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MORMONISM SIFTED ;

OR THE QUESTION,

8.

WAS JOSEPH SMITH SENT BY GOD ?

EXAMINED ;

BEING

THE SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE

DELIVERED IN THE

INDEPENDENT CHAPEL, BOXFORD,

ON

Friday Evening, March 8th, 1850,

BY

EDWARD B. HICKMAN.

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MORMONISM SIFTED.

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD." 1 *Thess.* v. 21.

THESE words obviously imply that in the course of life the Christian man would meet with many doctrines and practices, about the correctness of which, there might at first be some little difficulty. In such cases the Apostle exhorts, "prove all things;" examine them carefully and honestly; bring them to the test of holy Scripture; then, having tried them, reject the false, and "*hold fast*" the good; in other words, stand by the truth in all circumstances until life's latest hour. The great duty inculcated in the text is, first, enquiry; then, firmness. Careful enquiry to ascertain the truth; manly firmness in retaining it.

The subject of investigation in the present case, is in the highest degree important; for nearly eighteen centuries wise and holy men have taught that miracles, revelations from God, and angelic visits, ceased when the last Apostle fell asleep in Jesus. But *now* we are told this is a strange mistake. All these, it is said, may still be enjoyed by the true church; a work nearly as large as the Old Testament is presented to us as divine, and we are solemnly assured that *all* who refuse to obey its teaching must everlastingly perish! These statements we propose to examine in this lecture calmly and impartially.

From a tract called "*Remarkable Visions*," written by Orson Pratt, "one of the twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," we find Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was born Dec. 23, 1805. When about fifteen years of age, he was greatly impressed with the importance of religion, and commenced reading the bible with much earnestness; on one occasion whilst engaged in prayer, in a grove near his father's house, we are told he was favoured with a most remarkable vision. He beheld in the heavens a bright light, gradually the light descended toward him, and at length he "*saw two glorious personages*." He was informed that his sins were forgiven. Soon after, he received another vision,

an angel appeared to him, and informed him amongst many other things, that he was chosen to be the instrument in God's hands of restoring the true gospel to the world, and that some "sacred revelations" were to be brought to light through his instrumentality. From time to time further particulars were given by the angel; the place where these sacred records were deposited was pointed out, and on Sept. 22, 1827, they were delivered into his hands. He commenced translating them; and in 1830, the translated part, entitled the "Book of Mormon," was published. A church was organized in the state of New York, and to assist Mr. Smith in its government, numerous revelations on all subjects were received, many of which were published.

That the question at issue may be better understood, we will here give an extract or two. In "the Book of Doctrine and Covenants selected from *the Revelations of God*, by Joseph Smith, President," (mark well the title,) we read, "Revelation to Joseph Smith, given April 6, 1830. Behold there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ, being inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof, and to build it up unto the most holy faith; which church was organized and established in the year of your Lord eighteen hundred and thirty, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month, which is called April" (page 197.)* Again in a revelation to Ezra Thayre, and Northrop Sweet, given Oct. 1830, this sentence occurs, "And the book of Mormon, and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction" (page 208). In the book of Mormon, the angel is represented as saying unto Nephi, "And the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; wherefore, they both shall be established in one." (p. 27.)

In the first extract, Joseph Smith is described as "an apostle of Jesus Christ—inspired of the Holy Ghost;" in the other two the book of Mormon is placed on an equality with the Holy Bible. The question therefore is clearly this, Was Joseph Smith an "apostle," or an impostor? Was he a worthless pretender, or a holy prophet? Did God actually give him these "revelations," or did he presumptuously and blasphemously attempt to palm his own fancies upon the world as divine commandments?

In examining this question we have a right to expect that the *character* of the person, who declares that he has been

* Second European Edition.

favoured with revelations from God, will be above all suspicion; that the mode by which they were received with all the accompanying circumstances will also be above suspicion, and that there will be evidence so clear and conclusive, that there shall be no room for any reasonable doubt whether they came from God or from man. Investigating this subject by these tests, we cannot but express our astonishment, that any man can be found so foolish as to maintain, that Joseph Smith's revelations are entitled to a moment's consideration. They are not only bad things, but bad things *badly done*. The impostor's mark is seen on every page. For the sake, however, of that class, still so painfully large, whose defective education renders them unable to detect the imposition, we proceed to give a few plain reasons for the assertion that the revelations given to the world by Joseph Smith are bare-faced forgeries.}

1. Observe Joseph Smith's *character*. The first question in a court of law is always, what character does the witness bear? In the most trifling case, if the character of the party giving evidence, can be impeached, a very important point has been gained; how much more essential is it in a question so momentous as the one before us! It requires no argument to show God would not give revelations by a *bad* man; for if men could not believe the prophet when speaking of worldly things, they certainly could not believe him when professing to speak in God's name. For this reason the apostle Peter writes "*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*;"* and again he speaks of "the words which were spoken before by the *holy prophets*."† Apply this principle to Joseph Smith. What do his neighbours say of him? Startling fact—*all* the accounts given, represent him, as being any thing but a "holy man of God!" Isaac Hale, whose daughter he married, in a statement made before Charles Dimon, Justice of the Peace, declares,

"I first became acquainted with Joseph Smith, jun. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called 'money-diggers,' and his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see, by means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat placed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure. His appearance at this time was that of a careless young man, not very well educated, and very saucy and insolent to his father. Smith and his father, with several other money-diggers, boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine, that they supposed had been opened and worked by the Spaniards, many years since. After these occurrences, young Smith made several visits at my house, and

at length asked my consent to marry my daughter Emma. This I refused, and gave him my reasons for so doing; some of which were, that he was a stranger, and followed a business that I could not approve. He then left the place. Not long after this, he returned; and while I was absent from home, carried off my daughter into the state of New York, where they were married without my approbation or consent. * * * * Joseph Smith resided near me for some time after this, and I had a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with him, and somewhat acquainted with his associates: and I conscientiously believe, from the facts I have detailed, and from many other circumstances, that the Book of Mormon (so called) is a silly fabrication of falsehood and wickedness, got up for speculation, and with a design to dupe the credulous and unwary; and in order that its fabricators might live upon the spoil of those who swallowed the deception."

Such is Isaac Hale's opinion of Joseph Smith "the apostle of Jesus Christ;" but the reader will ask, can friend Isaac be trusted? Hear what William Thompson, and David Dimock, "Associate Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, in the county of Susquehanna," certify; they declare that, "they have for many years been personally acquainted with Isaac Hale, and that he is a man of excellent moral character and of undoubted veracity."—

What do Smith's neighbours say about him? Fifty-one persons of various professions, and of different religious sentiments, respectable citizens of Palmyra and Manchester, State of New York, signed the following affidavit—

"Palmyra, N. Y., Dec. 4th, 1833.—We, the undersigned, having been acquainted with the Smith family, for a number of years, while they resided near this place; have no hesitation in saying, that we consider them destitute of that moral character, which ought to entitle them to the confidence of any community. They were particularly infamous for visionary projects; spent much of their time in digging for money, which they pretended, was laid in the earth; and, to this day, large excavations may be seen in the earth, not far from their residence, where they used to spend their time in digging for hidden treasures. Joseph Smith, senior, and his son Joseph were, in particular, considered entirely destitute of moral character, and addicted to vicious habits. Martin Harris had acquired a considerable property; and, in matters of business, his word was considered good; but, on moral and religious subjects, he was perfectly visionary; sometimes advocating one sentiment, sometimes another. In reference to all with whom we are acquainted, that have embraced Mormonism from this neighbourhood, we are compelled to say that they were visionary, and most of them destitute of moral character, and without influence in the community. This is the reason why they were permitted to go on with their imposition undisturbed. It was not supposed that any of them were possessed of sufficient character, or influence, to

make any one believe their book, or their sentiments; and we know not of a single individual, in this vicinity, who puts the least confidence in their pretended revelations." Here follow the signatures of fifty-one persons.*

We have read many Mormon publications, but not one word have we seen in reply to these declarations; perhaps the writers acted on the principle "the less said, the better." Mark! the man asserts an angel appeared to him many times; that sacred records were given him to translate; that he was raised up by God to organize a gospel church, which would speedily attract all sincere inquirers after truth; and yet, his father-in-law declares his conscientious conviction that the Book of Mormon, "is a *silly fabrication of falsehood and wickedness*;" and *fifty-one* persons signed an affidavit that Joseph Smith was "entirely destitute of moral character, and addicted to vicious habits." Is not *that* suspicious?

II. Observe the improbable circumstances connected with the golden plates. Where did Joseph Smith get the Book of Mormon? He found in a cave, 'tis said, records *engraved on plates*: part of these he translated, and published under the title "Book of Mormon."

1. Mark the history of these plates. How came they in the cave? "Mormon had made an abridgement from the records of his forefathers upon plates; and (being commanded of God) he hid up in the hill Cumorah, all the sacred records of his forefathers, which were in his possession, except the abridgement called the "Book of Mormon," which he gave to his son Moroni to finish. Moroni continued the history until the four hundred and twentieth year of the Christian era, when (by the commandment of God) he hid up the records in the hill Cumorah, where they remained concealed until by the ministry of an angel, they were discovered to Mr. Smith." (Remarkable Visions, p. 10.)

These plates then were buried 1400 years! Why bury them? Because the Lamanites were determined to destroy them. These Lamanites were Jews; now the attachment of the Jew to his sacred writings is well known, but these American Jews are so bent upon destroying their sacred records, they must be hid in a cave! The perils our Bible has passed through would fill a volume, but never was it necessary to bury it! The Jews for their idol-worship go into captivity, but their sacred writings were safe; the early Christians were destroyed by thousands, but their Scriptures were safe. In the darkest ages of history, when superstition's tide rolled strongest, the Bible was safe. Why? God preserved it. He raised up

defenders. Had the Book of Mormon been the Book of God, there would have been no need to bury it.—

Buried 1400 years! More than two centuries have rolled away, since the pilgrim fathers first landed in New England. They had left their father-land to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience; if these records were lying in the cave as represented, how can we account for the fact, the angel was not sent to one of them? Amongst them were men of no every-day piety; they had left all to follow Christ; surely to them, rather than to Joseph Smith, would the wondrous fact be revealed. But no, 200 years roll along, ere the secret was disclosed! President Edwards, of giant mind, yet of child-like humility, devoted his life to explain and defend the doctrines of the cross. David Brainerd, mourning over the benighted state of the poor Indians, hastened to their camp, in the lonely wilderness, that he might tell of Christ; but not to Brainerd, not to Edwards, was the angel sent, but to the money-seeker, gold-hunter, Joseph Smith! Is not *that* suspicious?

2. Observe the size of the plates. "Each plate was not far from seven by eight inches in width and length, being not quite as thick as common tin. They were filled on both sides with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume; this volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters, or letters, were small and beautifully engraved." (Remarkable Visions, p 6.)

The Egyptian language, it is well known, requires a great deal of room, much more than the English. "Part" of the volume "was sealed;" the unsealed portion, (which was the only part translated) fills, in our language, 563 closely printed pages;* but, as it will be seen afterwards, 116 manuscript pages of the translated part were lost; and yet the sealed portion of the volume, with the unsealed part, containing 563 printed, and 116 written pages, when put together, formed a volume only "something near six inches in thickness!" A moment's reflection will show, that were all this matter engraved in the Egyptian language, on plates of the size described, the thickness of the volume would be much nearer twenty inches than six! Is not *that* suspicious?

3. Observe the language. The records were engraved in "*Egyptian* characters!" Why were they not written in Hebrew? All the Old Testament writers wrote in their own language; why did not these men do the same? The veneration the Jew feels for the language spoken by his forefathers is excessive in the extreme. Even to this day, the sorrow-

stricken Israelite may be seen slowly walking under the hallowed wall of the holy city, "with the sacred volume in his hand, singing in the language in which they were written, the Songs of Solomon and the Psalms of David." Why then, we repeat, was not the "Book of Mormon" written in Hebrew? These exiles left Jerusalem (such is the story) in "the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, six hundred years" before the birth of Christ; they took with them "the five books of Moses, and also a record of the Jews, from the beginning even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, and also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah." (Book of Mormon, p. 10.) The early writers of these records surely would write in the language Isaiah did; but no, they preferred "the reformed Egyptian!" This strange proceeding seems to have struck the cunning fabricator of "the Book of Mormon," for we are gravely told "If our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in Hebrew." (Book of Mormon, p. 515.) Why then were they not made larger? It is just as easy to make plates ten inches by twelve, as seven by eight. These pretended sacred writers preferred the reformed Egyptian forsooth! And now we are told, not a scholar could be found able to decipher the mysterious engravings! No wonder indeed! What does Professor Anthon say? "A few of the original characters were accurately transcribed and translated by Mr. Smith, which, with the translation"* were taken to Mr. Anthon. In a letter the Professor wrote, we read "the characters were arranged in columns, like the Chinese mode of writing, and presented the most singular medley I ever beheld. Greek, Hebrew, and all sorts of letters, more or less distorted, either through unskilfulness, or from actual design, were intermingled with sundry delineations of half-moons, stars, and other natural objects, the whole ending in a rude representation of the Mexican zodiac." And this was a specimen of the reformed Egyptian! We ask again, why not use the Hebrew?—for this simple reason; any knave, however ignorant, can make strange characters on a sheet of paper, and call it the "reformed Egyptian," or any other "reformed" language before unknown, but call it Hebrew and every scholar would at once detect the imposition.

4. Observe *the mode of translation*. If no one knew the language, how was Joseph Smith able to read the engravings? Happy man! With the records he found "a curious instrument, called by the ancients, the Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones, clear as crystal, set in the two rims of a bow;" by means of this instrument, in some

* Remarkable Visions, p. 6.

mysterious way, he managed the work of translation! But mark, no one but Joseph could translate! On one occasion, Oliver Cowdery insisted on sharing the honour of deciphering the sacred records; what was to be done? A revelation made up of gentle rebukes and flattering promises, is given to Oliver, in which he is told "It is not expedient you should translate now;" (Book of C. p. 177) and by this easy contrivance, the ambitious scribe becomes once more the obedient servant! Are not these things very suspicious? A worthless man tells us he found sacred records, which had been buried 1400 years; written in a language no one could read: and which were translated by the help of an instrument, no one could use but "my servant Joseph!" Are we not justified in saying these records were bare-faced forgeries; but we have stronger evidence yet.

III. We have no satisfactory evidence that there were any records engraved on plates.

1. No copy was ever given. "A quantity of the characters" were sent to some learned men, 'tis true; ah! easy enough to fill a sheet of paper with strange characters, which no one on the earth, or under the earth could read; but not so easy to fill 560 pages, if there were no records? If there were any, why not give a copy? Scholars would have studied it night and day, until the mystery was unravelled. The Chinese language, the most difficult of all, has been mastered; the hieroglyphics on the Egyptian temples, so long the student's puzzle, have been, in a great degree, deciphered; and had there been records of any ancient nation found, as soon as copies could be procured, English scholars, French philosophers, and German linguists would have entered the field, each ambitious of the glory of first discovering the meaning of the mysterious treasures. Why not give a copy? How satisfactory to be able to compare the English translation of the Bible with the original Hebrew and Greek; and how satisfactory, to know that copies of the records, engraved on the plates, were in the hands of the learned. There would be a strong hope, that at no distant day, the secret would be discovered, and the correctness of Joseph's translation fully proved. This comfort is denied; but what does it suggest? no copy, no plates.

2. Only twelve persons ever pretended they had seen the plates. Who were they? In a sort of preface to the Book of Mormon, their names are given as follow.

Joseph Smith. We have heard something of his character already. What did Henry Harris say of him? that, on one occasion, "an American jury, of which he was one, refused the prophet's evidence, though given *under an oath*;" and "that from his *long acquaintance* with Smith, the revelator, he could not himself, believe him on his oath."

Oliver Cowdery. Trustworthy men, in an affidavit they signed, declare he was "a worthless fellow, and not to be trusted or believed."

David Whitmer. This chosen witness seceded, and was denounced by Joseph Smith, as a liar and slanderer!

Martin Harris. "A gentleman in Palmyra, used to the law, a professor of religion, and of undoubted veracity, says that on one occasion, he applied to Harris, and asked him distinctly, "did you see these plates?" Harris replied he did. "Did you see the plates, and the engravings on them, with your bodily eyes?" Harris replied "Yes, I saw them with my eyes; they were shown unto me by the power of God, and not of man." "But did you see them with your natural, your bodily eyes, just as you see this pencil-case in my hand?" Now, say no, or yes, to this." Harris replied "Why, I did not see them as I do that pencil-case, yet I saw them with *the eyes of faith*. I saw them just as distinctly as I see anything around me, though, at the time, *they were covered over with a cloth*."

Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, jun., and John Whitmer; these are the next witnesses, then Hiram Page. Doubtless, these Whitmers are closely related to worthy David Whitmer, whom Joseph denounced as a liar. A man is known by his friends. It is quite sufficient to find their names coupled with such men as Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris; then follows Joseph Smith, the father, and his sons Hyrum and Samuel; with regard to these three, it is sufficient to say, the father (like Harris) admitted he had never seen the plates with his natural eyes! On the testimony of witnesses like these, we are to believe the Book of Mormon was "translated, by the gift and power of God," from plates which had the appearance of gold. What became of the witnesses? No less than *six* of them left the Mormon church; thus by their conduct proving to a demonstration, their belief, that the gold plates existed only in Smith's imagination. With regard to the others, it must be borne in mind, they were largely interested in the continuance of the imposition; men who could find simpletons, willing to believe *everything* they were told by "the prophet," would have no difficulty in obtaining from them large supplies of the good things of this life.

3. Every request to see the plates was refused! In "Remarkable Visions," page 7, we read "a few of the original characters were accurately transcribed, and presented to a gentleman of the name of Anthon. He examined them; but was unable to decipher them correctly; but *he presumed, that if the original records could be brought*, he could assist in translating them." If Smith had the plates, why not take them to the professor? In the statement made by Isaac Hale,

(to which we referred before) he declares "I was shown a box, in which it was said they (the plates) were contained. I was allowed to feel the weight of the box, and they gave me to understand that the book of plates was then in the box; into which, however, I was not allowed to look. I became dissatisfied, and informed him (Joseph Smith), that if there was anything in my house of that description, which I could not be allowed to see, he must take it away; if he did not, I was determined to see it. After that, the plates were said to be hid in the woods." If there were any plates, why not let his father-in-law see them? Oh! 'tis said he was commanded by God, not to show them. How did Moses, on one occasion, act? "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people." (Ex. xxiv. 7.) At another time, we find, he "came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in his hand." (Ex. xxxiv. 29.) No secrecy there! Why did not Smith take the plates in his "hand," and "read in the audience of the people?"

4. Observe the disappearance of the plates! Where are they *now*? The angel came and took them away. Moses laid "the tables of the covenant" in the tabernacle. (Heb. ix. 4.) Paul wrote to the Colossians "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans." How convincing a proof of the existence of these plates, if they had been placed in the Mormon temple; and men invited to go and examine them for themselves. Ah! truth courts investigation; falsehood shuns it.

5. Part of the Book of Mormon was lost! It is a well-known fact, that on one occasion, Harris (Smith's scribe) took home 116 pages; his wife, believing the whole to be a gross imposition, gave the manuscript to a friend; and though every effort was made, it never could be found. What consequence was that? If the translator had the plates, and the Urim and Thummim, by which to decipher the engraving, nothing easier than to sit down, and translate the missing part a second time. Had Smith the plates, as he pretended, undoubtedly he would have done so. What did he do? Thrice fortunate man! woman tries to ruin him, but heaven comes to the rescue. A revelation is received, in which we read, "Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings, which you had power given unto you to translate by means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them; . . . Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands." (Book of Cov. p. 178.) A child may see through this clumsy trick; there were no records to translate, and daring as this impostor was, he knew too well that any attempt to replace the missing manuscript, would at once put

an end to the whole scheme ; to re-write the 116 pages was impossible ; accordingly, a revelation was received, *forbidding* the translation.

A careful review of the above facts, must convince every unprejudiced man, that there were no records engraved on plates ; and that Joseph Smith's statement, that he found them by the direction of the angel, in a cave, in the hill Cumorah, is nothing but a base falsehood, coined to deceive the unwary. We must point out, however, other suspicious circumstances.

IV. Mark the character of these pretended revelations. We will notice first, the records translated, we are to believe, by Joseph Smith. The Book of Mormon, or Golden Bible, (as it was originally called) professes to contain a history of a part of the tribe of Joseph, with the revelations given to them before, and after the birth of Christ. These records were written by a succession of prophets, who were descended from Joseph. What are their characteristics ? In reading them carefully, we cannot but notice.

1. The poverty of style and sentiment. There is nothing in the whole book to indicate the mind of God ; not one sentence do we find, but what any man, possessing average intelligence, and gifted with an imaginative turn of mind, might have written. Wordy in the extreme, common place and uninteresting, the Book of Mormon certainly is. It is nothing, more or less, than an imitation of the Bible very badly done.

2. The uniformity of style. The book was written, we are to believe, by different writers who lived before, and some after the birth of Christ. The first writer commenced his labours about 600 years before our Lord's appearance on earth, the last finished the book 420 years after that event ; and yet we can discover no difference in the style, no variation in the construction of the sentences. The sameness of imagery, phraseology, and style, all strikingly indicate that the book under notice is the production of *one* mind. How different our Bible ! unity of sentiment, but how varied the style and language. The mental peculiarity of each writer is seen in every book. Not so, in the work before us ; dull uniformity is its leading characteristic.

3. The modern character of the style proves the forgery. Who would expect to find phrases like these in a book, written 550 years before the birth of Christ ? "*Churches* built up to become popular in the eyes of the world"—"The brethren of the *church*"—"great and abominable *church*"—"Christ, for the angel spake unto me, that this should be his name"—"my elder brothers, who were Laman, Lemuel, and Sam." "And *in fine*," we might easily fill a page with modern phrases similar to the above. Their occurrence in a book, a large

portion of which is said to have been written long before the birth of Christ, is quite sufficient to prove the forgery. In an article in the "Athenæum," it is well observed, "every successive prophet predicts the future coming of Christ; the writer has fallen into the vulgar error of mistaking an epithet for a name; the word 'Christ,' as all educated persons know, is not a name, but a Greek title of office, signifying "the Anointed." Now, the use of a Greek term, in an age when the Greek language was unformed, and by a people, with whom it was impossible for Greeks to have intercourse, is a mark of forgery, so obvious and decisive, that it ought long since to have exposed the delusion."

4. Quotations from the New Testament, prove the forgery. We quote from the book of Nephi, written, 'tis said, 550 years before our Lord's birth!

"The Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world." p. 17.

"And there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." p. 52.

"For, as death has passed upon all men." p. 72.

"This corruption could not put on incorruption." p. 72.

"They who are righteous, shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy, shall be filthy still." p. 73.

"To be carnally minded is death; and to be spiritually minded is life eternal." p. 75.

"And whoso knocketh, to him will he open." p. 75.

"They shall be thrust down to hell." p. 74.

"The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John i. 29.

"And there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." John x. 16.

"And so death passed upon all men." Rom. v. 12.

"This corruptible must put on incorruption." 1 Cor. xv. 53.

"He which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still." Rev. xxii. 11.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Rom. viii. 6.

"And to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." Matt. vii. 8.

"Shalt be thrust down to hell." Luke x. 15.

We give these passages as specimens; it would have been as easy to find eighty as eight, but the above are sufficient to show, that the writer of this part of the Book of Mormon was well acquainted with the New Testament; and yet these sentences, we are solemnly told, *were written* nearly 600 years before the birth of Christ!

5. Quotations from the *English version* of the Bible prove the forgery. In the first part of the Book of Mormon we have several chapters from the Book of Isaiah. The prophet translates Isaiah's Hebrew into the reformed Egyptian, and then Joseph Smith "by the power of God," translates the Egyptian into English; and yet, wonder of wonders, Smith's version

is as nearly the same as the authorised one, as can be! We have taken the trouble to compare fifteen verses with the English translation, and we find only eighteen variations, nine of which are words omitted, and six are unimportant words added. Every one of these eighteen variations any schoolboy could have made, by just taking a pen, and adding a word here, or crossing out a word there, according to his fancy! These facts are just what we might expect. We think no one, after reading the preceding pages, can believe the statement, that the Book of Mormon is a translation of sacred records, engraved on plates 1400 years since. The poverty of the style, its uniformity and modern character—passages from the New Testament, and evident quotations from the English version of the Bible; all prove it was written by no prophet, ancient, or modern, but by some would-be religious novelist, within the last fifty years.

Let us glance for a moment at the pretended "revelations of God" received by "President" Smith. One great object to be answered by them evidently was,

1. To exalt himself. We will give an extract. "Revelation to Joseph Smith, April 6, 1830. Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto *all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you* as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; for his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth." (Book of C. p. 197). "Revelation given to Oliver Cowdery, Sep. 1830. But behold, verily, verily I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church *except my servant Joseph Smith*, for he receiveth them even as Moses." (p. 202.) Again, "Revelation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, July 1830. Magnify thine office; and after *thou hast sowed thy fields and secured them (!)* go speedily unto the church which is in Colesville, Fayette, and Manchester, and they shall support thee, and I will bless them both spiritually and temporally; *but if they receive thee not, I will send upon them a cursing* instead of a blessing." (p. 111.) Was that the Saviour's spirit? Ah! no. When the Samaritans would not receive him, he rebuked the angry spirit the disciples manifested, and went to another village; no curse did he pronounce, and yet he was the Lord of angels and of men! Luke ix. 31—36.

2. Another object of these pretended revelations was to silence the dissatisfied, and awe the disobedient. *Whenever* any thing went wrong in the Mormon Church, at the *right* time, and in the *right* way a revelation came! "Let that which has been bestowed upon Ziba Peterson be taken from him; and let him stand as a member in the church, and labour with his own hands, until he is sufficiently chastened for all his

sins, for he confesseth them not, and he thinketh to hide them." (p. 146.) "And now, behold, I the Lord, am not pleased with my servant Sidney Rigdon, he exalteth himself in his heart, wherefore his writing is not acceptable unto the Lord, and he shall make another, and if the Lord receive it not, behold he standeth no longer in the office which I have appointed him." (p. 152.) "Behold, I the Lord was angry with him who was my servant Ezra Booth, and also my servant Isaac Morley. They condemned for evil that thing in which there was no evil : nevertheless, I have forgiven my servant Isaac Morley. . . And again I say unto you that my servant Isaac Morley may not be tempted above that which he is able to bear, and counsel wrongfully to your hurt, I gave commandment *that his farm should be sold.*" (p. 155.) "Hearken unto me, saith the Lord your God, for my servant Oliver Cowdery's sake. It is not wisdom in me that he should be entrusted with the commandments and *the monies* which he shall carry unto the land of Zion, except one go with him who will be true and faithful." (p. 167.)

Such was the way in which this arch-impostor kept the Mormon church in order! The above extracts suggest many painful thoughts, but we forbear. Before however we leave this precious "book of Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, selected from the revelations of God, by Joseph Smith, President," we must notice their views of slavery. In p. 333 we meet with this astounding paragraph, "We believe it just to preach the gospel to the nations of the earth, and warn the righteous to save themselves from the corruption of the world; *but we do not believe it right to interfere with bond servants,* (why not say slaves?) *neither preach the gospel to, nor baptize them,* contrary to the will and wish of their masters, nor to meddle with or influence them in the least, to cause them to be dissatisfied with their situations in this life, thereby jeopardizing the lives of men!" "We do not believe it right!" No anti-slavery nonsense for us; what have slaves to do with the Bible? What right have meddling men to interfere with "bond-servants?" "We do not believe it right to preach the gospel" to slaves! Oh! ye liberty-loving men, who talk so smoothly about England's injustice, and denounce so bitterly the oppression of England's poor; what tears ye shed on account of the sufferings of the slave! You knew there were two millions of your fellows in bondage, in your own native land; you heard the shriek of the mother when her darling daughter was sold in the slave-market, and then led away by some brutal white man! You knew well that innocent girl would be doomed to know sorrows more bitter than the pangs of death. You heard the grey-headed slave exclaiming "Am I not a man, and a brother?"

You saw the weeping mother, on bended knees, with uplifted hands, beseeching a merciful God to save her from the tyrant slave-owner. You heard the little child faintly, timidly, asking "Mother, are there any slaves in heaven?" You knew how gladsome to them was the thought, in heaven the slave will be for ever free; and yet, you Joseph Smith, "inspired of the Holy Ghost," you Sidney Rigdon, you Orson Pratt, and the rest of you, calling yourselves "the twelve Apostles" of that compassionate Redeemer who invited a *world* to come to him, you dared to write "*We* do not believe it right to preach the gospel" to slaves, "contrary to the wish of their masters!" Our Bible is the friend of the oppressed, and the comforter of the slave. Our Bible speaks in thundering tones "to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the Most High, the Lord approveth not." The great Apostle of the Gentiles preached to a run-away-slave, and wrote a letter to the master, exhorting him to receive Onesimus, not "as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved!" Go Mormon believer, go, study the epistle to Philemon, and ask thyself can that church be founded on truth, which to please tyrant slave-owners, coolly passes over two millions of their fellows, declaring "*We* do not believe it right to preach the gospel to bond-servants!"

In attempting to carry out an imposition like the one under review, there would necessarily be many difficulties to be removed; a glance at the mode by which some of them were got over will throw considerable light on this subject. Amongst the suspicious circumstances connected with these pretended revelations, we would notice then

V. Their easy way of surmounting difficulties.

(1.) In a visit "my servant Joseph" received from the angel, he was told "the American Indians were a remnant of the tribe of Joseph;" this statement suggested a startling difficulty. How is the marked difference in the complexion of the two tribes to be explained? "the red colour of the Indian skin so different from that of the Jew," must be accounted for, or that statement alone would go far toward exposing the imposition; oh! we are gravely told the colour of the American Jews was changed by God, as a punishment for their sins!

(2.) The book of Mormon professes to contain "the fulness of the everlasting gospel;" and many chapters from the gospels do we find there! How came these American Jews to be so well acquainted with our Lord's discourses? Page 455 tells us "And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice. And it came to pass that again they heard the voice, and they understood it not; and again the third time they did hear the voice, and they did look stedfastly towards heaven, from

whence the sound came; and behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them, behold my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And, behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down, and stood in the midst of them, and spake unto the people, saying, *behold, I am Jesus Christ.*" Our Lord then, after his ascension to glory, again visited the earth—nay, *three times*, we are to believe, visited these American Jews, wrought many miracles in their midst, and taught them the leading doctrines of the gospel, just as we have them in the four Evangelists. Peter's language "whom the heavens *must receive until* the restitution of all things," (Acts iii. 21) certainly does not in the least countenance this theory. Before we believe a statement so startling as the above, we must have some better evidence than "the prophet's" word.

3. The first time Joseph Smith was favoured with a vision he was told God had no church on the earth, consequently there were none authorized to administer religious ordinances; and he was expressly commanded to go not after any of the religious teachers. How then could he be qualified to baptize, &c.? "Mr. Smith testifies that Peter, James, and John, came to him in the capacity of ministering angels, and by the laying on of hands ordained him an apostle, and commanded him to preach, baptize, lay on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and administer all other ordinances of the gospel as they themselves did in ancient days." (Divine Authority, p. 4.) So Peter, James, and John, ordained Joseph an apostle. *Who saw them?*

4. One of the doctrines taught by this saint-like Smith, and his followers is, there can be no salvation without baptism by immersion. The objection at once suggests itself, where then did the penitent thief go? Review the simple facts. The dying Saviour was hanging on the cross; at the foot stood his sorrow-stricken disciples; around was the scoffing Jew, and the hard-hearted Roman. One bolder than the rest begins to jeer the bleeding sufferer, "ah! he saved others," he said, "himself he cannot save;" and then another exclaimed, "If thou be the Son of God, and you said you were, come down from the cross." But now *another* voice is heard; yes, it is one of the crucified thieves. He looks at Jesus of Nazareth; the Jews see only a dying man, he sees a divine being; they behold only a poor wanderer who had no home, he beholds a mighty king; and he prays, "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom," and Jesus said unto him, "verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Clear as these words are, we are actually told, "we have no evidence to believe the thief was taken into heaven. Paradise

must mean a place of departed spirits, without respect to its being either a good or a bad place." (Kingdom of God, part ii. p. 8.) What! are we to believe our blessed Lord would mock the poor thief, by solemnly assuring him "to day thou shalt be with me in paradise," and surely he did if paradise meant hell. Why this monstrous perversion of Christ's words? Simply because there is no reason to suppose the thief had been baptized. The apostle said, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" these men, "without immersion no man shall see the Lord."* If baptism by immersion for remission of sins, had been essential to salvation, we should have been plainly told so in the bible. A church which can only exist by sending the thief to hell because he had not been baptized, a church which coolly consigns to everlasting punishment, myriads of holy, Christ-loving men, simply because they have not been baptized by immersion, is no church of God.

VI. The want of evidence in support of these pretended revelations, compels us to reject them as impious forgeries.

We are required to believe a worthless man, of no moral character, was repeatedly honoured by God with angelic visits, and heaven-given revelations; by their own showing the book of Mormon was buried 1400 years, was written in a language no one could read, and was translated by an instrument none could use but Joseph Smith; no copy of the engravings was given, no impartial person permitted to see them, only twelve men (and they deeply interested in the success of the imposition) ever pretended they had seen them; the character and contents of the book strongly indicate, it was written, not by ancient prophets, but by a man well acquainted with the English version of the bible. We are moreover, to believe, that by a miracle, the peculiar complexion of the Jew was changed to that of the American Indian; that the Saviour three times descended from heaven and visited these Jews; that Peter, and James, and John, came down and ordained a man "entirely destitute of moral character, and addicted to vicious habits," ordained him *an apostle*; we are required to believe in a church which teaches "it is not right to preach the gospel to slaves," and which sends to hell the penitent thief because he had not been baptized. We are to believe a church like this, is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which, I the Lord, am well pleased." (Book of C. p. 67.) Now, what evidence have we for believing these startling

* A man cannot do a bad thing *well*. Smith says, an angel appeared to him, and told him he was "sent by commandment, to communicate to him that *his sins were forgiven*." This was six years before his baptism. This fact clearly proves that the dogma, "No immersion, no salvation," was an after-thought. Had it been a bible doctrine, the angel would have said, Be baptized, and your sins *shall be forgiven*.

statements? None, none whatever. We have nothing but the bare assertion of Joseph Smith and that is all! Mark,

1. The tarnished character of the witnesses. Certainly there is no evidence here. To *believe such* men would be the greatest of all absurdities. Mark,

2. The every-day character of these revelations. If these were "given by inspiration," then it is impossible to distinguish between divine and man-made revelations. We examine them, but we find nothing to indicate the mind of God. How different when we open the bible; we compare them, and each page tells us, unaided man wrote the first; God-inspired men the last. Destroy the bible, and it would be like taking away the noon-hour sun; destroy these revelations, and the loss would be unfelt and unknown. Mark,

3. The significant silence of the bible. Search from Genesis to Revelations, and not a hint can be found intimating God's purpose to raise up in the last days, a prophet by whom new revelations were to be given. John the Baptist was *thrice* foretold; but not one hint is there of Joseph Smith. This silence is the more significant, because we are repeatedly warned to beware of "deceivers," "false prophets," and "wolves in sheep's clothing;" the spirit of God solemnly cautions the church to take heed, for in the last days "seducers" will arise. But it will be said, if Joseph Smith is not referred to, the book of Mormon is. It is sufficient to reply, the most eccentric and extravagant interpreters of the bible never supposed the passages in question* referred to new revelations; the idea never occurred to any one till these self-appointed apostles, hunting for some text which would countenance their pretensions, gladly availed themselves of the figurative language, and boldly asserted the allusion was to the book of Mormon. Had these texts plainly referred to new revelations, the reference would long ago have been noticed, and the church would have been anxiously waiting the hour appointed for their fulfilment. It was so with the Jews in the case of John. The fact that this interpretation was not thought of until after the book of Mormon was written, is a clear proof that it is far-fetched and unnatural. Did our space permit we would take these texts, and prove the assertion.

4. Observe their inability to work miracles. When Christ sent forth the apostles, he gave them power to work miracles; and wherever they went we find they performed many wonderful works. Paul tells the Corinthians, "truly *the signs of an apostle* were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." As this power was given to the twelve, we may be quite sure if Christ had appointed

* Isa. xxix. 4, 11, 12, 18. Dan. ii. 34, 44, 45.

Rev. xiv. 6.

apostles in these days, he would have confirmed the appointment, by enabling them to give "the signs of an apostle." We need not argue this point, because these men assert they have received power, and have actually wrought many wonderful works. We reply,

(1.) These pretended miracles are not supported by sufficient evidence. Where were they done? in private. Who were the witnesses? the saints. What were the miracles? a poor fanatic felt pain in the finger, or "a fluttering of the heart," or "bad sensations in the inside;" a few kind words were uttered, a prayer offered, and lo! the sufferer was cured, and a miracle was performed. "The power of imagination in the cure of diseases, operates to a degree, of which few out of the profession are aware."* We must have real, unmistakeable, public miracles; miracles done at once, and not in a week; nature is a good nurse, and often does wonders in a few hours. Peter raised Dorcas; Paul, Eutychus: by the *temple-gate*, the former in a moment cured a man lame from his birth; in the *streets of Lystra*, the other by a word, healed a cripple who never had walked. Let these "apostles" raise a dead person; let them in the presence of impartial witnesses, open the eyes of the blind, cure the dumb, and heal the lame, and then we will withdraw the charge of inability to work miracles.

(2.) When we have reason to expect a miracle, we find none. Joseph Smith was imprisoned; ah! the apostles were imprisoned too, but the angel of the Lord opened the prison door, and brought them forth; a second time Peter was imprisoned, and a second time the angel sets him free. No angel is sent to "my servant Joseph!" Smith was killed by an angry mob, and a brutal murder it was. Ah! an angry mob stoned the apostle Paul, and left him, supposing he had been dead; but he rises up, walks back into the city, and the next day takes a long journey. If this man had been a divinely appointed apostle, the Master would have sent an angel to deliver him. He was forbidden to show the plates; ah! then God, in some wondrous way, will testify he is a prophet; the thunders of heaven will roll along the air; the lightning's vivid flash will strike terror into yon approaching mob; a voice will be heard, Touch not my servant, and do my prophet no harm. Not so—all is still; no stern voice is heard; no angelic form opens the prison door. Why? God does not work miracles, to set false prophets free.

(3.) These miracle-workers have to admit failures. In the *Millennial Star*, Aug. 1st, 1847, we are told "It now becomes a painful duty to inform many, who are not already aware of the severe indisposition of president Orson Spencer; a violent

attack of fever immediately reduced him to a state of almost entire helplessness, in bed, and continued to prey upon him; being frequently abated in its violence, by the anointing and prayers of such as attended him, till the 16th, it left him in an extremely debilitated condition; since which time he has been free from the fever, *but has recovered strength* so very slowly, most of the time, *as to be almost imperceptible*. These are their miracles! there was "the anointing and prayers," and all in vain; for "President" though he was, he "recovered strength so very slowly, most of the time, as to be almost imperceptible." Let us glance at a real miracle; "And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and *sick of a fever*; and he touched her hand, and the fever left her; and *she arose and ministered unto them*." If these latter-day apostles can cure diseases, by anointing with oil, and prayer, why was not "President Orson Spencer" healed? Surely he, a "President," had faith!

(4.) These men never work miracles when requested! Many an honest enquirer after truth, has said, if you will work a miracle, in my presence, I will admit your claim; but the request has been evaded. The enquirer is put off, with the bare assertion, we have performed hundreds of miracles in America! and when the request is pressed, then is the answer ready—Miracles are to confirm the believer, not to convince the doubter! Indeed. What said the Saviour? "Then began he to *upbraid* the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for, if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago." And, at another time, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin." Were these works done only, or principally even, to confirm believers? Certainly not. If these men can work miracles, *why* don't they? If they could in America, they can in England; and until they do, it would be folly; nay, sin to admit for a moment, their pretensions.

5. In support of the assertion, that these revelations are not supported by sufficient evidence, we point to the want of success.

(1.) As it regards numbers. Could these apostles work miracles, and give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, their success ought to have been far greater than that which attended the apostles of old. They profess to have all the powers the twelve had, whilst their advantages are far greater; they have the printing press, the railway, and the steam-boat; the masses are tolerably educated, and are favourably disposed towards Christianity. What then has been their success? They

only dare to put their numbers down at 200,000.* Not *under* the mark, we may be quite sure. 200,000 in twenty years! Why by this time they ought to have swallowed up the whole church. Peter on one occasion preached, and 3000 were converted: where can Mormonism point to a triumph like that? The martyr Williams went to the South Seas with the simple gospel message as in the Holy Scriptures, and tribe after tribe left the faith in which they had been brought up, and embraced Christianity. Not so with these self-appointed twelve! Christianity can point to a Saul of Tarsus, and to a multitude which no man can number, drawn from all classes, the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned. How different with Mormonism! All the evidence goes to show that Mormon converts are drawn from the least educated classes of the community; the least educated, and therefore the most likely to be deceived.

(2.) Want of success as it regards moral results. What has Mormonism done for its converts? We have seen what it has done for the slave. Its teachers can give the Holy Ghost through laying on of hands; then we have a right to expect all "the fruits of the Spirit"—love, gentleness, goodness, in a greater degree than ever before seen. Is it so? Are their converts more enlightened, more spiritually-minded, more holy than any men we have known? Do we see such seriousness in conducting their religious services, such heavenly-mindedness in their conduct, that we have to say, verily, John Bunyan was a worldly-minded man, and John Wesley a poor half-hearted Christian? It ought to be so. Endowed with powers like these, the "saints" ought to be the pink of perfection. We can find nothing of the kind. We hear a great deal more about Joseph Smith, than Jesus Christ; a great deal more about immersion than repentance, about going to the land of Zion than preparing for the heavenly Jerusalem.

We have not referred to the peculiar doctrines of the Mormons, nor noticed their strange interpretations of Scripture. If we can prove that Joseph Smith was an impostor, and the Book of Mormon a forgery, then his doctrines and principles are but the mere opinions of a worthless man, to examine which would be useless. To those who reject these revelations we would say, the best way of proving your reverence for the Bible is to obey its precepts; and those who still cleave to them as divine, will do well to remember, that if ever Mormonism

* Henry Miller's disciples were estimated at 40,000 (this estimate is as likely to be correct as the one above); and had Miller been wise enough to fix August 1st, 1853, as "the end of the world," instead of August, 1843, his disciples would soon have reached 400,000. Such, alas! is the credulity of man.

succeeds, it will be by raising up a band of men far holier, far more spiritually-minded, than the world has yet witnessed.

Are there any who say, we do not believe either in the Book of Mormon or in the Bible? Ah! does not the counterfeit shilling prove the existence of the good coin? and does not a false revelation prove the existence of a true one? Would it not be absurd for a man to say, because he had been vexed by listening to discordant sounds, there is no such thing as harmony? and is it not equally absurd for a man to reject the *Bible*, because bad men have tried to deceive him by presenting a false one? Just as the shadow proves the existence of the substance, and the imitation that of the original, so the Book of Mormon proves the existence of a divine revelation. Where is that to be found? We have the testimony of unnumbered myriads who have lived during the past eighteen centuries—myriads, drawn from all classes—that the Bible, and the Bible alone, contains God's will, and that that Bible is able to make the earnest enquirer wise unto salvation. And now may Almighty God, who in time past gave unto his church the heavenly doctrines of the sacred Scriptures, give us grace, that, being not like children carried away with every blast of vain doctrine, we may be established in the truth of his holy gospel, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

