

3 of 3  
Copies

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-BYU-

The Book of Abraham

Divine Revelation or Speculative Writings?

The Book of Abraham is accepted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as divine revelation. It is contained within the Pearl of Great Price one of four books of scripture canonized as <sup>containing</sup> official <sup>church</sup> doctrine.

The Book of Abraham, on the other hand is officially viewed by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints "as the speculative writings of its author, and certainly neither intended by him nor endorsed officially by the Reorganized Church at anytime since its founding in 1852 to qualify as 'inspired' writing."<sup>1</sup>

Since the two churches share a common origin and both regard Joseph Smith as a prophet of God I have chosen to study the divergency through an appeal to primary sources or at least the earliest available sources which should logically be acceptable to both parties.

The conflict will be approached by examining the following five questions:

1. What is the Book of Abraham--its origin and contents?
2. How did Joseph Smith and his trusted associates regard the Book of Abraham?
3. When did the differences surface?
4. What teachings and doctrines contained within the Book of Abraham are unacceptable to the RLDS?
5. What is the present situation? *Questions that persist?*

What is the Book of Abraham?

To better understand the nature of the controversy it is necessary to determine what the Book of Abraham is? What is its origin? What is its content?

During the last part of June and the first week of July 1835 Michael H. Chandler arrived and stayed the week in Kirtland, Ohio bringing with him four Egyptian mummies and some papyri. Mr. Chandler was an Irish immigrant who had moved to the United States a few years before. He resided in Philadelphia with his wife Frances F. Ludlow and their six children.<sup>2</sup> In the late winter or early spring of 1833 Michael H. Chandler was notified that he had been willed a most unusual inheritance, that of eleven Egyptian mummies whose sarcophagi had never been opened. He went to the Customs House in New York City where he claimed his peculiar legacy. He returned to Philadelphia and shortly after arriving made arrangements to display them in various arcades and museums in the city charging an entrance fee of 25¢ per adult and 12½¢ per child.<sup>3</sup> After several weeks of displaying the mummies in Philadelphia, Chandler took the mummies to Baltimore, Maryland where they were very well received.<sup>4</sup> Later that Summer he displayed the mummies in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>5</sup> Soon after receiving the mummies Mr. Chandler sold several of them to various buyers in Philadelphia.<sup>6</sup> He had retained only six of the original eleven mummies by the time he traveled to Baltimore.

By the Spring of 1835 Michael H. Chandler's original cache of eleven mummies had dwindled to four. After two years, Chandler, anxious to terminate his transient life style, had advertised in a Cleveland newspaper both the Egyptian exhibit and the fact that the mummies were for sale.<sup>7</sup> At each presentation he had inquired if there were anyone who could read Egyptian hieroglyphics. Several times Joseph Smith's name was mentioned, mostly in derision, of one who professed to read Egyptian writings since the plates of gold were claimed to be

engraved in that ancient language.<sup>8</sup> With Mormon headquarters just a few miles east of Cleveland Mr. Chandler made arrangements to exhibit his unusual display at Kirtland.

The following entry was made in the Prophet Joseph Smith's journal dated July 3, 1835:

On the 3rd of July, Michael H. Chandler came to Kirtland to exhibit some Egyptian mummies. There were four human figures, together with some two or more rolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphic figures and devices. As Mr. Chandler had been told I could translate them, he (July 4) brought me some of the characters, and I gave him the interpretation, and like a gentleman, he gave me the following certificate: (July 6)

"Kirtland, July 6, 1835

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

Signed,

Michael H. Chandler

Traveling with, and proprietor of,

Egyptian Mummies.<sup>9</sup>

Joseph Smith was not a stranger to the Egyptian language.

Even though Joseph Smith was not aware of the exact content of the papyri at the time of the purchase he apparently was impressed by the Lord to raise the considerable amount of money being asked for them. The Kirtland saints were desirous of purchasing the mummies and the papyrus from Mr. Chandler. The price was fixed at \$2,400.00--a large sum of money especially when the

completion of the temple was so pressing. Simeon Andrews and Joseph Coe contributed \$800.00 each and many other saints with less resources contributed the \$800.00 balance pledging what they could under Joseph Smith's name at the Geauga County bank.<sup>10</sup>

After the purchase Joseph Smith in company with his scribes commenced to translate some of the hieroglyphics. Joseph Smith recorded:

"Purchase of the 6.<sup>th</sup> Soon after this, some of the Saints at Kirtland purchased the mummies and papyrus, a description of which will appear hereafter, and with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters of hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.,--a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth."<sup>11</sup>

The Egyptian Connection

We are indebted to Michael H. Chandler alone for the story of the mummies and papyri prior to his receiving them. He must have learned these details from some information that was mailed to him or accompanied the mummies. Approximately six months after the Church acquired the mummies Oliver Cowdery, who interviewed Michael H. Chandler, recorded the following details:

"The public mind has been excited of late, by reports which have been circulated concerning certain Egyptian mummies and ancient records which were purchased by certain gentlemen of Kirtland, last July. . .who these ancient inhabitants of Egypt were, I do not at present say. . .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 records were obtained from one of the

catacombs in Egypt, near the place where once stood the renowned city of Thebes, by the celebrated French traveler, Antonio Lebolo in the year 1831. He procured license from Mehemet Ali, then Viceroy of Egypt, under the protection of Chevalier Drovetti, the French Consul, in the year 1828; employed 433 men four months and two days, (if I understood correctly, Egyptian or Turkish soldiers,) at from four to six cents per diem, each man; entered the catacomb June 7, 1831, and obtained eleven Mummies. . . On his way from Alexandria to Paris, he put in at Trieste, and after ten days illness, expired. This was in the year 1832. Previous to his decease, he made a will of the whole to Mr. Michael H. Chandler, then in Philadelphia, Pa., his nephew, whom he supposed to have been in Ireland. Accordingly the whole were sent to Dublin, addressed according, and Mr. Chandler's friends ordered them sent to New York, where they were received at the custom house, in the winter or spring of 1833."<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Chandler, discovered as he opened the coffins, that in connection with two of the bodies were two rolls of papyrus. Two or three other papyri fragments containing astronomical calculations, epitaphs, etc. were found with some of the other mummies.<sup>13</sup> While still at the Customs House he was told that no one in New York City could translate the papyrus but the same gentlemen mentioned that Joseph Smith, Jun. claimed some kind of power or gifts allowing him to translate similar characters.<sup>14</sup> Twenty seven months were to pass before Michael H. Chandler met Joseph Smith for the first time at Kirtland.

When Joseph Smith began the translation of the Egyptian writings the heading for the Book of Abraham read: "Translations of the Book of Abraham written by his own hand upon papyrus and found in the Catacombs of Egypt."

The Church Leader's Response to the Book of Abraham (1835-1844)

It has already been mentioned that Joseph Smith in company with his scribes, shortly after having accessioned the manuscripts began to translate the material and commented, "much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.,--a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth."<sup>15</sup>

In a letter dated July 19 & 20, 1835 W. W. Phelps, one of the prophets scribes in Kirtland, wrote to his wife in Clay County, Missouri the following:

"The last of June four Egyptian mummies were brought here; there were two papyrus rolls, besides some other Ancient Egyptian writings with them. As no one could translate these writings, they were presented to President Smith. He soon knew what they were and said the, the "rolls of papyrus," contained the sacred record kept of Joseph in Pharaoh's Court in Egypt, and the teachings of Father Abraham. God has so ordered it that these mummies and writings have been brought in the Church, and the sacred writing I have just locked up in Brother Joseph's house when your letter came. So I had two consolations of good things in one day. These records of old times, when we translate and print them in a book, will make a good witness for the Book of Mormon. There is nothing secret or hidden that shall not be revealed, and they come to the Saints. . ."<sup>16</sup>

In the latter part of July, 1835 the following Journal entry was made:

"The remainder of this month, I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients."<sup>17</sup>

Joseph Smith's October 1, 1835 Journal entry reads:

"This afternoon I labored on the Egyptian alphabet, in company with Brothers Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps, and during the research, the principles of astronomy as understood by Father Abraham and the ancients unfolded to our understanding, the particulars of which will appear hereafter."<sup>18</sup>

On October 3, 1835 Frederick G. Williams reported:

"In the afternoon of the same day he waited on the Twelve, most of them at his own house, exhibited to them the ancient records in his possession and gave explanations of the same. This day he observed, passed off with the blessing of the Lord."<sup>19</sup>

On October 29, 1835 Warren Parrish was called and employed by the Prophet Joseph Smith as Joseph's scribe relative to the Egyptian translation. Joseph Smith on November 14, 1835 recorded: "Thus came the work of the Lord unto me, saying: Verily thus saith the Lord unto my servant Joseph, concerning my servant Warren Parrish. . .

". . .Behold it shall come to pass in his day, that he shall see great things show forth themselves unto my people; he shall see much of my ancient records, and shall know of hidden things, and shall be endowed with a knowledge of hidden languages; and if he desire and shall seek it at my hand, he shall be privileged with writing much of my word, as a scribe unto me for the benefit of my people; therefore this shall be his calling until I shall order it otherwise in my wisdom, and it shall be said of him in time to come, Behold Warren, the Lord's scribe for the Lord's Seer, whom He hath appointed in Israel. . . ." <sup>20</sup>

On December 16, 1835 Elders William M'Lellin, Brigham Young, and Jared Carter called on Joseph Smith. Joseph exhibited and explained the Egyptian

*Vol. 4 # 21, 22*  
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records to them "and many things concerning the dealing of God with the  
ancients, especially the system of Astronomy as taught by Abraham which is  
contained upon these manuscripts. They were much gratified with this intelligence."<sup>21</sup>

Sunday, December 20, 1835

". . .Brother Palmer and Taylor called today to see him. To whom he exhibited the sacred records to their joy and satisfaction."<sup>22</sup>

Oliver Cowdery, second elder in the Church, and Joseph Smith's scribe during most of the Book of Mormon translation and then assisting with the Abrahamic translation expressed his high regard for the Egyptian records calling them "an inestimable acquisition to our present scriptures."

". . .When the translation of these valuable documents will be completed, I am unable to say; neither can I give you a probable idea how large volumes they will make; but judging from their size, and the comprehensiveness of the language, one might reasonably expect to see a sufficient to develop much upon the mighty acts of the ancient men of God, and of his dealing with the children of men when they saw him face to face. Be there little or much, it must be an inestimable acquisition to our present scriptures, fulfilling, in a small degree, the word of the prophet: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

P. S. You will have understood from the foregoing, that eleven Mummies were taken from the catacomb, at the time of which I have been speaking, and nothing definite having been said as to their disposal, I may, with propriety add a few words. Seven of the said eleven were purchased by gentlemen for private museums, previous to Mr. Chandler's visit to this place, with a small quantity of papyrus, similar, (as he says,) to the astronomical representation, contained with the present two rolls, of which I previously spoke, and the remaining four by gentlemen resident here.



Though the Mummies themselves are a curiosity, and an astonishment, well calculated to arouse the mind to a reflection of past ages, when men strove, as at this day, to immortalize their names, though in another manner, yet I do not consider them of much value compared with those records which were deposited with them.

If Providence permits, I will, ere long, write you again upon the propriety of looking for additions to our present scriptures, according to their own literal reading."<sup>23</sup>

John Whitmer was also very impressed with the Egyptian records:

"Joseph the Seer saw these records and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records which gave an account of our forefathers. Much of which was written by Joseph of Egypt who was sold by his brethren. Which when all translated will be a pleasing history and of great value to the Saints."<sup>24</sup>

Saturday, January 30, 1836

"Attended school, as usual, and waited upon several visitors and showed them the record of Abraham. Mr. Seixas, our Hebrew teacher, examined them with deep interest, and pronounced it to be original beyond all doubt. . ."<sup>25</sup>

February 3, 1836

". . .Received many visitors, and showed them the Records of Abraham."<sup>26</sup>

Thursday, February 11, 1836

"Spent the afternoon in reading, and in exhibiting the Egyptian records to those who called to see me, and heavens blessings have attended me."<sup>27</sup>

November 5, 1837

"The Church in Kirtland voted to sanction the appointment of Brother Phinehas Richards and Reuben Hedlock, by the Presidency, to transact business for the Church in procuring means to translate and print the records taken from the Catacombs of Egypt, then in the Temple."<sup>28</sup>

Sunday, May 6, 1838

"I also gave some instructions in the mysteries of the Kingdom of God: such as the history of the planets; of Abraham's writings upon the planetary systems, etc."<sup>29</sup>

Anson Call settled his family on his farm at Three Forks. Prior to September 1838 he made a business trip to Far West, Mo., where he visited with the Prophet Joseph Smith. Anson Call wrote:

"While at Far West I happened in John Corl's or the church store and my attention was called by Vincent Knights who was opening some boxes of goods. Says he, 'Joseph will be much pleased with these.' He had been very uneasy about the translation of the Bible and the Egyptian Records. Here they are, placing them on the table. Said he to me, 'If you will take one of these, I will take the other and we will carry them over to Joseph's office.' There we found Joseph and six or seven other brethren. Joseph was much pleased with the arrival of the books, and said to us 'Sit down and we will read to you from the translations of the Book of Abraham.' Oliver Cowdery then read until he was tired when Thomas Marsh read making altogether about two hours. I was much interested in the work."<sup>30</sup>

In Nauvoo Joseph Smith published:

June 18, 1840

". . . That your Memorialist (Joseph Smith) feels it a duty which he owes to God, as well as to the church, to give his attention more particularly to those things connected with the spiritual welfare of the Saints,

(which have now become a great people), so that they may be built up in their most holy faith, and go on to perfection:--That the Church have erected an office where he can attend to the affairs of the Church without distraction, he thinks, and verily believes, that the time has now come, when he should devote himself exclusively to those things which relate to the spiritualities of the Church, and commence the work of translating the Egyptian records, the Bible, and wait upon the Lord for such revelations as may be suited to the conditions and circumstances of the Church."<sup>31</sup>

Wilford Woodruff's Journal, February 19, 1842 Account:

"It is truly interesting edifying and glorious to contemplate the great & mighty work which God has set his hand to establish in these last days by revealing the fullness of the everlasting gospel as recorded in the Book of Mormon & establishing his Church & kingdom as at the Beginning which is according to the order of heaven with Seers prophets, Apostles, Elders Priests, Bishops, Teachers, Revelation, Administering of Angels gifts graces, Knowledge, wisdom, tongues healings &c &c. Truly the Lord has raised up Joseph the Seer of the Seed of Abraham out of the loins of ancient Joseph, & is now clothing him with mighty power & wisdom & knowledge which is more clearly manifest & felt in the midst of his intimate friends than any other class of mankind. 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 & Hyeroglyphics as old as Abraham or Adam. which causes our hearts to burn within us while we behold their glorious truths opened unto us. Joseph the Seer has presented us some of the Book of Abraham which was written by his own hand but hid from the knowledge of man for the last four thousand years but has now come to light through the mercy of God. Joseph has had these records in his possession

for several years but has never presented them before the world in the english language untill now. But he is now about to publish it to the world or parts of it by publishing it in the Times & Seasons, for Joseph the Seer is now the Editor of that paper & Elder Taylor assists him in writing while it has fallen to my lot to take charge of the Business part of the esstablishment. I have had the privilege this day of assisting in setting the TIPE for printing the first peace of the BOOK OF ABRAHAM that is to be presented to the inhabitants of the EARTH in the LAST DAYS

My Soul has been much edified of late from time to time in hearing Joseph the Seer convers about the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, truly God is with him & is making him mighty in wisdom & knowledge & I am convinced for myself that none of the Prophets Seers or Revelators of the Earth have ever accomplished a greater work than will be accomplished in the Last days through the mercy of God By JOSEPH THE SEER"<sup>32</sup> *et*

February 21, 1842

". . .--let all the different branches of the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints in all the world, call meetings in their respective places and tithe themselves and send up to this place to the Trustee in Trust, so that his hands may be loosed, and the Temple go on, and other works be done, such as the new translation of the Bible, and the record of Father Abraham published to the world."<sup>33</sup>

February 23, 1842

". . .gave Reuben Hedlock instruction concerning the cut for the altar and gods in the Record of Abraham."<sup>34</sup>

February 24, 1842

"In the afternoon explained the records of Abraham to the recorder. . ."35

Wednesday, March 1, 1842

". . .I was at my office. . .correcting the first plate or cut of the record of Father Abraham, prepared by Reuben Hedlock, for the Times and Seasons. . ."36

Thursday, March 2, 1842

"I read the proof of the Times and Seasons, as editor for the first time, No. 9, Vol. III, in which is the commencement of the Book of Abraham. . ."37

Friday, March 4, 1842

"At my office exhibiting the Book of Abraham in the original to Brother Reuben Hedlock, so that he might take the size of the several plates or cuts, and prepare the blocks for the Times and Seasons; and also gave instruction concerning the arrangement of the writing on the large cut, illustrating the principles of astronomy, with other general business."38

Tuesday, March 8, 1842

"Recommended translating from the Records of Abraham for the tenth number of the Times and Seasons, and was engaged at my office day and evening."39

Wednesday, March 9, 1842

". . .In the afternoon continued the translation of the Book of Abraham. . ."40

March 9, 1842

Letter to Edward Hunter:

". . .I am now busily engaged in translating, and therefore cannot give as much time to public matters as I could wish. . ."41

Wilford Woodruff recorded in his journal three days after initial was printed in The Times & Seasons:

"The truths of the Book of Abraham are truly edifying great and glorious which are among the rich treasures that are revealed unto us, in the last days."<sup>42</sup>

May 4, 1842 Joseph Smith recorded:

"I spent the day in the upper part of the store, that is in my private office (so called because in that room I keep my sacred writings, translated ancient records and receive revelations). . ."<sup>43</sup>

June 1842

Elder Parley P. Pratt, a member of the Twelve, was editor of the British mission publication the Millennial Star when the first instalment of the writings of Abraham was announced for the July edition. The pre-publication notice stated:

"Also, that we expect, in next months' "Star," to give some extracts from the "Book of Abraham"--a relic of greater antiquity than the Bible, written on papyrus, and taken from the breast of an Egyptian mummy, now in the possession of, and translated by Joseph Smith."<sup>44</sup>

John Taylor had been appointed as the editor of the Times and Seasons following Joseph Smith's short, but important, newspaper career. In the February 1, 1843 edition the following notice was printed:

"We would respectfully announce to those of our subscribers, (and there are a good many of them) who commenced their subscriptions for the Times and Seasons at the time when brother Joseph took the editorial department, that the term for which they subscribed for is nearly at a close: most of those commenced at the seventh and eight numbers; at the time when the translations from the Book of Abraham commenced. This is the sixth number, which only leaves four weeks until the time that they subscribed for, will be fulfilled.

15

We have given this timely notice that our friends may prepare themselves. We would further state that we had the promise of Br. Joseph, to furnish us with further extracts from the Book of Abraham. These with other articles that we expect from his pen, the continuation of his history, and the resources that we have of obtaining interesting matter; together with our humble endeavors, we trust will make the paper sufficiently interesting."<sup>45</sup>

November 15, 1843

"P.M. At the office. Suggested the idea of preparing a grammar of the Egyptian language."<sup>46</sup>

The evidence is overwhelming and without exception, that Joseph Smith and the early Church leaders regarded the Book of Abraham as sacred writings written by the great patriarch Abraham himself. Why shouldn't they thrill with having the writings of the Prophet Abraham in their possession, who is *possibly* the most honored prophet the world has ever known.

#### The Birth of the Pearl of Great Price

The first edition of the Pearl of Great Price was an 1851 British mission publication compiled by the mission president Elder Franklin D. Richards. Elder Richards was simultaneously a member of the Council of the Twelve. He published the small pamphlet to assist the British Saints in their great "war."<sup>47</sup> Everything in the Pearl of Great Price with the exception of a short concluding poem came from the writings of Joseph Smith which included the Book of Abraham. The Pearl of Great Price was very popular with the Utah Saints who were anxious for any Church publications. Printing in Utah was severely curtailed because of the desert<sub>^</sub> imposed paper shortage.

The Book of Abraham and the Early Reorganization

Richard P. Howard, RLDS historian stated that "the first publication of the body eventually known as the Reorganized Church affirmed the lineal principle, citing the Book of Abraham in doing so."<sup>48</sup>

*Smith & Smith* *John Day*

In 1861, Isaac Sheen editor of the Herald under Joseph Smith III spoke very highly of both the Book of Abraham and the doctrine of the plurality of Gods.

"By the quotations of our Utah correspondent from the new translation of the Bible and from the Book of Abraham, it will be perceived that a plurality of Gods is a doctrine of those books. Although it is an unpopular doctrine, it is a doctrine of the common versions of the Bible. . . . In Gen. 1:9, we read that "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." The words "us" and "our" signify more than one person, and those persons must have been Gods, for the work of creation belongs only to Deity. . . .These scriptural evidences, concerning the order of the Kingdom in the exaltation of the sons of God, show that the revelations in the New Translation of the Bible, and in the book of Abraham, concerning the Gods, all harmonize together. When this doctrine came forth in these books, it became a stumbling block to some people. We hope that the evidence which we have presented on this subject will be advantageous in the removal of their stumbling block out of the way."<sup>49</sup>

In the RLDS Saints Herald dated March 1860 the following strong statement in defense of the Book of Abraham is published:

"Now we propose to prove that all the revelations which Joseph gave unto the church, we are bound to 'give heed unto.' If the first edition of that book is divine, all the subsequent revelations which are contained in the Book of Covenants, in the Book of Abraham, etc., and which he gave unto the Church, are equally divine."<sup>50</sup>



In July 1862 the RLDS published the Book of Abraham in its entirety in its monthly periodical.<sup>51</sup> Twenty one months later it was reprinted in the True Latter Day Saints Herald along with other back issues. In order to increase its sales a small notice was printed in that April 1864 publication:

"The Book of Abraham was published in the Herald, in No. 1 of Vol.

3. That number has been republished, and is now for sale. Price 10 cents."<sup>52</sup>

Other references could be cited <sup>but</sup> these are sufficient to establish the fact that during the early years of the Reorganization (1853-1865) their leaders spoke with great respect and looked upon the Book of Abraham as inspired writings.

#### The Conflict In Interpretation

After a somewhat careful perusal of the RLDS literature since 1865 it is apparent that two major doctrinal differences keep the RLDS from embracing the Book of Abraham as they initially did. The two doctrinal differences are the plurality of Gods and the denial of priesthood to the blacks. The RLDS claimed a revelation to allow the blacks the priesthood in 1865. One has to raise the question why such a "revelation" was necessary. The "revelation" would be unnecessary if there was no previous restriction upon their being ordained. The doctrine of the plurality of Gods is not a minor difference as the ordination question is now since all races can now have priesthood privileges in both Churches. But that's another topic reserved for a future meeting.

Questions Raised in RLDS Literature Pertaining to the Book of Abraham

Question: The original text of the Book of Abraham is now back in the hands of the LDS Church. It has been translated and it is found to have nothing to do with the account of Abraham in Egypt--Joseph Smith was actually misleading the Church members as to its content.

Answer: The Book of Abraham and Joseph papyri was described as: "beautifully written on papyrus, with black, and a small part red, ink or paint, in perfect preservation."<sup>53</sup> The eleven fragments recovered from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City do not fit that description at all. What was found was Facsimile One and some other fragments unrelated to the published account of the present Book of Abraham. They were part of the original scrolls once owned by Joseph Smith but not directly related to the present text.

Question: Joseph Smith never once represented the Book of Abraham as divine.

Answer: What more could he have done that what he did as demonstrated by the numerous quotations in this paper. For nine years he displayed the records and mummies explaining their origin and worth. He became editor of Times and Seasons when the Book of Abraham was published letting people know that he was solely responsible for the contents, translations, publication, and distribution of the sacred work.

Question: Why didn't Joseph Smith publish the Book of Abraham in book form prior to his death or add it to the Doctrine and Covenants?

Answer: The Book of Abraham was a lengthy record. One non-member was told that when completed it would be more lengthy than the Bible.<sup>54</sup> Oliver Cowdery spoke of volumes necessary to contain it.<sup>55</sup> Only two short instalments were published during Joseph Smith's lifetime although more was promised.

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Link

(reportedly)

Had not Joseph Smith's last 16 months been so turbulent no doubt more of the translation would have been forth coming as he had promised.

Question: What is Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar?

Answer: Joseph Smith never explained the modus operandi nor the objective of his working with the Alphabet and Grammar. It was never finished nor prepared for publication. These were Joseph Smith's or his scribes working notes.

Question: What method did Joseph Smith use to translate the Book of Abraham?

Answer: The method of translating the Book of Abraham as well as the Book of Mormon was never explained in detail by the prophet Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith stated that the Book of Mormon was translated by the "gift and power of God." The Book of Abraham was translated by divine inspiration. How the Lord's Spirit operated upon the mind of the prophet when he was working with an unknown language has never been explained. Orson Pratt did state:

"I saw his (Joseph Smith) countenance lighted up, as the inspiration of the Holy Ghost rested upon him, dictating the great and most precious revelations now printed for our guide. I saw his translating, by inspiration, the Old and New Testaments and the Inspired Book of Abraham from Egyptian papyrus."<sup>56</sup>

It is my observation that time could be more wisely spent on studying the value of the finished product than troubling oneself with the mechanics of translating.

Question: President Israel A. Smith stated:

"We have no record that Joseph Smith, Jr., ever endorsed its contents or teachings. He merely translated on the basis of his own learning and study. He referred to it as a 'purported' record."<sup>57</sup>

Done?

6

15 Wilton St., Liverpool,  
Feb. 1st. 1851.

My Dear Doctor:

The present seems to me like, what might be termed in medical phrase, a turn of the disease. For the past two months I have been in a gale or a whirlwind of thought which together with the unusual amount of labor and severe cold which I have encountered has taken the flesh off some what. I had some what recovered from my cold and cough till on Thursday I accompanied Elder Pratt and family with the entire Co., to an anchorage in the river when having occasion to expose myself somewhat in mustering the passengers on deck, I received an addition to my complaint; but I now trust that a little more rest, with mild restoratives, will strengthen the vs medicatrix naturae, so as I may soon throw it off. It is supposed the vessel left the river today. When Bro. Pratt read your letter of approbation and regard he expressed himself in very unusual terms for him of satisfaction and delight, and wished me to express to you and your dear lady the gratification which your communications afforded him and also to assure you both of his best wishes and blessing in all things appertaining to your welfare.

I have this day determined the date of the next ship's departure viz. Feb. 28th. as per circular.

You will perhaps recollect my naming to you that I thought of issuing a collection of revelations, prophecies &c., in a tract form of a character not designed to pioneer our doctrines to the world, so much as for the use of the Elders and Saints to arm and better qualify them for their service in our great war. The order of the work which I had thought to adopt so far as I have considered is about as follows:

First the revelation to Moses then the translation of the first chap of Genesis. Then perhaps the revelation to Enoch after which or perhaps before it, items of revelation informing of Gods second law to Adam, viz faith repentance &c. as given to him by ministration of an Angel. The particular place could perhaps be better determined after close examination. Then perhaps, Mr. Chandler's letter about the mummies containing an account of the sale of them to the Church &c. &c. followed with a fac simile of the plates and the translation of the Book of Abraham. I have not particularly determined in my own mind as to the consecutive order of the other items such as translation of 24th Matthew. The destiny of the American Union &c., any further that I had thought it might perhaps be as well to close up with the Key to Revelation. Giving the whole a general feature of chronological order except it be Joseph's prophecy of the Union.

Will you please to give me your views upon the matter in full with any suggestions which may occur to your mind relative to the subject at your earliest convenience. I desire that the whole thing may bear the dignity and weight of character which justly belongs to the revelations of God.

Concerning the Hymn Book:

I consider its present appearance quite diminutive, too stinted, or compressed, as if the world, the printer, or somebody else could scarcely afford it a space in the world when compared with other works of that class. I purpose to effect some change in its appearance as well as its contents, if you think it would be well to do so. I am not quite satisfied myself as yet to what extent, nor do I expect to make the change which I could wish might be made, complete, but if I may do some good part in improving the general character of the work, by substituting appropriate for some of the most inappropriate pieces, perhaps add a sheet or two, enlarge the form, and perhaps size of type, (without changing the pages), and effect it upon such terms as to sell it at its present, or a triflingly reduced price. I feel as though one good step would be thereby taken towards coming at a proper collection of hymns sometime; and what I may effect in part some one in a future edition may complete or take another step towards. As the rising majesty of our great work is more and more developing itself and stepping more and more prominently forward into the respectable circles. I feel that our Hymns ought proportionably to increase their claims to the respect and favorable consideration of any and all good people in whatever classes of society they may perchance be introduced; and I do feel that our late edition leaves ample room for such improvement.

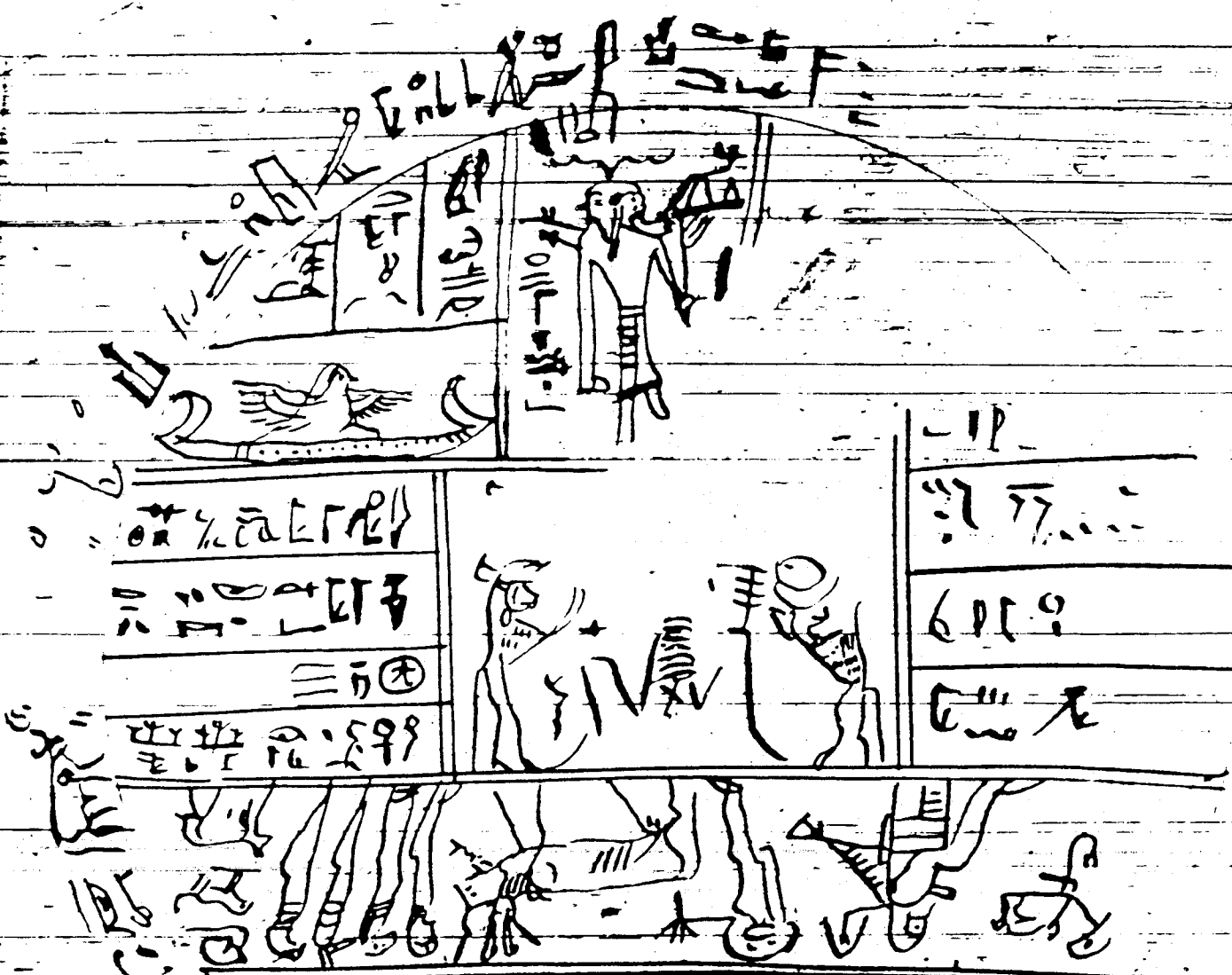
...of such improvement, the rapid increase of new members,

Kirtland Lake Co Ohio Jan 1 1844

JL(?) Joseph Smith

I have for a long time been anxious to receive some communication from you in relation to my interest in the Mummies etc. but having failed hitherto of learning anything satisfactory on the subject I have thought proper to drop you a line as the most ready means of exchanging sentiments on this subject. Permit me here to sketch the history of the purchase etc. in order to bring the subject fresh to your recollection. When the subject of purchasing that concern came up I was somewhat involved and unable to sustain a heavier burthen any great length of time. but having all confidence in the ability of the collection, and being assured by yourself that the burthen would be but temporary; that the profits coming from the work when translated would be more than adequate to the defraying all the expence which might accrue by the purchase. I therefore managed the business up in relation to the purchase with the same confidence that I had previously done business which I thought would result in the good of the church. Previous to closing the contract with Chandler, I made arrangements with S. Andrews for to take one third part and your self & Co. one third leaving one third to be borne by myself. Andrews soon paid his \$800 I took \$800 out of Geauga Bank which paid a large portion of my share; but yours together with the interest remained until the Spring of 1836 if I mistake not. when by arrangement with Chandler he agreed to take 1000 dollars and give up my notes if the raise would be made on short notice.

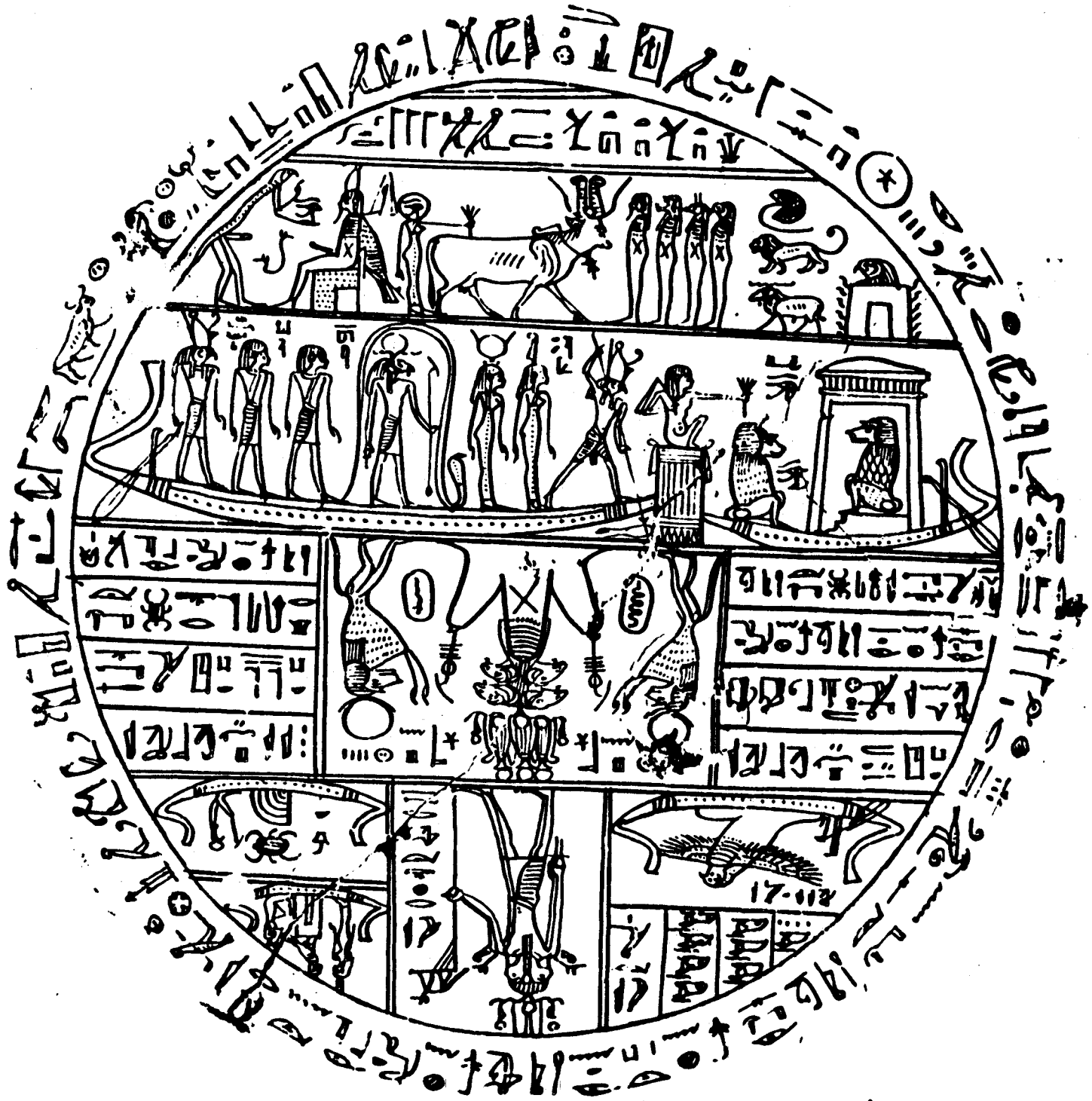
5



1P
77...
6P9
...

Handwritten text in a stylized script, possibly a musical score or lyrics, located on the left side of the diagram.

Handwritten text in a stylized script, possibly a musical score or lyrics, located at the bottom of the diagram.





W. H. Rylands, del.

HYPOCEPHALUS IN THE

BRITISH MUSEUM NO 8445C



EGYPTIAN MUMMIES  
DISPLAYED IN PHILA.  
APRIL 3 - JUNE 3,  
1833

61 ARTICLES

U.S. Gazette  
Published by Joseph R. Chandler  
Philadelphia--Wednesday, April 3, 1833  
Page 3

EGYPTIAN MUMMIES

The largest collection of EGYPTIAN MUMMIES ever exhibited in this city, is now to be seen at the Masonic Hall, in Chesnut Street above Seventh.

They were found in the vicinity of Thebes, by the celebrated traveler Antonio Lebolo and Chevalier Drovetti, General Consul of France in Egypt.

Some writings on Papyrus (sic) found with the Mummies, can also be seen, and will afford, no doubt, much satisfaction to Amateurs of Antiquities.

Admittance 25 cents, children half price. Open from 9 A.M. till 2 P.M., and from 3 P.M. to 6.

Ap 3 - d3W

The above article ran April 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 23. Not located on April 13, 16, and 22. There was no paper published on Sunday, so April 7, 14, and 21 are eliminated.

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CHANDLER'S DISPLAY  
IN CLEVELAND + J. S.  
PURCHASES 3 MUMMIES

### EGYPTIAN MUMMIES

Our limited room will not at present permit an extended description of these remarkable post humous travelers who are now in this village; but we cannot forbear calling upon those of our citizens who have not seen these ancient specimens of humanity, to visit them before they are removed, which we understand will be in 3 or 4 days. The exhibitor permits as free an examination of them as is consistent with their preservation. Specimens of the ancient method of writing on papyrus, found with the mummies, as also shown by Mr. Chandler, whose intelligent conversation adds much to the interest of the exhibition.

The collection is offered for sale by the proprietor.

Cleveland Advertiser  
Thurs. March 26, 1835  
on original - can't xerox  
(too brittle)  
Western Reserve Historical  
Society, Cleveland

Another Humbug.— We are credibly informed that the Mormons have purchased, of Mr. Chandler, three of the Mummies which he recently exhibited in this village; and that the prophet Joe has ascertained, by examining the papyrus through his spectacles, that they are the bodies of Joseph, (the son of Abraham,) and King Abimeleck and his daughter. With this shallow and contemptible story, Williams has commenced traveling about the country, and will no doubt gull multitudes into a belief of its truth. Surely one half of the world are fools.

The Cleveland Whig  
August 5, 1835, page 1  
(Western Reserve Library)

