage. When one realizes that Egyptian has no word for "and", and that it must be supplied by translators to meet the demands of the English idiom, it is
apparent that the Book of Abraham employs "and" too often to be consistent with Egyptian usage.17

In Hebrew the Genitive or possessive case is indicated by "a combination of words which is called the Construct relation". There is nothing in most languages which corresponds to this construction, but the nearest analogy to it is the relation expressed by "of" in English, e.g. יִהְמָלְחַת (the hand of the man). These two words are pronounced in close connection; together they make up one idea. The noun, "hand", is in the construct state and the noun, "man", is in the absolute state. "This is not a case but only a way of expressing what is expressed in other languages by a Genitive case and its governing substantive."18

This construct state according to certain Mormons is common throughout the Book of Abraham. A few examples will suffice. "...at the residence of my father..." is used instead of "at my father's residence".19 When Abraham was recording his experience with the priest of Elkenah, he said. "...they...endeavored to take away my life by the hand of the priest of Elkenah".20 Another sample of this construction is in relation to the gods mentioned in Abraham, chapter one. The "god of Pharoah" means simply the

20. Ibid., 1:7 Italics are mine.
god or idol which Pharoah worshipped as the chief deity of his household. In like manner the god of Elkenah, the god of Libnah, the god of Machmackrah, the god of Korash and the god of Shagreel were in all probability the chief gods of these various men. This hypothesis rests upon the following line of reasoning. First of all it is a good example of the construct state denoting possession. Secondly, the "god of Pharoah" is singular denoting that the god belongs to a man, therefore one may assume that the "god of Elkenah" belongs also to one man. The names of none of the "gods" are given here—only the names of the men who worshipped those "gods". The fact that the Semites had household gods is well illustrated in the case of Laban in Genesis chapter thirty-one.

In the following discussion four types of words are considered: (1) those that are definitely Hebrew, (2) those that are probably Hebrew, (3) those that are Semitic, but not found in any Hebrew vocabularies, and (4) those whose linguistic origin is unknown. The words which are strictly Hebraic will be treated first. The unusual transliteration of these words is due to the teaching of Joshua Seixas, who taught the Prophet, and to his grammar which was used in the school of the prophets at Kirtland, Ohio. There are seven words which are unmistakably Hebrew, viz.: Kokob, Kokaubeam, gnolaum, shaumahyeem, raukeeyang, Urim and
Thummim.

**Kokob** is the singular for star בּוֹקָבָא (Ko- Kav). **Kokaubeam** is the plural for stars, the "eam" making it plural. **Gnolaum** אֶּרֶץ ('olam) means everlasting or eternal. The Prophet transliterated the words שָׁרֶם (sha-
mayim), shaumahyeem; which signifies heaven, heavens or sky. שָׁרֶם meaning expanse or firmament becomes Raukeeyang in the Book of Abraham, facsimile two. The Prophet Joseph like most translators left the words, Urim and Thummim, שָׁרֶם, in the original transliteration instead of translating the words as "revelations and truth".

The next group of words according to certain Latter-day Saint students, have many Hebrew characteristics. These are Kolob, Olea and Jah-oh-eh which are not known in the Hebrew vocabularies now in existence. The letters l and r, as linguists know, are often interchangeable. If then, the letter r replaces l in Kolob one has karav שֶׁרֶם meaning to draw near or to be near. Thus a certain star is named Kolob because it is "nearest unto the throne of God". This is in keeping with the Hebrew custom of giving names which often reflected some circumstance, condition, or quality of the individual or place to which it was applied. Thus Isaac means laughter; Melchizedek is King of righteousness and Beth-el means the house of God. Like Kolob, Olea

may exchange "l" for "r" thus becoming oreah, הַל the moon. The name Jah-oh-eh from facsimile 2 seems basically Hebrew and may be closely related to the name Jehovah יהוה.

The third group of words most of which are proper names are evidently Semitic but are not found in the Hebrew Bible. Biblical names are excluded. The proper names of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, Shagreel, and Olis-hem may be mentioned without further analysis. Three other words are rahleenos, Shinehah and Egyptus.

"Rahleenos", the text states, "signifies hieroglyphics" in the Chaldean language.22 The Mormon apologists admit that no such word has appeared so far in the Akkadian, but to say that the people of the city of Ur, who were undoubt-edly acquainted with the Egyptians and their language, would have no name for hieroglyphic is making quite an assumption.

Shinehah does not appear in Hebrew or Akkadian but it does have a similarity to the Arabic word هُنَا (هنأ) which means "to shine" or "to glitter." It is quite possible that a word of this nature would be used for the sun because of its brilliance and heat.

The name Egyptus as found in the record of Abraham is unusual to say the least. Budge states that "the name 'Egypt' has remained unexplained".23 But some apologists

22. Abraham 1:14
reason in the following manner. The name Egypt, as it is now known, came from the Greek "Aigytos". The Greeks sometimes adopted foreign names with only the addition of terminal syllables as is represented by "os" in the word under consideration. By dropping the "os" one has "Aigypt" which is possibly the name as it sounded in the language from which it was adopted. Therefore, the name Aigpytos must be related to Egyptus as found in the Book of Abraham.

The writer will not attempt to classify the fourth group of words many of which seem to be of uncertain origin. The names: Onitah, Shulem and Olimlah are names of individuals. Another group of names are those given to the planets, viz. Oliblish, Enish-go-on-dosh, Kae-e-vanrash, Floese and Kli-flo-is-es. The text uses one set of words for sun, moon and stars whereas facsimile two employs a different group of names.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Facsimile 2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Shinehah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>Olea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stars</td>
<td>Kokaubeam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enish-go-on-dosh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Floese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kli-flo-is-es</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the foregoing discussion, it would appear that from the Mormon point of view the text is basically Semitic including facsimile one, but that facsimiles two and three contain words which are of uncertain origin.
The fact that there are two languages involved lends some force to the assumption that facsimiles two and three are of a later date than the text of Abraham. Neither of these facsimiles are mentioned in the Book of Abraham, nor are they supported by the text so far as it has been published.

It is evident from the preceding pages that there are two theories in Mormon circles both as to the means of translation and as to the language in which the papyri were originally written. In the word study the Semitic elements of the text seem predominant. Possibly the Book of Abraham was a Semitic document written primarily in Egyptian script. A precedent for this is known to exist. It is hoped that future studies will reveal additional material to clarify some of these points.

CHAPTER VI

CRITICISM OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

From Deveria in 1861 to Arbaugh in 1932, criticism of the Book of Abraham has centered about the issue: Did or did not Joseph Smith translate correctly the Abrahamic facsimiles? The opposition seldom took notice of the book proper. In fact the history of the opposition can be treated as a unit since each covered the same ground and reached the same conclusion. It may be well, however, to review the periods of criticism in chronological order.

M. Theodule Deveria.

Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley visited Salt Lake City and on their return to France carried with them at least the facsimiles from the Book of Abraham if not the entire Pearl of Great Price. These, they asked M. Theodule Deveria of the museum of the Louvre to examine. His verdict was that Joseph Smith had not translated the facsimiles at all. Remy and Brenchley published the results of this inquiry in their book, A Journey to Great Salt Lake City, in 1861. First they give a brief history of the papyri, then a synopsis of its contents. The remainder of the account consists of two parallel columns, one giving Joseph Smith's interpretation of the facsimiles the other giving Deveria's.

To Deveria, facsimile one becomes the resurrection of Osiris instead of the attempted sacrifice of Abraham.
Though he had never seen the resurrection of Osiris on funerary manuscripts, he decided this is what it was. It is also interesting to note that he says that certain of the figures should be changed. The apologists say he would alter the illustrations sufficiently to fit some other existing pattern instead of what they were originally intended for. This uncertainty and desire for changing the figures appear frequently in the study. Egyptology was still in its infancy in 1861, so the Mormons claim that one must take Deveria's statements with some reservation.

The Spalding Brochure.

In November of 1912 Rt. Rev. Franklin S. Spalding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, published a brochure titled: Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator. This thirty-one paged pamphlet was intended to deal a vital blow to Mormonism. Rev. Spalding begins by paying a tribute to such fair-minded Mormons as Orson Pratt and B. H. Roberts, then he remarks that the scholars should examine the Book of Mormon which, if it were true, would be of great value to the world. At this point Rev. Spalding inferred that many scientific theories would have to be revised if that book were true. The apologists accuse the Bishop of injecting doubts and unwarranted deductions into what on the surface is a rather fair-minded statement. "It is inexcusable," says Rev. Spalding "that the book has never had the
serious examination which its importance demands". Presumably he would have the reader believe that he intended to make such an investigation.

Chapter two of the pamphlet reviews the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. In chapter three the Bishop maintains that the Mormons place the inspiration of the Book of Mormon on a higher plane than they do the Bible. Here the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon\(^1\) by Orson Pratt is quoted to show the Mormon point of view. Mr. Roberts is then cited:

...the Book of Mormon must submit to every test--literary criticism with the rest. Indeed, it must submit to every analysis and examination. It must submit to historical test, to the tests of archaeological research, and also to the higher criticism.\(^2\)

The strategy is very plain. "We have seen", said the Bishop, "how much depends upon the answer to our question, 'Was the Book of Mormon translated correctly?'" He reasoned in this manner. We have not the original plates of the Book of Mormon, therefore we cannot determine the validity of Joseph Smith's translation of them. But we do have the facsimiles from the Abrahamic papyri in the Pearl of Great Price. An examination of these will suffice. If the Prophet could not translate correctly the

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Egyptian in the facsimiles, we have no reason to believe that he could translate correctly the Egyptian on the Book of Mormon plates. If he failed to be accurate in the Book of Abraham we must repudiate his entire claim as a prophet of God.

Chapter five takes up a brief history of the Book of Abraham and refers to the Deveria translation of the facsimiles. Rev. Spalding then assumes that fair-minded Mormons will welcome the opinions of "the world's greatest Egyptologists". Following a reproduction of the three illustrations from the Book of Abraham, the pamphlet presents the testimonies of eight Egyptologists who agree that Joseph Smith was wrong. Their opinions are based upon a study of the facsimiles in the 1907 edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

Dr. A. H. Sayce says, "It is difficult to deal seriously with Joseph Smith's impudent fraud". He mentions that facsimile two is a hypocephalus and that number three is "a representation of the goddess Maat leading the Pharaoh before Osiris, behind whom stands the Goddess Isis".

Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie agrees in certain respects with Sayce. He maintains that the scenes are of much later date than Abraham. Then he gives an interpretation of the figures on facsimiles one and three which he says are "badly copied". He concluded that "None but the
ignorant could possibly be imposed upon by such lucidious blunders". This statement is not typical of the careful scholarship shown by Petrie in other areas.

The most lengthy and one of the most unprejudiced testimonies is given by Dr. James H. Breasted. He gives a short account of the decipherment of Egyptian by Champollion and concluded "that if Joseph Smith could read ancient Egyptian writing, his ability to do so had no connection with the decipherment of hieroglyphics by European scholars". The facsimiles according to Dr. Breasted are of a later date than Abraham. The three are discussed in some detail and different interpretations from those offered by the Prophet are given to them. The final conclusion is that Joseph Smith was wrong.

Dr. Arthur C. Hayes fails to throw any light on the three facsimiles. He states that

Joseph Smith's interpretation of these cuts is a farrago of nonsense from beginning to end. Egyptian characters can now be read almost as easily as Greek, and five minutes' study in an Egyptian gallery of any museum should be enough to convince any educated man of the clumsiness of the imposture.4

Dr. John Peters states that the facsimiles are "a very poor imitation of Egyptian originals". Brief reference is paid to illustration number one, but numbers two and three are utterly neglected. In his final statement.

3. Ibid., p. 25.
4, Ibid., p. 27.
he holds that in the Book of Abraham the "Chaldeans and Egyptians are hopelessly mixed together, although as dissimilar and remote in language, religion and locality as are American and Chinese."\(^5\)

Like Dr. Breasted, Dr. S. A. B. Mercer is relatively fair in his treatment of the subject even if some disagree with his conclusions. He throws no light on the facsimiles, but deals more fully with certain Hebraic elements in Joseph Smith's explanations.

Dr. Edward Meyer of the University of Berlin declares that the illustrations are very poor. Brief reference is then made to facsimile numbers one and three. Dr. Friedrich Freiheer Von Bissing also deals with facsimile one and three and mentions illustration number two. He says: "A careful study has convinced me that Smith probably believed seriously to have deciphered the ancient hieroglyphics, but that he utterly failed."\(^6\)

Elder B. H. Roberts gives an excellent statement of the Bishop's case in the following account.

Briefly stated, the case of the bishop against Joseph Smith as a translator is this:

The competency of the Prophet as a translator of ancient records can be ascertained in but one way. "The original texts, together with his interpretations, must be submitted to competent scholars, and if they declare his translations to be correct, then they must be accepted.

\(^5\) Ibid. p. 28.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 30.
as true."

Conversely, if the "competent scholars" shall declare his translations to be incorrect, then, of course, his claims as a translator fall to the ground; and with that failure as a translator demonstrated, his claims to divine inspiration cannot be allowed; he is no prophet of God. If he was not a truly inspired translator then he had no right to the religious leadership which "earnest men" accorded him.

"However sincere he may have been in believing in his mission," the bishop argues, "if the translation he gave to mankind is false, he is shown to have been self-deceived." And if he was self-deceived in the matter of his translations, then those witnesses who testified to the correctness of his translation, by a supposed hearing of the voice of God, declaring the fact, were also self-deceived (pamphlet p. 11); and the result must be a repudiation of "the whole body of belief", which has been built upon Joseph Smith's translations of ancient records—the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham.

As the bishop remarks, "these questions are most critical", and, I might add, most searching, since they lay the ax at the root of the whole "Mormon" tree. I allow the bishop all his claims to the dire results to "Mormon-ism" if he can to the point of demonstration, make his case good against Joseph Smith as a translator.

How may this end be achieved? Confessedly, as the translator of the Book of Mormon, the Prophet is beyond the reach of the bishop, at least by direct means; for the reason that "the plates" of the Book of Mormon are "not available" for the above purpose, being in the keeping of the messenger to whom Joseph Smith returned them after the translation was completed. But in certain Egyptian papyrus rolls, found in a sarcophagus in Egypt, which came into Joseph Smith's possession in 1835, a translation of which he published in March, 1842 (Times and Seasons, vol. 3, Nos. 9 and 10.) the bishop finds something that will serve his purpose
equally well; because with the Prophet's translation and explanation of some parts of this ancient record, which the translator called the Book of Abraham, is published three facsimiles of the original Egyptian text from the Book of Abraham. These facsimiles may be submitted to the learned Egyptologists, and as "today the Egyptian language is readily translated by many scholars we have just the test we need", says the bishop, "of Joseph Smith's accuracy as a translator." (Pamphlet p. 18.)

The bishop has applied the test. That is to say, Bishop Spalding sent the facsimiles of the Egyptian records with Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Abraham, with the Prophet's partial translation and explanations of these facsimiles, to certain American, English, and German Egyptologists for their opinion of the accuracy of the translation, with the result that they all—and there are eight of them—give judgment against the Prophet.

"THE JURY" IN THE CASE.

These scholars, world renowned, are: Dr. A. H. Sayce of Oxford England: Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie, London University: James H. Breasted, Ph. D. Haskell Oriental museum, University of Chicago: Dr. Arthur C. Mace, assistant curator, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, department of Egyptian art: Dr. John Peters, University of Pennsylvania, in charge of expedition to Babylonia, 1888-1895; the Rev. Prof. C. A. B. Marcer, Ph. D., Western Theological seminary, custodian Hibbard collection Egyptian reproductions; Dr. Edward Meyer, University of Berlin; Dr. Friedrich Freiherr Von Bissing, professor of Egyptology in the University of Munich.

Quite a formidable list of learned men, truly: and I give it, because I think the Bishop is entitled to have it known by those reading these "remarks" how eminent is the jury pronouncing on the case against the "Mormon" Prophet.

7. B. H. Roberts. "Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator. A Plea in Bar of Final Conclusions." Improvement Era, XVI (February, 1913), pp. 310-311. The Bishop's case is so well stated by Mr. Roberts that it is given here verbatim.
The Spalding Controversy.

The Mormons immediately challenged Rev. Spalding and his scholars, but they were handicapped in that they knew no Egyptian, no Biblical languages, and little about Egyptian history. They did, however, find loopholes in the argument. Some criticised the Bishop's methods of investigation, some questioned his logic and still others found apparent disagreements among the scholars. In the first place the Bishop's methods of investigation were criticised by the Mormons for the following reasons:

1. It is assumed by the Latter-day Saints that the scholars were prejudiced by the fact that Spalding sent to them the 1907 edition of the Pearl of Great Price instead of a photostatic copy of the facsimiles only. Modern investigators generally discount supernatural translations of documents.

2. Rev. Spalding admitted that the pamphlet made no pretension of being a scientific treatise; as a result the Mormons claim that the whole investigation was biased.

3. The opposition did not take all the evidence into consideration because all the facts were not known.

4. The differences in interpretation were emphasized, but the similarities between Joseph Smith's and the scholars opinions were neglected.

5. The internal evidences of the Book of Abraham were disregarded.

6. The problem of Abraham and Egypt was never elucidated.

7. The letters which averaged one page or less were so brief that it is difficult to convince one that the scholars made a thorough and minute study of the matter.

8. Most of the opinions of the scholars do not reflect the high quality of work which they have shown in other studies.

In the second place the Latter-day Saints also objected to Spalding's line of reasoning in regard to the following points:

1. The Bishop obtained the testimonies of eight scholars that the three facsimiles of the Book of Abraham were not translated correctly, therefore the book as a whole was incorrectly translated. The Mormons ask how one can determine if a document is translated incorrectly unless he has the original source instead of a single translation of that source.  

2. If the Book of Abraham were not translated one must

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infer that the Book of Mormon was incorrectly translated also. Again the original document could not be examined.

3, If the Book of Abraham and the Book of Mormon are incorrect then one must repudiate Joseph Smith and all his work as uninspired.

In the third place the Mormon apologists could not accept the scholars' opinions with the same degree of certainty as Rev. Spalding for there appeared to be too many discrepancies among the witnesses. For example facsimile one became an embalming scene for Petrie, Peters, Von Bissing11 and Woodward.12 To Breasted, Deveria13 and an unnamed scholar quoted by Martin14 it represented the resurrection of Osiris; whereas to Meyer, Banks,15 and Budge16 it was simply a scene of a dead body on a bier. To most scholars facsimile three represented a dead person being led by the goddess of truth before the judgement seat of Osiris; but to Peters it was a "representation of the life of the deceased on earth"; and to Budge facsimile three represented the "adoration of Osiris by some deceased person."

Two of the eight experts, viz., Peters and Mercer replied to the Mormon criticism. George A. Barton also entered the controversy in 1912. Peter's defense of his position was rather unconvincing. Barton agreed essentially with the critics, and tried to explain away Robert's objections. S. A. B. Mercer harmonized the arguments of the opposition. Each of the above named scholars wrote letters which were published in Spalding's answer to Dr. Widtsoe. 17

Mercer's principal contribution, however, was a summarization of the argument for the opposition. This was titled: "Joseph Smith as an Interpreter and Translator of Egyptian," and was published in the Utah Survey for September 1913. 18

Dr. Mercer began his review by stating the origin of the controversy and the Bishop's Case against the Mormons. He then summarizes the opinions of each scholar, thus attempting to show their unanimity of opinion. That unanimous appearance of agreement so far as the Latter-day Saints were concerned was unconvincing for certain reasons which were noted earlier. Mercer lists the defenders of the Mormons in three categories: "First, intelligent and fair-minded Mormons; secondly biased Mormons (perhaps

18. S. A. B. Mercer, "Joseph Smith as an Interpreter and Translator of Egyptian," The Utah Survey I. (September 1913), pp. 4-36."
unconsciously) and very ignorant in respect to the subjects they pretend to criticise; thirdly, biased and ignorant gentiles." 19 He comments at some length on these apologists. Then the defense is reviewed and its weakness pointed out. It is in this analysis that Dr. Mercer harmonizes the points on which the scholars agreed; and he conveniently forgets some of the unwarranted statements which were made. Following this summary of the defense, the author turned to Dr. Widtsoe's criticism of Spalding and his evidence. The oppositions arguments may have been stronger had Widtsoe's propositions been ignored. Attention is then called to the assumption that facsimiles similar to the ones in the Book of Abraham are of much later date than that assigned to Abraham. At this point an attempt is made to bolster Peter's statement to the effect that the "Chaldeans and Egyptians are hopelessly mixed together". This also would not stand up under criticism. Certain linguistic aspects of the book are noted and pronounced as not being Egyptian but Semitic. Furthermore, a few points relative to textual and higher criticism of the document are brought forth. Dr. Mercer summarizes what he has written and ends by pronouncing the final verdict of the Spalding scholars on Joseph Smith.

The failure of the Mormon replies is

19. Ibid. p. 12.
explained by the fact that the unanimous opinion of the scholars is unassailable. In the judgment of the scholarly world, thereof, Joseph Smith stands condemned of self deception or imposition.20

Whatever may be said of Spalding's witnesses, one may be certain that further impartial study should be made of Joseph Smith's translation. The air of "finality" about some of these scholars did anything but inspire trust among the Latter-day Saints. On the other hand, some at least may be correct in saying that certain figures would have certain meanings in Egyptian, but if the facsimiles, as certain Mormons claim, do not attempt to portray Egyptian subject, there should be a reinvestigation of the whole problem. In light of the present status of the investigation one cannot come to final conclusions.

Post Spalding Critics.

There are only three critics of any consequence after the Spalding controversy, namely, La Rue, Martin and Arbaugh. While they are here considered as an independent group, they are in reality an extension of the same school of thought. Their arguments are primarily a recapitulation of the 1912 and 1913 opposition to the Book of Abraham.

William Earl La Rue published a book titled: The Foundations of Mormonism in 1919. 21 This is anti-Mormon

20. Ibid. p. 36
in character, and so far as the Book of Abraham is concerned it adds nothing new. A few facts concerning the history of the document are given, then follows a brief restatement of the Spalding arguments.

The next critic is Stuart Martin.22 His book is so undocumented that one cannot be certain of the sources to which he refers. He gives a brief history of the Book of Abraham and a reproduction of the three facsimiles. Few new points against the Mormon point of view are brought into the argument. Spalding's investigation is mentioned, then Martin proceeded to conduct an inquiry of his own. He referred to Professor Edgar James Banks whose opinion was written for the Christian Herald in 1913. This testimony is in accord with the Spalding witnesses but fails to present any additional facts. Alfred Wiedemann of Bonn University is then quoted. Martin makes an unwarranted inference at this point. He says:

Smith in his translation challenges the world to find the true meaning of the inscription on the disk. (Facsimile 2). The world has accepted the challenge. Here is the full translation by Professor Alfred Wiedemann of Bonn University, a well-known scholar and author of Religion of the Ancient Egyptians.23

Immediately one is led to believe that facsimile two

of the Book of Abraham has been deciphered by a scholar. This is far from being true. Wiedemann, so far as the evidence shows, never wrote a line about the facsimile under consideration. Martin assumes that a certain hypocephalus in the British Museum is the original from which the Abrahamic illustration was copied. The translation by the professor is of the one in the British Museum instead of the *Pearl of Great Price*. 24

Martin uses the testimony of an "English student of Egyptology", but with his typical thoroughness he forgets to mention the student's name or any references for his material. He concludes with a challenge to the Mormons, warning them that it will be disastrous to oppose the scholars who testify against the Book of Abraham.

George B. Arbaugh is the last major critic to appear on the scene. His doctor's thesis which was published in book form in 1932 under the title of Revelation in Mormonism 25 is the most thorough "gentile" work in the field. It may be said, however, that numerous inaccuracies exist. Chapter ten of the volume treats the Book of Abraham. The first part is a critical review of the history of the record. One of its principal limitations is that it fails to include foot notes on many points which one may question.

The contents are then criticised. Finally Arbaugh reviews the anti-Mormon side of the controversy relative to the facsimiles. The chapter ends with a brief history of the *Pearl of Great Price* in which the Book of Abraham is now included.

It may be seen from the foregoing discussion that the scholars from Deveria to Arbaugh have agreed that Joseph Smith did not translate correctly the three facsimiles appearing in the Book of Abraham. On this one point at least they are unanimous. But there were differences of opinion among them in regard to the interpretation of several of the figures. The treatment of the internal aspects of the book has been rather sketchy. One does not question that the scholars knew Egyptian as such, but their testimonies in this case do not represent the careful work they have done in other studies. They were continually saying that some figure should be changed or that some were too illegible or badly drawn to be interpreted; therefore, they admittedly could not read the writing on the illustrations. The whole question must be scientifically investigated in the light of more recent discoveries both in regard to the Book of Abraham and in regard to Egyptology before either the opposition or the defense can be satisfied.
APOLOGIES FOR THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

Apologies for the Book of Abraham fall into three distinct periods. The first of these is represented by George F. Reynolds who published a defense of the Abrahamic record in 1879. The second period covering primarily the years 1912 and 1913 may be designated as the 1913 group of apologists; and, the third period beginning in 1935 is dominated by Dr. Sidney B. Sperry and his associates. Each period will be treated, then they will be analyzed as a group.

The Reynolds Apology.

Since the appearance in 1861 of Remy and Brenchley's A Journey to Great Salt Lake City, the opponents of Mormonism had used M. Deveria's testimony, that the Abrahamic facsimiles were not translated correctly, as an argument against the claims of Joseph Smith. To counteract this propaganda Elder George F. Reynolds published in 1879 a pamphlet titled The Book of Abraham. Though the publication is issued under Reynolds's name the labors of other Mormons are found in its pages. Among those acknowledged are "President John Taylor, Elder Franklin D. Richards, Joseph L. Barfoot, John R. Howard, David Mc Kenzie and others".¹

The author of the book aims primarily to vindicate the claims of Joseph Smith. He quotes copiously from ancient and modern historians to corroborate the points of his thesis. In spite of the fact that this work reflects the proof text method there are many points of worth. On the other hand some of the propositions are open to question.

Chapter one of the book deals with the history of the Book of Abraham and gives a preview of the eight chapters which are to follow. These chapters are built around twelve propositions which are essentially as follows:

1. "Human sacrifice was practiced in Egypt and in adjacent countries in Abraham's day."
2. "Abraham's fathers were idolaters."
3. "Abraham was persecuted by his fellow countrymen because he opposed their idolatry."
4. "God commanded Abraham to leave Chaldea" because his fathers were idolaters.
5. Abraham was a missionary and preacher of righteousness.
6. Abraham exercised great political and religious influence in Egypt.
7. Facsimile three was the source after which the magical disks called hypocephali were patterned.
8. The chronology of the ancient Egyptians and other peoples is based on a faulty knowledge of antede-
luvian history.

9. Abraham performed important services for the Pharoah and in gratitude the king of Egypt accorded Abraham the honor of sitting on the royal throne.

10. The "Father of the Faithful" was taught important astronomical facts by means (1) of antedeluvian records; (2) of the Urim and Thummim, and of communing with the Almighty face to face.

11. From the ancient pyramid of Cheops it is evident that the "astronomy, as taught by God to Abraham, was known to those who raised this mighty structure".

12. M. Theodule Deveria's translation of the facsimiles of the Book of Abraham is erroneous and his objections to Joseph Smith's translation do not take all the facts into consideration.

The propositions which are most questionable are numbers six, seven, nine and eleven. There is little question among most Mormons so far as the first five points are concerned. It may be possible that Abraham exercised considerable political and religious influence in Egypt, but it will take stronger evidence than this book presents to establish that as a fact. It is extremely doubtful that facsimile two was the fore runner of the hypocephalus. At least the supporting evidence and arguments are not
convincing. Point number eight is entirely plausible.
The thesis that Abraham was permitted, because of some
great service, to sit on Pharoah's throne may be accepted
by some and rejected by others. While the data are not
conclusive this appears to some Latter-day Saints as a
possible explanation of facsimile three. From their
point of view number ten is correct. Proposition eleven is
very open to question in spite of the converts to pyramid
study. The Mormons generally accept the fundamental points
in Reynolds' treatment of the Deveria translation.
The Apologists of 1912-1913.

In November of 1912, Rev. F. S. Spalding of Salt Lake
City issued a brochure which was titled, Joseph Smith, Jr.,
As a Translator. This was intended as a vital blow to the
Mormon cause. It did indeed produce a sensation throughout
the Church, and to many Mormons the Bishop's case seemed
unassailable. The initial shock soon subsided, and the
Mormons attempted to answer their critics. They were not
Egyptologists, but they did detect what appeared to be
unscientific methods in the investigation and what seemed
to be a lack of harmony in the camp of the opposition.
The defenders of the Mormons may be listed in two groups
for convenience, viz: (1) the Latter-day Saint authors,
and (2) a small group of non-Mormons who supported the
church cause. The Mormon writers were as follows: John
Henry Evans, N. L. Nelson, Frederick J. Pack, B. H.
Roberts, J. M. Sjodahl, James E. Talmage, Sterline B.
Talmage, Junius F. Wells, John A. Widtsoe, Osborn E. P.
Widtsoe, Levi Edgar Young and Richard W. Young. The group
of favorable non-Mormons were F. F. Heintz; J. E. Homans
who wrote under the pen name of Robert C. Webb, Ph. D.;
V. S. Peet and Isaac Russell. The writings of the Latter-
day Saint authors will be reviewed first.

J. M. Sjodahl, 2 editor of the Deseret News wrote the
opening article in defense of the Book of Abraham. He
charges that the arguments of the opposition are unfair;
furthermore, the scholars are sometimes wrong in their
opinions. Spalding's witnesses, he maintains, make state-
ments which contain many discrepancies. He holds that all
of the Book of Abraham would not be wrong even if it were
possible to prove that the facsimiles were translated
incorrectly. Later he wrote a discussion of the word Kolob.

Elder B. H. Roberts 3 gave the second rebuttal to
Spalding's arguments. It was titled, "Joseph Smith, Jr.,
as a Translator". A Plea in Bar of Final Conclusions".
In reviewing the complete Mormon defense this is probably
the best article of the group. Roberts first states the

December 17, 1912. See also the Improvement Era. XVI
(April 1913), pp. 620-622.
3. B. H. Roberts, "Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator",
Salt Lake Tribune, December 15, 1912.
Bishop's case, then he calls attention to the fact that Egyptology is still growing and that new discoveries may alter the decisions of scholars as has often been the case. He then points out certain elements of weakness in the arguments of the opposition. First, he calls attention to the fact that the scholars agree that the facsimiles are badly copied or illegible. By studying an illegible copy they assume that the original was something different, as a result, Smith's translation was wrong. Following this, he points out wherein the scholars disagree among themselves, and finally, he indicates wherein the testimonies also confirm Smith's claims for facsimile two. He questions Spalding's motive in this attack against the Book of Abraham, and ends by urging the Mormons to hold their ground until all the facts are in.

On December 21, 1912 Dr. Frederick J. Pack.4 assailed the Spalding position. He called attention to the point that the methods employed were unscientific and that the validity of Joseph Smith's claims can be ascertained only by having access to the original documents instead of a facsimile which is not adequate. If the part of a document be correct, are all men under necessity of accepting the whole, or if a part be wrong, must the entire thing be

rejected? Such, he maintains, is Spalding's reasoning. Even if Joseph Smith were wrong once, that would not invalidate his entire claim. Pack then carried on a correspondence with Dr. John Peters, one of the Spalding scholars. Peter's answers, to say the least, were very disappointing to Dr. Pack.

Elder Junius F. Wells wrote an editorial for the Deseret News, December 19, 1912, in which the opinions of Henry Woodward and E. A. Wallis Budge regarding the facsimiles were printed. These scholars had been contacted and their statements were dated in 1903. They came essentially to the same conclusions as the Spalding group.

John Henry Evans attacked Spalding's line of reasoning. He maintained that before one could say that all of the Book of Abraham had been translated incorrectly, the original papyri would have to be examined, not merely three facsimiles which were only incidentals instead of a part of the text. Spalding inferred that if the Abrahamic record were incorrect the Book of Mormon would be wrong also. Mr. Evans points out what seems to him a fallacy in this assumption, and in the one that if Joseph Smith were not an inspired translator, the Latter-day Saints should repudiate not only the Book of Mormon but also the

5. See also the Improvement Era, XVI (February 1913), pp. 341-343.
entire work begun by the Prophet.

Levi Edgar Young\(^7\) published in the *Improvement Era* an article dealing with the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". This was undoubtedly called forth by frequent references to that document by both the opposition and the defense. The editions of that book are enumerated at the end of the article.

Elder John A. Widtsoe\(^8\) took up the attack in January of 1913. This was conducted in the form of open letters through the columns of the *Deseret News*. "The essential question", said Dr. Widtsoe, "is: Did or did not Joseph Smith translate the hieroglyphics in the Pearl of Great Price correctly?" He then points out certain flaws in the Spalding argument and claims that the conclusions are unwarranted for the following reasons:

1. That (Spalding) secured the opinions of only eight scholars in the somewhat inexact field of Egyptology when many more were available.
2. That there was evidence of an unscientific haste to get into print.
3. That (he) accepted without question the authority of (his) small jury.
4. That (he) ignored the evident differences in the opinions of the members of the jury.
5. That (he) failed to make minute comparisons of the figures and script in the hieroglyphics in the Pearl of Great Price with similar figures and scripts in the museums of the world.

\(8\) See also the *Improvement Era*, XVI (March 1913), pp. 454-460.
6. That (he) virtually denied the symbolic meaning of all Egyptian funeral inscriptions.
7. That (he) refrained from mentioning the striking similarities between Joseph Smith's translation and your eight opinions.
8. That (he) disregarded the possible internal evidences of the Book of Abraham in support of the Prophet's translation.
9. That (he) was silent on the whole vital matter of Egypt and Abraham.
10. That (Spalding) probably unintentionally prejudiced his witnesses.
11. That (his) eight letters are not even remotely studies of the matter under investigation.
12. That (he) accepted at their face value letters that are clearly prejudiced and ill-tempered.

Rev. Spalding answered Dr. Widtsoe admitting that this was not a scientific treatise nor a scientific investigation; thereupon, he produced letters from Mercer, Peters, and George A. Barton by which he attempted to show that Robert's objections were invalid. 9

Widtsoe 10 replied and claimed that ten to his twelve points were not answered. Then he labels as antiquated the interpretations of facsimiles one and three and reminds Spalding that they have done nothing with facsimile two. The witnesses disagree, he pointed out and they do not treat the inquiry seriously.

Judge Richard W. Young 11 called the attention of his

readers to the fact that scientists are not always correct. Theories have come and theories have been discarded with each new advancement in science. Egyptology is no exception. Students of that language are constantly changing their opinions. Egyptology is only now maturing and difficulties with the language are still tremendous.

Like some of his contemporaries Osborne J. P. Widtsoe attacks the attitude and reasoning of Bishop Spalding. He indicates that the "fairness" of the inquiry only cloaks one of the bitterest of anti-Mormon attacks. Then he criticises the reasoning of the opposition and points out its fallacies.

N. L. Nelson addressed an open letter to Rev. Spalding in which he made certain arguments against the Bishop. Except for his praise of Webb's defense of Mormonism, Nelson almost missed the subject.

James E. Talmage's writing was also very meagre. It consisted primarily of two photographs from Spalding's pamphlet which contained a quotation from Cannon's The Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet. It had been carelessly copied, so Dr. Talmage indicated this carelessness by making proof readers marks on the quotation which was then

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photographed and printed.

Sterling B. Talmage entered the contest by replying to an article titled, "The Sacred Books of the Mormons," by Edgar J. Banks in the Christian Herald. The editor of that paper sent Talmage's article to Mr. Banks that he might make a rejoinder. This, Mr. Banks failed to do; as a result, the editor of the Christian Herald would not publish Talmage's reply. The Improvement Era then printed both Bank's and Talmage's articles, one of which supports the scholars and the other which finds flaws in the argument.

The non-Mormons who wrote in defense of the Book of Abraham and of the Latter-day Saints may now be considered. V. S. Peet and F. F. Heintz need only be mentioned by name since their articles contributed nothing of value to the defense. Isaac Russell, on the other hand, takes issue especially with Dr. Peters in regard to the latter's statement that the "Chaldeans and Egyptians are hopelessly mixed together, although as dissimilar and remote in language, religion and locality as are today American and Chinese." Such a statement he maintains, reveals only a prejudiced mind and an ignorance which is surprising for

one who is supposed to be as learned as Dr. Peters. Russell's work, however, does not reflect a well digested knowledge of the subject.

J. E. Homans, or Robert C. Webb as he is known to most Mormons, has termed himself as a "professional student". He holds no Ph. D., but according to his statement he did do some work at an eastern university. It is rather unfortunate that he added a Ph. D. to a pseudonym. The only plausible reason for this is that he thought that the degree would add weight to his claim as an authority. It is amusing that every Mormon and most non-Mormons in the Spalding controversy added every degree, title or position that might contribute to his prestige. As the years lend perspective, it is evident that Homan's pseudonymity did nothing to increase respect for the Mormons.

Webb is not an Egyptologist and as a result makes certain statement which are questionable to the scholar. On the other hand, he does bring out a number of facts which cannot be ignored. In his first article, Webb reviews the arguments against the facsimiles from the Book of Abraham, and points out their shortcomings. He concludes that the burden of proof that Joseph Smith's translation is incorrect is shifted to the opposition.18 His second

article is more of a defense of Joseph Smith than of the record of Abraham.19 The third article20 from his pen criticises the opposition for its unwarranted assumptions, its bigoted attitude and its failure to take all the facts into consideration. In his final article,21 Webb summarized the arguments from the pro-Mormon point of view even as Mercer does for the opposition. This is one of the finest articles he has written. In 1936 he published a book bearing the title, Joseph Smith as a Translator. In its pages he discusses certain Egyptological problems of the Book of Mormon as well as the Book of Abraham. It is very difficult for the average reader who has to work his way through a maze of half digested linguistic details. This book is far less convincing than his articles in 1913.

In reviewing the apologies of 1912 and 13, the writers seem to stress the following points:

1. That the investigation was very unscientific and prejudiced.

2. That the scholars disagree too much among themselves to be considered infallible.

3. That the reasoning of the opposition is often illogical.

4. That the scholars tried to throw doubt on Joseph Smith's translation, but they did not translate the facsimiles themselves.

5. That some of the scholars made statements that the facts did not justify.

6. That Joseph Smith's transliteration of certain words is entirely defensible.

7. That in dealing with the facsimiles, there are many facts the scholars did not take into consideration.

8. That since Egyptology, like most sciences, is still growing one should not be too dogmatic in asserting that the scholars have the final word.

Like some of their opponents the defenders of the Book of Abraham reflect many unscholarly attitudes. Some were fair, but others were definitely so prejudiced that they could not see the issues clearly. Again some articles reflected a mass of half assimilated facts and were anything but a credit to the Mormons. From certain points of view the opposition had the best of the argument. It is true that they did not succeed in proving that Joseph Smith was mistaken, but in the handling of their attack they were more adept than the Mormons. Again, their fund of information prevented many of them from making as many embarrassing statements as the defense. One may summarize
by saying that the controversy stirred up considerable excitement, but that it proved nothing.

Later Apologists and Scholars.

Dr. Sidney B. Sperry of the Brigham Young University was the guiding hand in giving a renewed impetus to research regarding the Book of Abraham. He was well trained in biblical languages, having taken his Ph. D. at the University of Chicago in 1931 and having studied in Palestine in 1931-32. He became interested in the Book of Abraham, and in 1935 he brought forth his first article on the subject which was titled "Joseph Smith as an Egyptologist". This presented to the world an entirely new avenue of thought on the Book of Abraham.

In 1938 Dr. Sperry wrote for Latter-day Saint Mutual Improvement Associations the adult course of study which was titled Ancient Records Testify in Papyrus and Stone. The first eight chapters of this book are pertinent to the Book of Abraham. It was written primarily for the layman and makes no claim of being a learned or scientific treatise. Neither does it claim that all the facts are in, nor does it attempt to treat fully any of the topics discussed. The chief values lie in the fact that it presents many source materials which were heretofore unknown to the Church at large and that it throws out many suggestions for future research.

Chapter one of the book introduces the reader to the
subject of archaeology and chapter two opens the door to Egyptology in which many Mormons are interested. Then the author presents in chapters three, to and including six a documentary history of the mummies and the Abrahamic record. An analysis of its contents and certain linguistic problems are discussed in chapter seven; and chapter eight deals with the teachings of the Book of Abraham.

James R. Clark, also of Brigham Young University and a former student of Dr. Sperry, is a researcher in this field. He has published only one article in the field, viz., "The Records of Enoch", but he had done much independent work which will eventually throw considerable light on certain problems connected with the Book of Abraham. His work is primarily concerned with the historical aspects of the book.

These later scholars have not attempted to prove certain internal aspects of the book as did Reynolds. Instead they utilized the discoveries of archaeologists to verify the same points. The 1913 apologists were concerned primarily with the three facsimiles and with refuting the Spalding arguments; whereas the present group does not fully accept the then current Egyptian theory of those illustrations. They have studied the Abrahamic text from the Semitic instead of from the Egyptian point of view. In addition they have developed the history of the Abrahamic
record from source materials and have analyzed more minutely the contents of this unusual document.

In recapitulation it may be said that Reynolds attempted to show that the internal claims of the Abrahamic record were historically correct. The 1913 apologists while defending this book also pointed out that it could not be interpreted correctly until more facts were known. Later Mormon researchers have placed Book of Abraham investigation on a more sound and scholarly basis. Perhaps they will yet subject the Abrahamic record to a thorough scientific analysis.
CHAPTER VIII

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

The problem of the validity of the Book of Abraham is one thing; the contents is another. A summary of the focal teachings of the book are here presented. These teachings are treated in the order of the amount of space devoted to them in the text.

The Creation.

Judging by the number of words devoted to a topic, the account of the creation as contained in the Book of Abraham is the most important. This aspect of the record comprises chapters four and five with a total of fifty-two verses. The creation is dual being first a spiritual then a physical phenomenon.

This creation story is essentially the same as it is in Genesis and in the Book of Moses. There are certain interesting differences, however, which should be noted. Abraham uses the expression "the Gods" instead of "God" as in Genesis and "I, God" in the Book of Moses. Some maintain that this plurality in reference to God is in keeping with the word "Elohim" as used in the Hebrew text.

Another unusual point is that the Abrahamic record uses the term "time" instead of "day" for a period of creation. There are some theorists who have taken this to possibly mean a period of thousands or even millions of years; but the text does not support that assumption. "Now
I, Abraham, saw that it was after the Lord's time, which was after the time of Kolob, for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning."1 If the earth was after the time of Kolob, one day was 1000 years of the present earth time.

One other very interesting feature is the note of futurity in the planning of this earth as mentioned in Abraham chapters four and five.

And the Gods said among themselves: On the seventh time we will end our work, which we have counseled; and we will rest on the seventh time from all our work which we have counseled.

And the Gods concluded upon the seventh time, because that on the seventh time they would rest from all their works which they (the Gods) counseled among themselves to form; and sanctified it. And thus were their decisions at the time that they counseled among themselves. 2

The Life of Abraham.

The most outstanding historical facts of the Book of Abraham deal with the life of the Patriarch himself. This topic comprises forty-four verses in chapters one to three. Abraham's early life is a complete blank so far as the Hebrew canon is concerned. The Biblical account begins with Abraham's marriage to Sarai and his departure from Ur of the Chaldees, but the Book of Abraham speaks of many events

2. Abraham 5: 2, 3.
prior to his journey to Haran. The following points may be noted:

1. That Abraham learned the gospel in Ur of the Chaldees;
2. That he received the priesthood;
3. That his fathers were idolaters;
4. That he taught against their polytheistic religion;
5. That an attempt was made to offer Abraham as a human sacrifice;
6. That he was saved from death by the intervention of God;
7. That the idols were destroyed;
8. That he received the records of the "fathers" or the 'Patriarchs';
9. That a famine caused the death of Abraham's brother Maran and possibly influenced the family migration from Ur.

Certain Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphal books support the Book of Abraham narrative in many points. However, the text of the latter disagrees in many instances with the events recorded in the Pseudepigraphal books.

As a sample, one may further discuss points one and two. Abraham states that he sought for the "blessings of the fathers" or the right to receive the Holy Priesthood and to administer its ordinances. Then he inform
his readers that he "became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time..."3

The question now arises, Where did Abraham learn of the monotheistic doctrines and receive of the ordinance of baptism, etc., if his fathers were idolaters? Did they apostatize from the religion of Noah while Abraham remained faithful; or did he learn monotheism from someone else? The text indicates that Abraham received the priesthood while yet in Ur of the Chaldees. If that is true, then some other monotheist must have taught him for it is unlikely that Abraham's idolatrous kindred would have taught him the doctrine of one god.

The claim that the Lord made the famous Abrahamic covenant with the Father of the Faithful before his trip into Palestine may also be an indication that he then held the priesthood. The Book of Abraham states:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is in thy priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy priesthood) for I give unto thee a promise that this right (of the priesthood) shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all of the families of the earth be blessed even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.4

3. Abraham 1: 2,3.
Then Abraham took his family, his possessions, and "the souls that (he) had won in Haran, and came forth in the way to the land of Canaan..." With this conversion of Abraham's fellow tribesmen at Haran, the historical part of the text comes to a close.

Abrahamic Cosmology.

The Book of Abraham is the source for a unique system of cosmology. This is treated in Abraham 3: 1-17. In showing to Abraham the great governing stars of this stellar universe, the Lord designated a particular one and said: "...the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me... I have set this one to govern all those which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest." One revolution of this great orb is one thousand years as measured by earth time—a thousand years being as one day to the Lord. How many universes beside this solar system are under the direction of Kolob is not stated. Next to Kolob stands a planet which is designated as Oliblish. One cannot be certain from the text whether this star stands between the sun and Kolob or whether it is equally as great in governing other systems.

Abraham taught that if one planet has a certain time of revolution that there was one above it which had a still longer time, until one came to Kolob which is the nearest

5. Abraham 2: 15
6. Abraham 3: 3
the throne of God. This principle possibly applies to the numberless stellar and planetary creations of the Great Elohim. Thus Abraham indicates that systems like the solar universe belongs to greater systems even until the bounds of our galaxy is reached. According to the record Abraham learned these facts through (1) the records of the patriarchs, (2) the Urim and Thummim, and (3) "face to face" conversation with God.

**Canaanite and Egyptian Worship.**

Another point of historical interest is the light which the Book of Abraham throws on the Egyptian and Canaanite forms of worship. In Abraham 1: 5-20 the text states that men, women, and children were offered as sacrifices to the idols in Ur of the Chaldees. The god of Pharaoh and the god of Shagreel are indicated as ones to whom many offerings were made. This part of the account agrees with recent archaeological evidence of such practices in the boundaries of the Egyptian empire. Duncan states:

> Human sacrifices were prevalent among the Canaanites from the earliest times, as is attested by human remains found on high places in sacrificial refuse-pits mixed with bones of other sacrificial animals at Gezer and elsewhere. The sacrifice of an infant, or a first-born child even up to the age of ten, at the foundation or completion of public buildings, such as city walls and gates, was

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a regular custom. These sacrificial deposits have been found at the foot of the wall, within the masonry of the wall, or under the foundation in various sites, such as Taanach and Megiddo.10

In speaking of this same excavation at Gezer in Palestine, Dr. George A. Barton writes:

The whole area of the high place was found to be a cemetery of newborn infants. These were in all probability first-born children who had been sacrificed to the deity of the high place. ... The Semites generally believed that the first-born were sacred to deity and must be sacrificed to it.11

Josephus 12 records that the Egyptians were guilty of offering human sacrifices. These are only a sample of a host of writers especially archaeologists whose findings reveal similar conditions to those mentioned in the Book of Abraham.

There is also a hypothesis to the effect that Abraham is referring to the practices of a fertility cult when he said: "Now, this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time... These virgins were offered up because of their virtue."13 It is well known that at certain times of the year the fertility cults indulged in sexual orgies as a form of worship of the gods who gave

13. Abraham 1:11
them crops and prosperity. Those who would not indulge
would thus be giving offense to their deities. The logical
thing to do, then, would be to offer such persons as a
sacrifice to appease the gods. One cannot be certain that
this was the case with the daughters of Onitah, but it is
highly possible.

The Pre-existence of Man.

In Abraham 3:18-28 is taught the unusual doctrine of
the pre-existence of man. The spirit of man, it teaches,
existed somewhere before it came to a mortal body on this
earth. The spirit or intelligence of man can "have no
beginning; they existed before, they have no end, they shall
exist after, for they are gnolaum or eternal." 14 The ego
or intelligence of man is therefore co-eternal with God;
and like the primary elements it can neither be created
nor destroyed.

Abraham also teaches that there are variations in
intelligence. He does not state whether this difference
is due to some innate qualities, to longer existence, to
more experience, or to a combination of all three. The
Lord states, however, that he is "more intelligent than
they all". That is, this scripture implies that God is
more intelligent than any of the spirits or of all of them
together. 15

According to the Abrahamic record a select group of leaders possibly representing a larger body of spirits met to plan and transact business for all concerned. A plan was presented for the creation of an earth and for peopling that orb. The spirits who should come to that planet and become mortal should have a chance to make a choice between good and evil. By obeying certain laws these spirits could keep what is termed the "first estate". If they were successful in this, they could receive a "second estate"; if they were not successful, that marked the end of their progression. Those who kept their "second estate" were to have "glory added upon their heads for ever and ever". Thus the process of the "survival of the fittest" eliminates those who are spiritually, intellectually, morally and physically unable or unwilling to "pay the price" for life eternal in the kingdom of God.

Then according to the Abrahamic record the leaders in heaven planned the organization of this earth. And when all was in readiness man was to be placed here to keep his "second estate". All things both plant and animal existed spiritually before their temporal creation. Then as the creation proceeded, physical bodies were provided for their spiritual counterparts and they became "living souls".
Egyptus and Pharoah. 16

According to the Book of Abraham both Ham's wife and daughter were named Egyptus and Ham's eldest grandson through Egyptus was named Pharoah. Who Pharoah's father was is not stated. Egyptus had her sons settle in the fertile valley of the Nile. When they entered this valley, it was inundated by the annual spring overflow of the river. The text reveals that Pharoah, who ruled the colony, bequeathed his name to all succeeding rulers of Egypt as did Caesar to the emperors of Rome. According to the Abrahamic record these Egyptians had the Canaanite blood or the blood of Cain, therefore they were cursed as pertaining to the priesthood.

The Negro.

The Book of Abraham states that the third son of Noah married a woman whose name was Egyptus, which in Chaldean signified ... "that which is forbidden". 17 The name would seem to indicate that some group regarded her as undesirable for a companion in marriage. The Book of Abraham infers that those who were not of Cain were forbidden to marry anyone having negro blood in his veins. This taboo seems to have been prompted by fear that the children from that union would be unable to hold the

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priesthood.

The Book of Abraham implies that the negro should not have the priesthood because he has the blood of the Canaanites: and the seed of Cain are cursed as to the priesthood. "Pharoah," writes Abraham, "was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth." These Egyptians tried to claim the priesthood from Noah through Ham; and, while their claim was invalid, it served to deceive many.\(^18\)

Foreordination.

Predestination in most Christian thinking implies that God has appointed certain souls to eternal happiness or to eternal damnation regardless of their good or bad deeds. On the other hand foreordination in the Book of Abraham implies that an individual may be chosen in the pre-existent spiritual state to fulfill a special mission here upon earth. His fulfillment of that mission, however, depends upon his obedience after his advent in this temporal existence. He has his free agency. He may choose to honor that calling, or he may reject it, but he is not predestined either way.

The Book of Abraham speaks of those who were foreordained as follows:

Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham,

\(^{18}\) Abraham 1: 26,27.
the intelligences that had been organized before the world was; and among all these were many of the noble and great ones;

And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou are one of them; thou was chosen before thou wast born.19

The text does not inform one if the leaders thus chosen were religious only or if some were chosen in other fields as well. It is quite apparent that the majority were not chosen to be rulers. From the record it is evident that those "noble and great ones" who were chosen, were selected for those qualities of leadership which they had already exhibited and which would insure their success on the mission to which they were called.

The Abrahamic Covenant.

The Book of Abraham throws considerable light on the covenant between Jehovah and Abraham.20 The Patriarch was promised certain things as an individual and his posterity was also given some assurance of future blessings. To Abraham as an individual the Lord promised:

1. To make of him a great nation;
2. To bless him personally above measure;
3. To give him great influence among the nations;
4. To bestow great blessings on his posterity.

To Abraham's descendants both literal and adopted the Lord promised:

1. That they shall have the gospel with all of its saving ordinances necessary to life eternal in God's kingdom;
2. That because of Abraham they shall have the right to hold the priesthood;
3. That they shall have the privilege of being ministers for God to all men.

The nations of the world are included in the Abrahamic covenant in so far as they are willing to receive the gospel. God promises them:

1. That they shall be sent the gospel through the ministry of Abraham's righteous posterity;
2. That if they receive this gospel they shall become the seed of Abraham through adoption;
3. That they shall receive the priesthood, and if faithful,
4. They shall receive the fullness of the gospel of salvation, "even of life eternal".

From the foregoing summary of the focal teachings of the Book of Abraham, it is evident that the topics when arranged as to the number of verses devoted to each are as follows:

1. The creation--fifty-two verses.
2. The life of Abraham—fourty-four verses.
3. Abrahamic cosmology—seventeen verses.
4. Canaanite and Egyptian worship—fifteen verses.
5. The pre-existence of man—ten verses.
8. Foreordination—seven verses.
CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

The writer has attempted in this thesis to present a broad over-all view of the Book of Abraham. In the first place he pointed out the essential facts in the history of the record. Certain problems concerning the translation of the papyri are then discussed. Following this, the criticisms of the book are reviewed; and the apologies for the record are summarized. Finally the writer points out certain historical, theological and philosophical teachings from the Abrahamic record.

One incontrovertible fact stands paramount in the historical data used in this work, and this fact is that Joseph Smith had four mummies and some papyri. No longer can there be any doubt of the reality of the physical basis for the Mormon claims about the record. There are also some data which indicate that no more than two of the four mummies and a part of the papyri were destroyed in the great Chicago fire of 1871. Furthermore there is some evidence, from the Mormon point of view, that the papyri were translated by means of the Urim and Thummim and that all the record which Joseph Smith translated was never printed.

From the evidence concerning the facsimiles, the author concludes that there has been no accurate reproduction of any of them since 1891. There has been absolutely no exact reproduction of facsimile one since 1842. And
even granting that the facsimiles of the *Times and Seasons* and the *Millennial Star* were the nearest like the original papyri, there is still doubt that Hedlock's cuts were one-hundred percent correct, thereby leaving room for error in the illustrations.

From the linguistic point of view, it is evident that the Prophet did not utilize in his translation that which had been discovered by the European Egyptologists. Then certain data are presented which are evidence to Mormons that the Book of Abraham is essentially a Semitic document which seems to have close affinities to a Hebrew original.

The criticism of the Abrahamic record from Deveria in 1861 to Arbaugh in 1932 is devoted primarily to the three facsimiles in the Book of Abraham. There is considerable doubt that the Egyptologists could actually read or correctly interpret the facsimiles. The true evaluation of these illustrations from a scholarly point of view is yet to be given.

Apologies for the Book of Abraham have as a whole made few contributions to an understanding of the record. Much has been said, but little has been proven. And like most Mormon scriptures, the internal aspects of this scripture have seldom been touched.

To the writer, this document seems to have certain distinctive Mormon teachings—historically, theologically
and philosophically. The last word has not been said; and until all the facts are in, neither the critics nor the apologists can come to conclusions that will be acceptable to all.
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