

# "THE BOOK OF MORMON"

by

Anthony A. Hoekema

## Appendix A

from

### *The Four Major Cults*

(William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963)

In the preceding chapter the question of the necessity for revelations additional to the Bible was touched upon. In this appendix we shall discuss the question of the genuineness of the *Book of Mormon* as an additional sacred scripture which purports to give additional revelation from God. We shall look at this matter from two points of view: the languages in which the plates basic to the *Book of Mormon* are said to have been written, and the transmission of the *Book of Mormon*.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE LANGUAGES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Mormons claim that the *Book of Mormon* is a book of divine revelation, given us by God in addition to the Bible. Let us see whether the facts concerning the alleged writing and transmission of the *Book of Mormon* bear out this claim. The Bible, as we know, was written in languages which were known and spoken by many: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language which was spoken in Palestine at the time when these writings were produced, with the exception of a few short sections in Aramaic (six chapters of the Book of Daniel and two passages in the Book of Ezra). The New Testament was written in Greek, which was at that time the common language of the Roman Empire and the literary language of Palestine. Although there was a time when the differences between the Greek of the New Testament and classical Greek led some scholars to presume that the former was a special kind of "Holy Ghost Greek," particularly devised by God for the purpose of communicating His revelation to man, the discovery during the last sixty years of thousands of extra-Biblical papyri dating from New Testament times, mostly commercial documents written in Greek, has proved that the Koine Greek of the New Testament was simply the everyday language which was in common use throughout the empire at that time.<sup>2</sup>

If, now, God intended to issue another set of sacred books, it would be expected that He would do so in another well-known language, the existence and character of which would be testified to by extra-canonical documents. Mormons claim, however, that the language in which the plates

---

1 In the bibliography one will find a list of books dealing particularly with the *Book of Mormon*. To these may be added George B. Arbaugh's *Revelation in Mormonism*, E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unveiled*, and Chapters 3 and 4 of James H. Snowden's *The Truth About Mormonism*. These volumes bring up such matters as contradictions between the *Book of Mormon* and the Bible, between the *Book of Mormon* and the other sacred books of Mormonism, and between the *Book of Mormon* and various statements by Joseph Smith; the so-called Spaulding-Rigdon theory of the origin of the *Book of Mormon*; and the relation between the *Book of Mormon* and archaeological discoveries on the American continent. Since these topics are adequately treated by other writers, this appendix will not touch upon them, but will deal with some aspects of the genuineness of the *Book of Mormon* which have not been fully dealt with elsewhere.

2 J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated by the Papyri* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), pp. xi-xii.

allegedly original to the *Book of Mormon* were written was "Reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32); two verses later the following qualification is added: "But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof." "Reformed Egyptian," therefore, is not a known language; neither do we possess documents or inscriptions of any sort which attest the existence of this language or help us understand its character. Is it likely that God would give us His newest and allegedly greatest Book of Scripture in a language completely unknown?

The force of this objection will be more fully realized as we reflect a bit further. The existence of manuscript copies of the books of the Bible in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek enables Bible scholars to study the Bible in these original languages. As anyone who has ever attempted to translate from one language to another knows, a translation is never a precise reproduction of the original text. Certain fine shades of meaning are invariably lost in translation, since one can never fully express in the second language everything that is expressed in the first language. Because we do have Biblical manuscripts in the original languages, however, Bible scholars (including ministers trained in Greek and Hebrew) can study the Bible in the original, and thus recapture the fine shades of meaning which the authors of the Bible (and, we should add, the Holy Spirit who inspired them) intended to convey. All this, however, is impossible in the case of the *Book of Mormon*, for there are no manuscript copies of the original documents from which the book was allegedly translated. Does it seem likely, now, that God would give us His latest sacred book in a manner so different from that in which He gave us the Bible? Why did God cause copies of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the books of the Bible to be preserved in greater number than those of any other ancient book, whereas in the case of the *Book of Mormon* He purportedly left with us only an English translation?

The existence of an extra-Biblical literature in the languages of the Bible constitutes a strong testimony to the genuineness of the Biblical writings. This type of testimony, however, is completely absent in the case of the *Book of Mormon*, since there exists no literature in "Reformed Egyptian." What assurance have we, then, that "Reformed Egyptian" was actually spoken and actually written? We must simply take one man's word for this: namely, that of Joseph Smith. Further, the existence of manuscripts in the original languages of the Bible and the existence of an extra-Biblical literature in these languages enable Biblical scholars to study the grammar of these languages and to engage in lexicographical studies. All of this type of study, however, is impossible in the case of "Reformed Egyptian." Why do we have no lexicons of "Reformed Egyptian," no grammars of "Reformed Egyptian," as we do have Hebrew lexicons and Hebrew grammars, Greek lexicons and Greek grammars? Does it seem likely that God went to all the trouble of having these additional revelations recorded in "Reformed Egyptian," only to allow all further traces of this language to disappear?

More should be said, however, about the "Reformed Egyptian" language. Nephi, who is alleged to have engraved the first "Reformed Egyptian" sacred plates, was a Jew who, it is said, lived originally in Jerusalem at about 600 B.C. At that time both the spoken and written language of the Jews was Hebrew.<sup>3</sup> It should be expected, therefore, that Nephi, his brothers, and his father, Lehi, would also speak and write in Hebrew. However, *mirabile dictu*, we find that Nephi, after having arrived in America, began to write on golden plates in "Reformed Egyptian!" Not only so, but we

---

<sup>3</sup> For example: the Siloam Tunnel Inscription (7th century, B.C.) and the Lachish Letters (early 6th century, B.C.) were written in Hebrew. Further, as is well known, Bible books written around this time, like Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Habakkuk, were written entirely in Hebrew.

find that the "Brass Plates of Laban" which Lehi and his sons had taken with them were also written in the Egyptian language! As was mentioned, these brass plates supposedly contained the five books of Moses, the genealogy of Lehi, and "many of the prophecies from the beginning down to and including part of those spoken by Jeremiah."<sup>4</sup> Mosiah 1:4 tells us that the language of these plates was "the language of the Egyptians."

We are to understand, then, that Nephi and his brothers found in Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. a set of brass plates containing large sections of the Hebrew Scriptures translated into some form of Egyptian. Leaving aside the question of the kind of writing materials used (to which we shall return), we ask at this time: Where did this Egyptian translation come from? What body of Egyptian scholars did this translating? For what purpose was this translation made? If the Egyptian language was so commonly used in Palestine at this time that an Egyptian translation of the Scriptures was required, why have we heard nothing about this? And why do we have no record of this Egyptian translation -- which, if it were to be found, would rival, if not surpass, the Septuagint<sup>5</sup> in importance?

We now ask the further question: Where did Lehi and his sons learn to read the Egyptian language so that they could decipher these brass plates? And where did Nephi learn the Egyptian language well enough to write it on the golden plates? In I Nephi 1:2 we hear Nephi saying, "Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which [the language?] consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians." Were not Lehi and his sons Hebrew-speaking Jews? Mormon missionaries have told the author that the reason Nephi and the Nephites wrote in Egyptian was that they were descendants of Joseph (who was the father of Manasseh), and that Joseph had lived in Egypt. True enough, but the entire nation of Israel had lived in Egypt for over 400 years; yet they did not speak and write Egyptian but Hebrew. Moses himself, who was trained in all the culture of the Egyptians, wrote not in Egyptian but in Hebrew. Why, then, should Nephi, who apparently had never lived in Egypt, write in Egyptian? Why should this small group of Jews from the tribe of Manasseh form a linguistic exception to the prevalence of Hebrew in Palestine?

One could counter, of course, that God could have caused them to learn Egyptian miraculously. But why this unnecessary miracle, when they already possessed a language, namely, Hebrew? And, further, since the plates were later to be miraculously translated into English by Joseph Smith, and were not to be left on earth, why, if there was to be a linguistic miracle, did not the Nephites learn to talk and write English? Then there would have been no need for a "translation."

This brings us to the further question of the character of this "Reformed Egyptian" language in which Nephi and subsequent Nephite scribes reportedly recorded the history of their nation. The official description of this language and of its characters is found in Mormon 9:32, "And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech." So this was allegedly a somewhat altered form of an earlier pure Egyptian language, written in characters which had undergone a process of alteration. Unfortunately, we possess no samples of these characters; we can only surmise what type of script this is supposed to have been. One wishes that Moroni had specified whether the original Egyptian script which the Nephites had somewhat altered was hieroglyphic, hieratic, or demotic.<sup>6</sup> Whichever form it was,

<sup>4</sup> McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 97; cf. Alma 37:3.

<sup>5</sup> The translation of the Old Testament into Greek, prepared in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third and second centuries B.C.

<sup>6</sup> The three main types of Egyptian writing. Hieroglyphic began to be used about 3,000 B.C., and had passed out of

however, it seems reasonably sure that it was not an alphabetic script, since none of the three above-mentioned types of Egyptian are either syllabic or alphabetic.<sup>7</sup> This means that any of these types of Egyptian script would be extremely difficult to learn or to use, having a great number of characters picturing various objects and actions. This fact, plus the fact that in Egypt writing was not practiced by the common people but only by the priestly classes,<sup>8</sup> makes it all the more amazing that Lehi and his sons were able to read and write Egyptian.

This raises the question: Why did God choose to use this language and this script for His alleged latest book of revelation? Why, in other words, did God make Nephi and his descendants change from Hebrew to Egyptian? One can very easily understand why the change from Hebrew to Greek was made when the New Testament manuscripts were written: Greek was then the common language of the Greco-Roman world, the language in which the gospel would be able to command the widest hearing. There is a second reason: Greek is more highly inflected than Hebrew, having, for example, seven tenses instead of the two found in Hebrew, and thus providing opportunity for many additional shades of meaning. The language of the New Testament, therefore, is well adapted to convey the more advanced revelation about God and the plan of salvation which is given in the New Testament. But now the question begins to pinch: why the shift from Hebrew to Egyptian? The reason cannot be found in the suggestion that this was to be the language of the new land where they were going, since the land was at this time presumably uninhabited. As far as the Nephites themselves were concerned, what good reason would there be for their not continuing to talk and write in Hebrew, which they already knew and understood? Furthermore, neither can the reason be found in any possible superiority of the Egyptian language over the Hebrew as a mode of conveying divine revelation. For, as we have seen, all the types of Egyptian script were non-alphabetic, whereas Hebrew is a language written in alphabetic script. Does it seem likely, now, that God would, for His alleged final sacred book, shift from an alphabetically written language like Hebrew to a more primitive, non-alphabetically written language like Egyptian, which would be obviously less precise in conveying fine shades of meaning than either Hebrew or Greek? If, finally, Egyptian were a language in some respects superior to Hebrew, and admirably suited to convey the new and final revelation, why did God permit all traces of this language to be lost and all these original documents to be removed from the earth? If God's intent from the beginning was to leave with us only an English translation of these documents, why could not this translation have been just as effectively made from Hebrew as from "Reformed Egyptian"?

The *Book of Mormon* raises another major linguistic problem, however. Moroni, as we have seen, supposedly completed his father Mormon's records, and added two books of his own, one of which was the Book of Ether. The latter was supposed to be an abridgment by Moroni of the twenty-four plates of Ether (Ether 1:2). Ether was a prophet of the Jaredites, and one of the last survivors of that race. The Jaredites, however, did not speak Egyptian; they "retained a tongue patterned after that of Adam."<sup>9</sup> The Book of Ether itself tells us that, at the time of the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel, the language of the Jaredites was not confused, though all other languages were (1:33-37). Since Ether was a Jaredite, it seems reasonable to suppose that he wrote in the language of the Jaredites -- a language which must have been utterly different from "Reformed Egyptian."

---

use by 600 B.C. Hieratic was used alongside of hieroglyphic, and continued to be employed until the third century A.D. Demotic, a cursive derivative of hieratic, was used from about the 8th century B.C. to the 5th century A.D. See David Diringer, *The Alphabet* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), pp. 59, 64-67.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

9 McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 393.

Here is another amazing linguistic phenomenon: without supernatural help, such as was allegedly supplied to Joseph Smith when he did his work of translation, Moroni, whose language was "Reformed Egyptian," was able to decipher and abridge plates written in the language of the Jaredites, a language akin to that spoken by Adam and Eve!

Moroni, in fact, must have been quite a linguist. Apparently he knew Hebrew too. For note what he says, according to Mormon 9:33,

And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

Talmage concludes from this statement that the Nephites continued to be able to read and write in Hebrew until the time of their extinction.<sup>10</sup> This was also a remarkable achievement! According to Talmage's comment, the Nephites remained bilingual for a period of a thousand years (from 600 B.C. to A.D. 421), able to read and write both in "Reformed Egyptian" and in Hebrew. They thus did far better than the Palestinian Jews, who after the captivity generally no longer used Hebrew as the language of everyday life, but more and more used Aramaic instead.<sup>11</sup> What a pity, further, that these Hebrew-reading Nephites did not have a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures in the Hebrew, but had to depend on an Egyptian translation on brass plates!

We are interested, now, in knowing why Moroni (and his father Mormon) did not write the plates in Hebrew, which would, according to the last part of Mormon 9:33, have resulted in a more perfect type of record. The reason given is that the plates were not large enough. A strange reason indeed. Why did not Moroni and Mormon simply write the Hebrew in smaller letters? Or why did they not make larger plates? If the record would have been more perfect in Hebrew, and if the Nephites could read Hebrew, why did not these men exert every effort to convey the revelation in the best possible medium?

When we attempt to reconstruct the scene, the reason given seems more strange still. If one knew two languages and were trying to decide in which of these two languages he should write certain important material, does it seem likely that the crucial factor in making this decision would be the size of the plates on which he were writing? Would not the deciding factor rather be the writer's greater competence in one language or the other? Or if -- as seems highly unlikely -- one's competence would be equal in both, would not the language chosen be the one which would most effectively convey the material to be transmitted? According to Moroni's statement, that language would have been Hebrew. And yet Hebrew was not chosen. Does this seem likely?

Does it seem likely, further, that God would allow His revelation to be written in a language which would leave a somewhat imperfect record simply because of a lack of room on the plates? If it was important that the best possible record should be made -- and why shouldn't it be? -- why did not God see to it that Mormon and Moroni were provided with a sufficient quantity of large plates?

---

<sup>10</sup> *Articles of Faith*, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, rev. by A. W. Adams (N.Y.: Harper, 1958), p. 94. This Nephite linguistic phenomenon is all the more remarkable when we reflect on the fact that the Palestinian Jews largely lost their ability to use Hebrew during their 70-year sojourn in Babylonian captivity, whereas the American Nephites allegedly kept up their Hebrew during a 1000-year stay in a foreign land, *while at the same time using "Reformed Egyptian" as their main language!*

## THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

We concern ourselves next with the question of the transmission of the documents allegedly basic to the *Book of Mormon*. Here, too, we shall find a number of improbabilities. In the sixth century B.C. the most common forms of writing material in Palestine were papyrus and leather (or animal skin); the Hebrews also wrote on wood and potsherds. Rare examples of Mesopotamian clay-tablets with cuneiform writing have been found in Palestine, but these were obviously the work of foreigners.<sup>12</sup> The most common form in which books were made in those days was the roll, made of leather or papyrus, in which the various sheets were sewn or pasted together.<sup>13</sup> So common was this method of making books that the expression "roll of the book" (*megillath-seepher*) is often used in the Bible to describe a book. Note particularly that this expression is used several times in the thirty-sixth chapter of the book of Jeremiah -- a book written around the sixth century B.C. It is quite obvious, further, that the roll mentioned in Jeremiah 36 was not made of metal, since the king cut it into pieces with a penknife. It should, of course, be mentioned that writing on metal was not completely unknown, since a copper scroll has been discovered at Qumran. This scroll, however, was not a plate but a roll, and is dated much later than 600 B.C., being generally ascribed to the first century B.C.

In view of the above facts, does it seem likely that brass plates containing a large section of the Old Testament in Egyptian would be found in Palestine in 600 B.C.? We have previously discussed the problem of the language reputedly inscribed on these plates; the use of metal plates as writing material for an extensive document such as that described above, however, presents a problem as great as that of the language. The only other instance of writing on metal which is commonly known is the copper scroll of Qumran, as noted above; but even this was a roll, not a plate.<sup>14</sup>

A similar question could be asked about the "golden plates" on which the Nephite records were made. Manuscripts from Central America and Mexico dating from pre-Columbian times were generally on coarse cloth or on paper.<sup>15</sup> Great numbers of these pre-Columbian manuscripts are known to have been burned by fanatical Spanish priests -- hence they could not have been made of metal.<sup>16</sup> Does it seem likely, then, that the prehistoric inhabitants of the American continent would have kept their records on golden plates?

We have observed previously that no copies of the original plates from which Joseph Smith "translated" have been preserved; Mormons contend that Smith had to return these plates to the

---

12 G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 197. Cf. Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956), p. 275. Also Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past*, 2nd ed. (Princeton University Press, 1959), pp. 389-90.

13 Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 197. Cf. Frederic Kenyon, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

14 It should be mentioned, however, that a bronze blade from the eleventh century B.C. has been found at Gebal or Byblos on the Mediterranean coast, containing an inscription in Phoenician-Hebrew script. Also, bronze arrowheads of the same period have been found near Bethlehem, each of them containing two words in the Phoenician-Hebrew script (*Views of the Biblical World*, International Publishing Co., 1960, II, 91). It should be noted, however, that these metal objects are a far cry from the type of "brass plates" described in the *Book of Mormon*, that the date of these objects is about five centuries before 600 B.C., and that the writing found on them is not Egyptian but a kind of early Hebrew. Note also that the blade was discovered at Byblos, which is some 160 miles north of Jerusalem, and that neither the blade nor the arrowhead present any kind of analogy for the writing of entire books on metal.

15 Diringer, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

16 *Ibid.*

custody of Moroni.<sup>17</sup> This brings us to the question of translation. Joseph Smith, who had not been trained in "Reformed Egyptian," was nevertheless able to translate all these writings into English. Mormons claim, as we know, that Smith did this translating in a supernatural way, with the aid of the "Urim and Thummim."<sup>18</sup> Here, already, as we have seen, there is great disparity between the Bible and the *Book of Mormon*. In giving us the Bible, God gave us manuscripts in Hebrew and Greek which we can translate with the aid of lexicographical helps. Does it seem likely that God would completely change His method and give us, in the instance of His later and reputedly superior revelation, only a translation but not the original language? Does it seem likely that an untrained man can by looking through stones translate foreign characters?

We must next examine the nature of this alleged translation. It will be recalled that, according to Talmage, no reservation may be made respecting the *Book of Mormon* on the ground of incorrect translation, since this translation was effected through the gift and power of God.<sup>19</sup> This means, then, that Joseph Smith's translation differs from all other translations that have ever been made; it was inspired directly by God and is therefore completely errorless. This means, too, that the original manuscript of Smith's translation must be the authoritative one, since it embodies the translation as it is alleged to have come directly from God. No changes therefore may be tolerated in this original translation, since a single change would be sufficient to upset the theory that this was an errorless translation. The fact of the matter is, however, that a great many changes have been made in the *Book of Mormon* since the original edition of 1830 was published.<sup>20</sup> In comparing just the first chapter of this 1830 edition with the first chapter of the 1950 edition, I have noted nine changes, exclusive of punctuation. A number of these changes correct obvious grammatical errors. For example, "my father had read and saw" has been changed to "my father had read and seen"; "thy power, and goodness and mercy is over all the inhabitants of the earth" has been changed to "thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth"; "the tender mercies of the Lord is . . ." has been changed to "the tender mercies of the Lord are. . . ." Does the following sentence sound as though it has been inspired by God? "And when Moroni had said these words, he went forth among the people, waving the rent of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had wrote upon the rent . . ." (Alma 46:19). The sentence has been changed to read: ". . . waving the rent part of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part. . . ." There have even been doctrinal corrections. On page 25 of the 1830 edition we read, "And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!" This has been corrected to read: "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!" (I Nephi 11:21).

Does it seem likely that God would "inspire" a translation in which both grammatical and doctrinal corrections would have to be made? Mormons have no right to regard the grammatical errors as excusable on the ground of Smith's lack of formal education, for this entire translation is alleged to have been made "through the gift and power of God," and is said to be "in no sense the product of linguistic scholarship."<sup>21</sup> When there are occasional grammatical errors in our Bible translations -- such as the notorious King James rendering of Matthew 16:15, "But whom say ye

---

17 McConkie, *op. cit.*, p. 300.

18 See above, p. 10 and n. 4 on that page. [Hoekema is referring to his own book here.]

19 See above, pp. 18-19.

20 Lamoni Call, in a book written in 1898, claimed that 2,038 corrections had been made in the *Book of Mormon* subsequent to the original edition (Arbaugh, *Revelation in Mormonism*, p. 50, n. 23). Arthur Budvarson, however, contends that by 1959 there had been over 3,000 changes (*The Book of Mormon Examined*, published by the Utah Christian Tract Society of La Mesa, Calif., 1959; p. 12).

21 Talmage, *Vitality of Mormonism*, p. 127.

that I am?" -- we have no difficulty in admitting that the translators, perhaps misled by the accusative case of the interrogative pronoun in the Greek, were in error. After all, no translator is inspired. But Mormons cannot admit even a single grammatical error in Smith's original translation.

Another difficulty we have with Smith's "translation" is the presence in it of at least 27,000 words from the King James Version of the Bible.<sup>22</sup> Does it seem likely that passages on the golden plates would be translated by divine inspiration in language precisely like that of the King James Bible?

We consider finally the testimony of Professor Charles Anthon, found in *Pearl of Great Price*, regarding the genuineness of the characters taken from the plates and the accuracy of the translation.<sup>23</sup> It will be recalled that when Anthon was shown the characters with their translation, he said, according to Smith's autobiography, that the translation was "correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian" (*Pearl of Great Price*, p. 55). However, in Mormon 9:34 we read, "But the Lord knoweth . . . that none other people knoweth our language; therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof." If the latter statement be correct, how could Professor Anthon know that the translation was correct? If, on the other hand, he could make a judgment as to the accuracy of the translation, it is not true that "none other people knoweth our language."

Both Budvarson and Walter Martin reproduce the letter sent to Mr. E. D. Howe by Professor Anthon on February 17, 1834, in which the professor completely denies the truth of the statements attributed to him in the *Pearl of Great Price*.<sup>24</sup> Even apart from the existence of this letter, however, it will be obvious to any well-informed person that Professor Anthon could not have said what he is alleged to have said in *Pearl of Great Price*. For, according to this document, Anthon said, after he saw some characters supposedly copied from the golden plates, that these characters were: "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic" (p. 55). One would have expected a learned man, however, to designate which type of Egyptian script the characters represent: hieroglyphic, hieratic, or demotic. If we assume, now, that "Assyriac" stands for Assyrian, and that "Chaldaic" stands for some form of Aramaic, we may note that the professor is reported as saying that characters representing four different languages would provide a readable kind of writing! The matter is still further complicated when we observe that the cuneiform script used by the Assyrians, though it did employ syllabic signs and vowels, never became an alphabetic script,<sup>25</sup> that none of the three types of Egyptian writing were alphabetic scripts, and that both Aramaic and Arabic were written in alphabetic scripts. Does it seem likely that sense could be made out of characters from four different languages, two of which were written in alphabetic scripts, whereas the other two were not? To use an illustration, this would be like trying to write a sentence by putting letters from our own English alphabet next to some Hebrew consonants, some Japanese characters, and some Chinese characters! Is it not by this time clear that Professor Anthon, if he were any kind of scholar at all, could not possibly have said what the *Pearl of Great Price* reports him as having said? We may thus dismiss this supposedly learned testimony as completely valueless.

We conclude that there are so many improbabilities and absurdities in the story of the alleged

---

22 Budvarson, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

23 See above, pp. 11-12.

24 Budvarson, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40; Walter R. Martin, *The Maze of Mormonism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), pp. 42-44.

25 Diringer, *op. cit.*, p.43.

"coming forth" of the *Book of Mormon* that it cannot possibly have been a genuine vehicle of divine revelation. In the words of a Mormon writer,

This book [The *Book of Mormon*] must be either true or false. . . . If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deep-laid impositions ever palmed upon the world, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who would sincerely receive it as the word of God, and will suppose themselves securely built upon the rock of truth until they are plunged with their families into hopeless despair.<sup>26</sup>

It is my earnest conviction that, in the light of the evidence presented in this appendix, the *Book of Mormon* is precisely what Orson Pratt says it might be in the latter part of the above quotation. It is, I believe, one of the most cunning and wicked impositions ever palmed upon the world.

---

<sup>26</sup> Orson Pratt, *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*; quoted in Budvarson, *op. cit.*, p. 7.