

CHAPTER XXII

An Answer to Budvarson's Criticisms of the Book of Mormon (Cont'd)

Mr. Budvarson gives us a photo reproduction (p. 22) of page 482 of the First Edition of the Book of Mormon in which he underlines seven cases where we have either the reading "Father which" or "Father, which." (Cf. 3 Nephi 13:1-23.) The page, so Mr. Budvarson charges, was copied into the original edition of the Book of Mormon from Matt. 6:1-23, and is thus a "plagiarism," to quote his next page (p. 23). He makes much of the fact that the King James rendering of "which" has been changed to "who" in succeeding editions of the Book of Mormon. This is an improvement, to be sure, in that it takes note of the fact that language changes. Probably Mr. Budvarson would approve the change were it not for his preposterous views concerning claims the Mormon leaders allegedly make for the "perfectness" of the First Edition on his pages 10 and 11. These claims we have already dealt with, and so we pass now to his charges (p. 23) that "The Book of Mormon is a plagiarism" in that "it purloins large portions of the King James Bible. (The 1830 original edition failed to even recognize the Bible Later editions however, refer the reader to it.)" Mr. Budvarson's page 23 gives a photo reproduction of page 501 of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon and points out that "Isaiah 54, verses 1 through 4 of the King James Bible are copied verbatim. Later editions of the Book of Mormon have added the phrase, 'and shalt not remember the reproach of thy youth,' to Isaiah's text, verse 4. (See 3 Nephi 22:4.)"

In respect to the text of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, we suggest that Mr. Budvarson read our Chapter XI,

"The Isaiah Problem in the Book of Mormon." Of about 433 verses of Isaiah quoted in the Book of Mormon, the prophet Joseph Smith changed or modified about 234 of these in the course of his translation, leaving about 199 verses the same as in the King James Version. In the course of our researches on the Book of Mormon we have never been able to prove historically, that is, with adequate documentation, that Joseph Smith or his scribe had at their sides copies of the King James Version of the Bible to which they made reference as the translation of the Nephite record proceeded. We shall not claim another miracle, however, in the translation, but will simply assume, as most translators would, that the prophet realized the greatness of the King James Version and used it to help him in his work of translation when he came upon familiar scriptures. It is true that the Book of Mormon does contain many verses of scripture, other than those in Isaiah, which agree verbatim with their parallels in the King James Version. But Mr. Budvarson, don't you think that to say Joseph Smith was a "plagiarizer" in that the Book of Mormon "purloins large portions of the King James Bible" is pretty strong language and downright ungenerous on your part when we consider the young prophet's lack of literary experience in 1830, not to mention some other considerations? Do you think for one moment that Joseph Smith would assume that the readers of the Nephite record would not recognize the numerous parallels from Isaiah, the Sermon on the Mount, and others in their own Bibles? Whatever else you may think of Joseph Smith, Mr. Budvarson, he was not stupid. He doubtless assumed that people would recognize the parallels in their own Bibles. How could they miss recognizing them? And don't you know, Mr. Budvarson, that hundreds of writers in good repute, even today, quote from the King James Bible and other translations on occasion without giving credit to them except for book, chapter and verse? We don't

call them plagiarizers. Their readers have a measure of understanding of what the authors are doing. And notice, Mr. Budvarson, how often the Book of Mormon recognizes the writer of a passage of scripture, even if it does not cite the King James Version which you would claim as the source. (Cf. 1 Nephi 19:10-13, 23-24; 2 Nephi 6:4-7; 11:8; Mosiah 12:31-14:12; 3 Nephi 16:17; 24:1, etc.) If we assume that Joseph Smith used the King James Version to assist him when translating a familiar passage of scripture on the plates in his presence, we presume that the King James reading was retained when it agreed substantially with that before him but was changed when it did not agree. As examples of change note 2 Nephi 12:16 (cf. Isa. 2:16) and 2 Nephi 19:3 (cf. Isa. 9:3). These changes meant that the prophet had to translate afresh. If you were able to make a scholarly study of these changes and their implications, even you might be converted, Mr. Budvarson, to the Book of Mormon.

Budvarson claims that "at least twenty-seven thousand words from the King James translation of the Bible are contained in the Book of Mormon." Our own estimate is about seventeen thousand words, an estimate we think is much more accurate. The total number of words in the Book of Mormon is a trifle over two hundred and sixty-four thousand.

Let us now look over Mr. Budvarson's "Items of Special Interest" beginning on his page 24. The first item is one in which the gentleman alleges that "the Book of Mormon contradicts the Bible." The first "proof," and one which he really seems to relish, is found on page 240 of the First Edition where we find this statement:

. . . the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem, which is the land of our forefathers, . . . [Cf. Alma 7:9-10]

Budvarson cites the Bible (Micah 5:2; Matt.2:1) to

prove that through prophecy and fulfillment Jesus was "born in Bethlehem of Judaea." Then he says:

Here is a direct contradiction between the Book of Mormon and the Word of God, the Bible, regarding the birthplace of Jesus Christ! In defense of this glaring error in the Book of Mormon, the Mormons offer the excuse that Jerusalem is the "land." We would remind those who make this absurd claim that Jerusalem is not the "land," but is a city in Judea as was also Bethlehem. Even the Book of Mormon, in other passages, calls Jerusalem a city. (See 1830 Edition, page 1. Later editions, 1 Nephi 1:4)

We verily know that, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea" and not in Jerusalem!

"It is not lawful to contradict a point of history known to all the world" (Dryden—Webster's Dictionary).

Well, now, Mr. Budvarson, it is incredible that even you could believe that Joseph Smith, not to mention his intelligent scribe, Oliver Cowdery, were unaware that Jesus was born at Bethlehem! They would be reminded of the fact every Christmas, if at no other time, in their Bible-reading communities. Why does the text, then, in Alma 7:10, read that Jesus should "be born of Mary, at Jerusalem"? For the simple reason, Mr. Budvarson, that Joseph Smith was translating what someone else had said; he was not injecting his own opinion into the subject matter at hand. Moreover, what Alma said about the place of Jesus' birth was correct, historically correct in the light of our knowledge of customs in vogue in Palestine when the Nephites left "the land of Jerusalem." (1 Nephi 2:11) Alma 7:10 does not really contradict the passages of scripture you cite at all. If you don't believe this, turn to our Chapter XV, "Was Jesus Born in the 'Land of Jerusalem'?" where you will find the facts set forth quite plainly. Too bad you didn't know the facts, Mr. Budvarson. Your case fails again.

Mr. Budvarson now turns his attention (pages 25-28) to the "Three Witnesses" and the "Eight Witnesses" of the Book of Mormon. He is hard put to confront the testimony of these witnesses and so conjures up the same excuse that their solemn witness "must be regarded as null and void" because of the fact that "thousands of changes have been made in the work" [Book of Mormon] in later editions. Now, Mr. Budvarson, you know very well that the sense of the First Edition has not been disturbed in later editions, and the "thousands" of changes are relatively minor in nature, in matters of punctuation, spelling, diction, correction of errors and the like. The thing that counts still remains, the message and sense of the original translation. If you are so concerned about the testimony of the witnesses in later editions of the Nephite record, may we remind you that the Mormon people will be content to have you stick to their witness in the First Edition. How about it, Mr. Budvarson? We are willing to rest our case on the First Edition.

You are careful to point out that the "Three Witnesses" and five of the "Eight Witnesses" apostatized from the Church. We fail to see how this fact can help your case one iota. Quite the reverse, it helps our case as far as the Book of Mormon is concerned. How does it happen, Mr. Budvarson, that not one of the apostates ever denied his testimony? One would expect an apostate to expose Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon if it was really a "phony." But none did deny his testimony to the day of his death. Please point out one, if you can. Your arguments are very weak and unconvincing.

The next Achilles' heel Budvarson finds, (pp. 29-31) or thinks he finds in our claims for the Book of Mormon, concerns assertions made in revelations received by Joseph Smith that the Nephite record contains "the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ." (See D. & C. 20:9; cf. 27:5.) Says the gentleman:

Surely it would be an act of arrogance, and a presumptuous disregard of God's Word and power, if the above "revelations" were true, that after having received them, the "prophet" would dare to add to "the fulness of the everlasting gospel" of the Book of Mormon! Yet, much has been added, for most of the doctrines of Mormonism are found in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and in the so-called "modern-day revelations."

As examples of doctrines which Joseph Smith "added" to "the fulness of the everlasting gospel" found in the Book of Mormon, Budvarson cites baptism for the dead and "celestial marriage." Here are some of his comments on baptism for the dead:

The Mormon doctrine and practice of "baptizing for the dead" which was instituted by Joseph Smith and is performed in Mormon temples, is one of the greatest of the "dead works" carried on by men. This work involves the extensive and complicated system of "endless genealogies," which the Bible says are, "foolish, unprofitable, and vain." (See 1 Timothy 1:4 and Titus 3:9.) . . . And yet, the Book of Mormon, which is supposed to contain the "everlasting gospel in its fulness," has absolutely nothing to say about baptizing for the dead. Not one word of instruction can be found in the entire book on this so-called "most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel!" [Cf. D. & C. 128:17.]

On the matter of celestial marriage, Budvarson cites Dr. Milton R. Hunter's *The Gospel Through the Ages*, pages 118-120, where he says that the "crowning gospel ordinance requisite for Godhood is celestial marriage," and then comments in these words:

"Celestial marriage," peculiar to the Mormon religion and performed in their "temples," has a strange and fanatical hold upon the people. The rituals executed are very secretive and the participants are under oath not to reveal them.

The above quotations [from Hunter], calling celestial marriage "the crowning gospel ordinance," disclose how

important this doctrine is to the Mormon religion; yet the Book of Mormon which is supposed to contain the "everlasting gospel in its fulness," does not even mention "celestial marriage"!

To sum up, Budvarson attempts here to convict us on two grounds: (1) that the Book of Mormon, which contains the "fulness of the everlasting gospel," has been "added to" and (2) that the additions such as "baptism for the dead" and "celestial marriage" are not even mentioned in the Nephite record.

Now, Mr. Budvarson, you betray such an abysmal ignorance of the Book of Mormon and the two doctrines you say have been "added to" the "fulness of the everlasting gospel" as contained in the book that we wouldn't even deign to answer you were it not for the fact that your brochure comes from a reputable publishing house and is therefore likely to draw some sincere people away from the truth. Before you write another brochure against "Mormonism," why don't you get some of your fine Latter-day Saint relatives living in or about San Diego, California, to give you some elementary instruction in the fundamentals of our faith? But, anyway, let's meet your charges head-on.

Now, Mr. Budvarson, if you know anything about fundamental Mormon beliefs at all, you should realize that the doctrines of baptism for the dead and celestial marriage are both inextricably tied up with Malachi's prediction about the coming of Elijah in Malachi 4: 5-6. According to our *Doctrine and Covenants* (110:14-16) Elijah came, as predicted by Malachi, into the Kirtland Temple in Kirtland, Ohio, April 3, 1836, and conferred upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery keys giving them the right to do baptism for the dead and to perform "celestial marriage." And since you seem to have a copy of President Joseph Fielding Smith's *Teachings of the Prophet*

Joseph Smith in your possession, Mr. Budvarson, you should have known about our beliefs in Elijah's mission (see pp. 172, 300, 301, 323, 330, 335-338) and its connection with Malachi's prophecy. Why then did you omit this vital information when you quoted from the *Doctrine and Covenants* 128:17-18 on your page 30? Here is the way you quoted it to your intended public:

" . . . the glories to be revealed in the last days, and in an especial manner this most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel . . . and behold, what is that subject? It is baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect."

Now, in all good conscience, because of its bearing on the Book of Mormon which you attack, you should have quoted the passage in this fuller manner:

. . . the glories to be revealed in the last days, and in an especial manner this most glorious of all subjects belonging to the everlasting gospel, namely, the baptism for the dead; for Malachi says, last chapter, verses 5th and 6th: Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.... and behold what is that subject? It is the baptism for the dead. For we without them cannot be made perfect; neither can they without us be made perfect.

You have no justification at all in omitting Joseph Smith's reference to Malachi's prophecy, and you must be basically ignorant of its importance to our case for the Book of Mormon. The reason is this: Since our beliefs in baptism for the dead and celestial marriage are both bound up with Elijah's mission as mentioned in Malachi 4: 5-6, you do the Mormon people a grave injustice by failing to point out to your reading public that the Book of

Mormon does quote the passage in question. In fact, the Book of Mormon relates that the risen, glorified Savior on his appearance to the Nephite people quoted chapters 3 and 4 of Malachi to them and expounded their meaning. (See 3 Nephi 24:1-26: 2.) Consequently, the Nephite people knew all about baptism for the dead and celestial marriage. To be sure, the Book of Mormon does not mention these two doctrines specifically, but they are definitely implied. Why weren't you scholarly and frank in your presentation, Mr. Budvarson? And may we ask another question of you: If baptism for the dead is one of the greatest of the "dead works" carried on by men, as you say (p. 29), and involves an extensive and complicated system of "endless genealogies," how does it happen that the ancient saints seemed to know about it and practice it? (I Cor. 15:29) And don't try to tell us that Paul disapproved the doctrine; he was simply reproving the Corinthians for their inconsistency in practicing the doctrine and having at the same time a lack of faith in the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead. The two were incompatible.

We hope you understand now, Mr. Budvarson, that nothing is really being "added to" the "fulness of the everlasting gospel" as contained in the Book of Mormon. And understand this also, that when the Lord says in the *Doctrine and Covenants* (20:9) that the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ," He does not mean that it contains a full list or description of all doctrines understood by the Nephites or of the ordinances they practiced. Rather he means that they had divine authority and keys of Priesthood sufficient to bestow the Holy Ghost and enable them through obedience to the Lord's commands to gain a "fulness" of salvation. The *Doctrine and Covenants* contains a "fulness of the gospel" also, but it does not, for example, contain a description of all ceremonies and rites practiced in the temple

for the salvation and blessing of men and women, both living and dead. Your attack on the Book of Mormon fails again, Mr. Budvarson. You emphasize the letter, but lack the spirit. You are clearly out of your depth in attacking the Nephite scripture.