

MORMON SCRIPTURE

Doctrine And Covenants, Part III

By Marvin W. Cowan

Mormons claim their Church is superior to all others because it has a living prophet who receives current revelation from God which is added to their scripture in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. But, as our previous articles showed, they have *deleted* far more from the *Doctrine and Covenants* than they have added since Joseph Smith's death in 1844. Smith's revelations were first published in 1832 and 1833 in *The Evening and Morning Star*, a Mormon newspaper in Independence, Missouri and also in the 1833 *Book of Commandments*, which was the predecessor of the *Doctrine and Covenants*. But when the first edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* was published in 1835 numerous changes were made in the "revelations." In 1835 Mormon leaders in Kirtland, Ohio also re-printed the 1832 and 1833 editions of *The Evening and Morning Star* with Smith's "revelations" changed to agree with the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*. So, it was a bogus re-print! Mormons claim prophets and new revelation are needed to clarify God's message. But, the *Book of Commandments* and the *Doctrine and Covenants* often record what is supposed to be the same "revelation," given at a certain time and place, yet the message is different in the two books. Changed "revelations" raise such questions as: Which way did God reveal it? Or, *did* He reveal it? Or, will other revelations also be changed?

The "revelation" given to Smith at Harmony, Pennsylvania in March 1829 concerning his gift to translate the *Book of Mormon* is an example of such change. It is in the *Book of Commandments*, Chapter IV, verses 1-2: "Behold, I say unto you, that my servant Martin has desired a witness from my hand, that my servant Joseph has got the things of which he has testified, and borne record that he has received of me. And now, behold, this shall ye say unto him:—I the Lord am God, and I have given these things unto my servant Joseph, and I have commanded him that he should stand as a witness of these things, nevertheless, I have caused him that he should enter into a covenant with me, that he should not show them except I command him, and he has no power over them except I grant it unto him: and *he has a gift to translate the book*, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for *I will grant him no other gift.*"

In the 1835 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* all of the above quotation is verse one of Chapter XXXII, and is changed to: "Behold, I say unto you, that as my servant Martin Harris has desired a witness at my hand, that you, my servant Joseph Smith, jr. have got the *plates* of which you have testified and borne record that you have received of me: and now behold, this shall you say unto him, He who spake unto you said unto you, I the Lord am God, and have given these things unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, jr. and have commanded you that you shall stand as a witness of these things, and I have caused you that you should enter into a covenant with me that you should not show them except to those persons to whom I command you; and you have no power over them except I grant it unto you. And *you have a gift to translate the plates*; and *this is the first gift* that I bestowed upon you, and I have commanded that you should pretend to *no other gift until my purpose is fulfilled in this*; for *I will grant unto you no other gift until it is finished.*" This quotation is now *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 5:1-4. The last few lines of this quotation in the *Book of Commandments* declares that Smith's gift to translate the *book* was the *only* gift that

God would give him. But, in the *Doctrine and Covenants* it says his gift to translate the *plates* was the *first* gift given him and that he wouldn't get any other gift until that translation was finished. These are not two different revelations, but the same revelation in two different books of Mormon scripture. Since they don't say the same thing, they can't both be right. So, which way did God reveal it? There are also other differences in the two quotations.

Another example of changes in Mormon revelation is in the *Book of Commandments*, Chapter VII, verse 3: "O remember, these words and keep my commandments. Remember this is your gift. Now this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the gift of *working with the rod*: behold it has told you things: behold there is no power save God, that can cause this *rod of nature*, to work in your hands, for it is the work of God; and therefore whatsoever you shall ask me to tell you by that means, that will I grant unto you, that you shall know." This quotation is only the first part of verse 3 in the 1835 *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section XXXIV. But it is changed to read: "O remember these words, and keep my commandments.—Remember this is your gift. Now this is not all thy gift; for you have another gift, which is the *gift of Aaron*: behold it has told you many things: behold there is no other power save the power of God that can cause this *gift of Aaron* to be with you; therefore, doubt not, for it is the gift of God, and you shall hold it in your hands, and do marvelous works; and no power shall be able to take it away out of your hands; for it is the work of God. And therefore, whatsoever you shall ask me to tell you by that means, that will I grant unto you and you shall have knowledge concerning it." This is *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 8:5-9 in the current edition. The gift of "working with the rod" is "water witching," which is not the same thing as "the gift of Aaron." But, even if they were the same thing, *why* was "revelation" changed? Does God change revelation that He has already given and then claim it is the same revelation that it was before the change? Many other changes appear in the above quotation and in other "revelations" in the *Doctrine and Covenants*.

Our next article will discuss false prophecies in the *Doctrine and Covenants*. For more information on this subject, we suggest *Mormonism, Shadow or Reality*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, published by Utah Lighthouse Ministry, P. O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.