

Early Publications on the Book of Mormon

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One of the best historical windows for understanding how the Book of Mormon was interpreted and understood by early readers is the literature relating to that book published during the Prophet Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Publications of this period can often enrich our perspective on early Latter-day Saint history. Until fairly recently, however, the task of collecting many of the early publications relating to the Book of Mormon was difficult. During the 1930s Francis W. Kirkham started a collection with articles from New England and Ohio newspapers. As Keith Perkins notes, “At a time when others lacked either the opportunity or the inclination to do so, [Kirkham] set out to gather many early documents related to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon—source materials that were still available but in jeopardy of loss or deterioration. He analyzed these sources

and compiled them into a work that has had a lasting impact on our understanding of this book of scripture.”¹ This collection was initially published in 1937 under the title *Source Material Concerning the Origin of the Book of Mormon*.²

Later Kirkham expanded his work to include and describe naturalistic explanations of the Book of Mormon of that period. With the encouragement of Latter-day Saint leaders, these efforts produced several expanded editions of his work that were eventually published in two volumes.³ “Since the early books and newspapers and pamphlets are few and widely scattered,” noted John A. Widtsoe in 1959, “President George Albert Smith invited Dr. Kirkham to extend his research in this field and to assemble for publication under one cover the many attempts to prove the Book of Mormon man-made.”⁴ Church leaders believed such efforts

The screenshot shows the website for the '19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829-1844)' collection. At the top, it identifies the 'BYU Harold B. Lee Library'. The main heading is '19th-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829-1844)'. Below this, there are search options: 'Basic Search' with a 'Search All' dropdown and a search box, and 'Detailed Search' with dropdowns for 'Keywords', 'Author', 'Title', and 'Date' (formatted as 'yyyy-mm-dd'). A 'Search' button is provided for both. To the right of the search options, the collection is described as 'Compiled and Edited by Matthew Roper, Research Scholar and Sandra A. Thorne, Editor', and 'Published by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, © 2010'. A small thumbnail image of a historical document is shown on the right. Below the search options, there are links for 'Browse the Collection' and 'Advanced Search', and a list of links: 'Introduction', 'Acknowledgments', 'Master List of Documents', 'Using This Collection', and 'Contact Us'. The footer contains navigation links: 'Home | Renew Materials | Contact Us | Site Index', and contact information: 'P.O. Box 26000, Provo, UT 84602-6000 | (801) 424-2927 | © 2010 Brigham Young University'.

would have a salutary effect on Latter-day Saints by making them more familiar with the history and events surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as well as with the arguments of critics who believed that it was man-made. “Unbelievers in Joseph Smith’s story,” wrote John A. Widtsoe, “have not been able to agree on any one explanation. It has even been necessary by some writers to change the explanation they first proposed. This unsuccessful, changing search is of itself an evidence of the truth of the Prophet’s own story.”⁵ Since many of these publications were rare, even in Kirkham’s day, and not easily accessible, Kirkham’s two-volume collection has been a helpful resource to historians and students of Latter-day Saint history who are interested in the events surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.⁶

Although still valuable, Kirkham’s volumes are not comprehensive or complete. Many important articles relating to the Book of Mormon published in American religious periodicals that were unknown to him at the time have since been identified by researchers. Additionally, Kirkham usually only published extracts from these documents in order to provide a sampling of varying theories

about the Book of Mormon. Kirkham’s focus was limited primarily to issues relating to the origin of the Book of Mormon and the theories of critics who attempted to prove it man-made. His research did not focus on other factors, such as how Latter-day Saints understood and related to the Book of Mormon. These limitations underscore the need for a more comprehensive and searchable resource. Thanks to the encouragement and support of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship and the assistance of the staff at the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, an important collection of early publications relating to the Book of Mormon between 1829 and 1844 has been gathered and is being made accessible to researchers. This article provides an overview of this collection and a sampling of its contents.

Nineteenth-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829-1844) includes more than 600 publications (close to one million words of text) and is intended to comprise, insofar as possible, everything published in that time span relating to the Book of Mormon. The collection includes works by defenders and detractors. By far the most common category of publications in the collection is articles

published in early newspapers. “Newspapers,” notes Walter A. Norton, “were the first form of public communication, other than community gossip and hearsay, to convey to a surprised citizenry the curious story surrounding the birth of Mormonism in Western New York. In fact, for nearly a century newspapers and magazines were almost unanimous in conveying a disparaging image of Mormonism.”⁷ In spite of this challenge, Latter-day Saint writers were able to utilize the print media to spread the message of the restoration more widely. Beginning in 1832, the Church of Jesus Christ began publishing its own periodical, *The Evening and the Morning Star*. This and later Church-sponsored newspapers such as the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* and the *Times and Seasons* enabled the first generation of Latter-day Saints to become better informed about their beliefs, present their history, and provide a forum in which to correct, clarify, and respond to misrepresentations. Other publications include books and pamphlets, published accounts of missionary activities relating to the Book of Mormon, hymns, broadsides, and early reference works.

Reports alluding to the recovery and coming forth of a “Gold Bible” may have been published before that time, perhaps as early as 1827, but if so, they may not have survived. As Norton observes, “Certain newspapers printed in these two regions [New York and Ohio] can be identified by name, but copies of them exist today in no known archival depository. Furthermore, many individual issues are missing from larger collections and apparently are lost forever.”⁸ The earliest known article published on the Book of Mormon appeared in the Palmyra *Wayne Sentinel* on 26 June 1829. On 16 November 1830, E. D. Howe, the editor of the *Painesville Telegraph*, recalled, “Some two or three years since, an account was given in the papers, of a book purporting to contain new revelations from Heaven, having been dug out of the ground, in Manchester in Ontario Co. N.Y.”⁹ Howe did not indicate where the article was published. Two years before 16 November 1830 would have been November 1828.

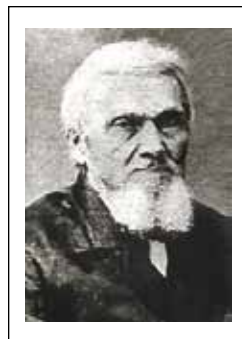


Brigham Young

Courtesy Church History Library and Archives.



Orson Hyde



E. D. Howe

Three years before would have been November 1827, about two months after Joseph Smith recovered the plates.

In 1845 Brigham Young spoke of the years before his conversion in Mentor, New York. Young also described signs in the heavens that he and his wife observed, on what he would later realize was “the night the plates were found.”¹⁰

He recalled that about this time “there was printed in the newspaper a short paragraph; it was only about a square inch, but it stated that a young man had seen an angel who had told him where to find an Indian Bible, and it went on to inquire what would happen if it should come forth; should we then know about the origin of the Indians?” While it is clear that Young refers to a time before the publication of the Book of Mormon, his statement is insufficiently clear as to whether this was the time when Moroni first revealed the plates in 1823 or the night when Joseph Smith recovered the plates from the hill in 1827. A date in late 1827 would fit with Howe’s recollection.

In 1858 Orson Hyde published an autobiographical account of the events leading to his introduction to the Book of Mormon: “About this time [1827], some vague reports came in the newspapers, that a ‘golden bible’ had been dug out of a rock in the State of New York. It was treated, however, as a hoax. But on reading the report, I remarked as follows—‘Who knows but that this “golden bible” may break up all our religion, and change its whole features and bearing?’ Nothing more was heard of it for a long time in that section.”¹¹ In a letter to Thomas Gregg in 1882, former Utah Governor S. S. Harding recounted some of the early events of his life relating to Mormonism: “When I left my home in the West, I had never heard of Mormonism, by that name. When I was a student at Brookville, in the fall of 1827, the *Brookville Enquirer* was laid upon my table, when my eye fell upon a paragraph, credited to some Eastern paper, of the finding of a book of metallic plates, called the ‘Golden Bible.’ It was found by a young man by the name of Joe Smith.”¹²

80 THE REFLECTOR.

now wanting to enable us to pursue reading profitably, is to select the one, while we reject the other.

BOOK OF PUKK.—Chap. 2.

Contents.—1. The idle and slothful reverence the prophet.—2 The prophet reveals to them the first appearance of the spirit.—3 Its admonition and promises.—4 Description of the spirit.—5 Mormon—the ten tribes.—6 Their migration—wars—extinction.—7 Gold Bible and contents.—8 spectacles—breastplate—Oliver, &c.

1. And it came to pass, that when the mantle of Walters the Magician had fallen upon Joseph, surnamed the prophet, who was the son of Joseph; that the "idle and slothful" gathered themselves together, in the presence of Joseph, and said unto him, "lo! we will be thy servants forever, do with us, our wives, and our little ones as it may seem good in thine eyes.

2. And the prophet answered and said,—“Behold! hath not the mantle of Walters the Magician fallen upon me, and am I not able to do before you my people great wonders, and shew you, at a more proper season, where the Nephites hid their treasures!—for lo! yesternight stood before me in the wilderness of Manchester, the spirit, who, from the beginning, has had in keeping all the treasures, hidden in the bowels of the earth.

3. And he said unto me, Joseph, thou son of Joseph, hold up thine head; do the crimes done in thy body fill thee with shame!—hold up thine face and let the light of mine countenance shine upon thee—thou, and all thy father's household, have served me faithfully, according to the best of their knowledge and abilities—I am the spirit that walketh in darkness, and will shew thee great signs and wonders.”

4. And I looked, and behold a little old man stood before me, clad, as I supposed, in Egyptian raiment, except his Indian blanket, and moccasins—his beard of silver white, *lung* far below his knees. On his head was an

old fashioned military half cocked hat, such as was worn in the days of the patriarch Moses—his speech was sweeter than molasses, and his words were the reformed Egyptian.

5. And he again said unto me, “Joseph, thou who hast been surnamed the *ignoramus*, knowest thou not, that great signs and wonders are to be done by thine hands? knowest thou not, that I have been sent unto thee by MORMON, the great apostle to the Nephites—Mormon who was chief among the last ten tribes of Israel?

6. Knowest thou not that this same apostle to the nephites conducted that *pious* people, who could not abide the wickedness of their brethren, to these happy shores in bark canoes, where after fighting with their brethren the Lamanites, a few hundred years, became wicked themselves, when God sent the *small pox* among them, which killed two thirds of them, and turned the rest into Indians?

7. Knowest thou not, thou weak one of earth, that this same Mormon wrote a book on plates of gold, in the language I now speak, of and concerning the aforesaid Nephites and their brethren the Lamanites, and their treasures, (including a box of gold watches on which thou shalt hereafter raise money,) and knowest thou not, that thou art greater than all the “money-digging rabble,” and art chosen to interpret the book, which Mormon has written, to wit, the gold Bible?

8. “And lo! I answered the spirit of the money diggers saying, how can these things be, as I can neither read nor write? And he said unto me” “I will give thee a breast plate, to keep thee from evil, and I will send thee an assistant, even Oliver, the pedagogue.”

¶ The “Hudibrastic ode” on the subject of the Geneva “Dancing school Public,” (in May last,) and the conduct of “the Bull” on that occasion has

Reflector, 7 July 1830.

Unfortunately copies of the *Brookville Enquirer* for the period in question have apparently not survived. It is significant, however, that each of these reports, coming both from non-Mormons like Howe and Harding and Mormons like Young and Hyde, consistently place the appearance of such an article in New York or Ohio in late 1827 and shortly after the recovery of the plates in September of that year. Such articles, were they to be located, would be of great interest to historians.

While many publications are no longer extant, diligent and persistent researchers often turn up occasional treasures. One researcher recently

Book of Mormon.—In the 2d number of the *GEM*, we gave a full length portrait of this ranting of wickedness and credulity. By a late Painesville, Ohio paper, we perceive that this pretended revelation from heaven has found some believers, and that there are preachers travelling about in those parts who pretend that it is the only revelation which men can safely live and die by. In Canandaigua, it is also said, that there is a book of Mormon in a preacher, who is attempting to push his way forward, in spite of all opposition. The reason for these efforts is obvious. When the work spoken of came before the world, it proved to be such a spawn of wickedness, that the press aimed a blow at it, and it fell, where it had scarce seen the light. The getters-up therefore, seeing their hopes all blasted, and their names coupled with infamy, have determined to ‘make a raise’ on the public by some means, and thus they are going about “like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour.” We do not anticipate a very great turning to this heresy. The public are too much enlightened

Gem, 25 December 1830.

located an early article published in the *New York Telescope* on 20 February 1830, written by C. C. Blatchley. By some means Blatchley had obtained a copy of one of the sixteen-page signatures of the Book of Mormon from Grandin’s Palmyra printing office more than a month before the Book of Mormon was published and took the opportunity to disparage its style and grammar. More significantly, he cited a previously unknown letter he had received from Oliver Cowdery which Blatchley reportedly printed in another publication called the *Investigator* on 11 December 1829. Blatchley said he had previously written to Joseph Smith, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer, “the believers in said bible of gold plates—which they affirm they have miraculously, or supernaturally beheld.” Not willing to accept their testimony, he “sought for evidences, and such as could not be disputed, of the existence of this bible of golden plates.” He said that Oliver Cowdery had written back to inform him that “the

world must take their words for its existence; and that the book would appear [that] month.”¹³ Although it comes to us secondhand, this is the earliest published reference to the testimony of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon. Efforts to locate the *Investigator* and the previously unknown Oliver Cowdery letter have so far failed, but future researchers may be more successful.

Some accounts in these publications shed additional light on the activities of early missionaries. In the revelation given on 25 January 1832, now known as section 75 of the Doctrine and Covenants, Lyman Johnson and Orson Pratt are commanded to “take their journey into the eastern countries” (D&C 75:14). In his personal journal, Pratt gives a summary of their labors but provides few details about their journey or what they taught. Others, however, who encountered these early missionaries provide descriptions of what they said and did. In one account published in Mercer County, Pennsylvania, one observer describes these two missionaries in favorable terms as they stopped for a cottage meeting at his home on their journey to the East. “They appeared to have very little learning, to be sincere in all they said. They had good manners—had been well raised—were decent and unassuming in every thing I saw, or heard them say.” One of them stated that he was “specially commanded to go forth and warn the people to flee from the wrath to come . . . to declare the will of God, and the revelation of John who saw the angel flying through Heaven—An angel brought the Mormonite Bible and laid it before him (the speaker;) he therefore *knows* these things to be true.”¹⁴

While these early publications can be a valuable resource to historians, it is also worth noting the obvious fact that not everything published was necessarily true or accurate. Both Mormon and non-Mormon writers could be deeply partisan. Writers were often hasty in publishing descriptions and reports without verifying their accuracy. In 1841, for example, the *Rochester Daily Democrat* published a false report of the murder of Martin Harris (Harris would in fact live another thirty-four years and die of natural causes in 1875).¹⁵ Negative rumors, reports, and speculations about Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints tended to be taken at face value without serious investigation or criti-



Parley P. Pratt

cal assessment. “Considering the state of transportation and communication in antebellum America, newspapers were able to ‘get away with’ ambiguous writing, if not palpable falsehoods.”¹⁶ Even Howe, not above reporting negative rumors about the Mormons, observed, “To record the thousand tales which are in circulation respecting the book and its propogators, would be an endless task, and probably lead to the promulgation of a hundred times more than was founded in truth.”¹⁷ In 1838 Elder Parley P. Pratt surveyed the bewildering chaos of mostly unchallenged rumor and misrepresentation so common in the press:

Fortune telling, money digging, juggling, wicked, cheat, liar, profane, intemperate, quarrelsome, not good character, gold bible company, indolent, lying, notoriously bad, wife whipper, destitute of moral character, visionary, addicted to vicious habits; and add to this catalogue, the ridiculous stories that went the rounds of the religious papers concerning the “Angel Caught;” and the walking on the water story; and the murder story; together with “Adultery,” and the love tale of Mr. Smith’s stealing his wife; and then the all things common; together with doing away with matrimony; and then the Treason against Government; the stirring up of the Slaves against their Masters; the instigating of the Indians to war and bloodshed; together with driving the inhabitants of Jackson County, Missouri, from their houses and lands, and the taking possession of them by force. . . . Perhaps they might have added the story of eating their own children; and of having hairy throats, and but one eye, and that in the middle of their foreheads. . . . We are willing to give our enemies, . . . together with his Satanic majesty; great credit, for inventive and fertile imaginations, as well as for great credulity.¹⁸

In a letter published in 1842, J. N. T. Tucker, a cousin of Palmyra printer Pomeroy Tucker, claimed to have worked on the typesetting of the Book of Mormon. While preparing the Book of Mormon for publication he and several coworkers in the printing office attempted to test Joseph Smith’s ability as a translator. “Accordingly, after putting one sheet

Mormonism—Some Curious Facts.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—Having noticed in a late number of the *Signs of the Times*, a notice of a work entitled “Mormon Delusions and Monstrosities”—it occurred to me that it might perhaps be of service to the cause of truth, to state one circumstance in relation to the authenticity of the “Book of Mormon” which occurred during its publication, at which time I was a practical printer, and engaged in the office where it was printed, and became familiar with the men and their principles, through whose agency it was “got up.”

The circumstance alluded to was as follows:—We had heard much said by Martin Harris, the man who paid for the printing, (and the only one in the concern worth any property) about the wonderful wisdom of the translators of the mysterious plates, and resolved to test their wisdom. Accordingly, after putting one sheet in type, we laid it aside, and told Harris it was lost, and there would be a serious defect in the book in consequence, unless another sheet like the original could be produced. The announcement threw the old gentleman into quite an excitement. But after a few moment’s reflection, he said he would try to obtain another. After two or three weeks another sheet was produced, but no more like the original than any other sheet of paper would have been, written over by a common school-boy, after having read, as they did, the manuscripts preceding and succeeding the lost sheet.

As might be expected, the disclosure of the plan greatly annoyed the authors, and caused no little merriment among those who were acquainted with the circumstance. As we were none of us Christians, and only labored for the “gold that perisheth,” we did not care for the delusion, only so far as to be careful to avoid it, ourselves and enjoy the hoax. Not one of the hands in the office where the wonderful book was printed ever became a convert to the system, although the writer of this was often assured by Harris if he did not, he would be destroyed in 1832.

Signs of the Times, June 1842.

in type, we laid it aside, and told [Martin] Harris it was lost, and there would be a serious defect in the book in consequence, unless another sheet like the original could be produced.” This, according to Tucker, forced Harris to return to Joseph Smith and ask him to reproduce the missing text. When he returned several weeks later with

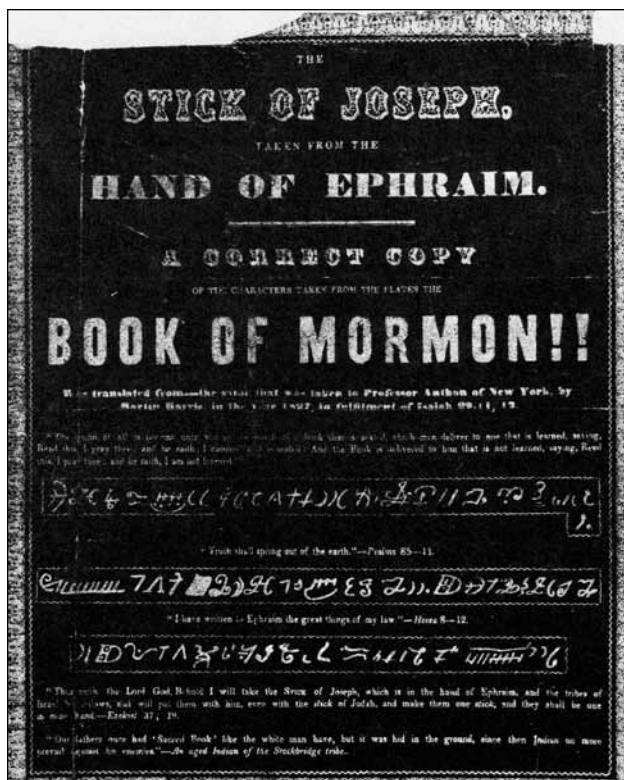
a replacement sheet, it differed from the original. This little joke, Tucker said, “caused no little merriment among those who were acquainted with the circumstance.”¹⁹

Tucker’s tale, however, appears to have been fabricated. When asked about the incident, John Gilbert, who was responsible for setting the type of the Book of Mormon, noted that Tucker did not even work in the office at the time the alleged incident was to have occurred. “His statement in regard to a page of the manuscript being spirited away by some of the typos in the office, is totally untrue.” Tucker, Gilbert remembered, “went to Groton, Ct., got married, became a preacher—Baptist I believe—committed some crime,—was tried and acquitted on the plea of insanity—he was a ‘bad egg.’”²⁰ Unfortunately, there were few safeguards against the circulation of false stories and rumors about Mormonism once they were printed.

Early Reactions to the Book of Mormon

Early literature relating to the Book of Mormon appeared in a highly partisan atmosphere of religious polemic common to the time. Early publications treated the Book of Mormon with contempt and ridicule even before it came off the press. “For some time past,” noted the editor of the *Wayne Sentinel* on 26 June 1829, “much speculation has existed, concerning a pretended discovery, through superhuman means, of an ancient record, of a religious and a divine nature and origin, written in ancient characters, impossible to be interpreted by any to whom the special gift has not been imparted by inspiration. It is generally known and spoken of as the ‘Golden Bible.’ Most people entertain an idea that the whole matter is the result of a gross imposition and a grosser superstition.”²¹ The term *Gold Bible* was not intended as one of respect. As Abner Cole, the editor of the Palmyra tabloid the *Reflector*, explained, “The appellation of ‘Gold Bible,’ is only a *cant cognomen*,” a nickname given to the Book of Mormon by “revilers and unbelievers—by way of derision.”²²

During the summer of 1829, the editor of *Paul Pry’s Weekly Bulletin* lampooned local community figures in a series of parodies written in biblical style. On 8 August, he concluded one such parody, entitled “From the Gold Bible,” with a swipe at the as-yet-unpublished Book of Mormon, “Behold all these things, yea many more, are graven on the



Broadside announcing the publication of the Book of Mormon, ca. 1844. Courtesy of the Harold B. Lee Library.

massy leaves of the Golden Book, and are now in the custody of *Joseph* the prophet.”²³ In another one written on 29 August, the editor lambasted local Methodists for alleged improprieties and then concluded, “And now oh ye worshipers of *Bad*, if ye turn not from the evil of your ways, and do that which is right, ye shall be delivered over to the folly of Smith, and with his exhortations be tormented day and night forever.”²⁴

On 26 March 1830, the *Wayne Sentinel* reported that the Book of Mormon had been published and was available for sale. Early reactions in the press to its publication varied from charges of blasphemy or contempt to amusement. On 2 April 1830, the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* wrote, “The ‘Book of Mormon’ has been placed in our hands. A viler imposition was never practised. It is an evidence of fraud, blasphemy and credulity, shocking to the Christian and moralist.”²⁵ “We have no doubt,” wrote the editor of the *Cleveland Herald*, “many will be shocked to learn there are those sacriligious enough to contend that a new bible has been given to the children of men. But it is even so.” He considered it “one of

the veriest impositions of the day.”²⁶ Such views were typical and were widely disseminated.

The belief in a restoration of spiritual gifts and miracles heralded by the Book of Mormon was also a common object of criticism and at least a partial motivation behind early persecutions of Latter-day Saints. In the summer of 1833 a mob destroyed the printing office of *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Independence, Missouri, and tarred and feathered several Church leaders, forcing them to sign an agreement promising to remove the Saints from the county. In an article published in the *Missouri Republican*, the actions of this “citizen’s meeting” are described as follows: “The committee express their fears that, should the population [of Mormons in Jackson County] continue to increase, they will soon have all the offices of the county in their hands; and that the lives and property of the other citizens would be insecure, under the administration of men who are so ignorant and superstitious as to believe that they have been the subjects of miraculous and supernatural cures; hold converse with God and his angels, and possess and exercise the gift of divination, and of unknown tongues.”²⁷

Such animosity was also evident after the Saints’ removal to Illinois several years later. One interesting report was published in the *Illinois Register* in March 1840:

A short time since it was ascertained that a Mr. Clark, a member of the Methodist Episcopal church in Logan county, had in his possession the Book of Mormon. For this glaring outrage he was severely reprimanded, deprived of his station as class leader, and the book demanded of him by his preachers, a Mr. Martin and a Mr. Watt. He (the said Clark) contended that the book was his own property, and unless they bought it, they could not have the same. Accordingly, the necessary sum was raised, and paid for the book. Shortly after the said book was taken into De Witt county, to a Quarterly Conference meeting, there to await its final trial; and it was condemned, and burnt to ashes—the judges themselves being the executioners. And what is still more appalling, Mr. Watt, a preacher, has been heard unblushingly to assert, that *if burning the book would not do, they would next burn the Mormons themselves.*²⁸

Early publications also recount the reactions of travelers and visitors to the Prophet and the Saints. David Marks, a Methodist preacher, visited the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, shortly after the publication of the Book of Mormon. “On reviewing this pretended revelation, I was forcibly struck with the contrast between the introduction of the gospel of Christ, and that of the ‘Book of Mormon.’ The former came *down* from heaven; the latter is said to have been *dug* out of the earth.” He dismissed the notion that only certain witnesses could be allowed to see the plates which were subsequently “*hid* up unto the Lord” and



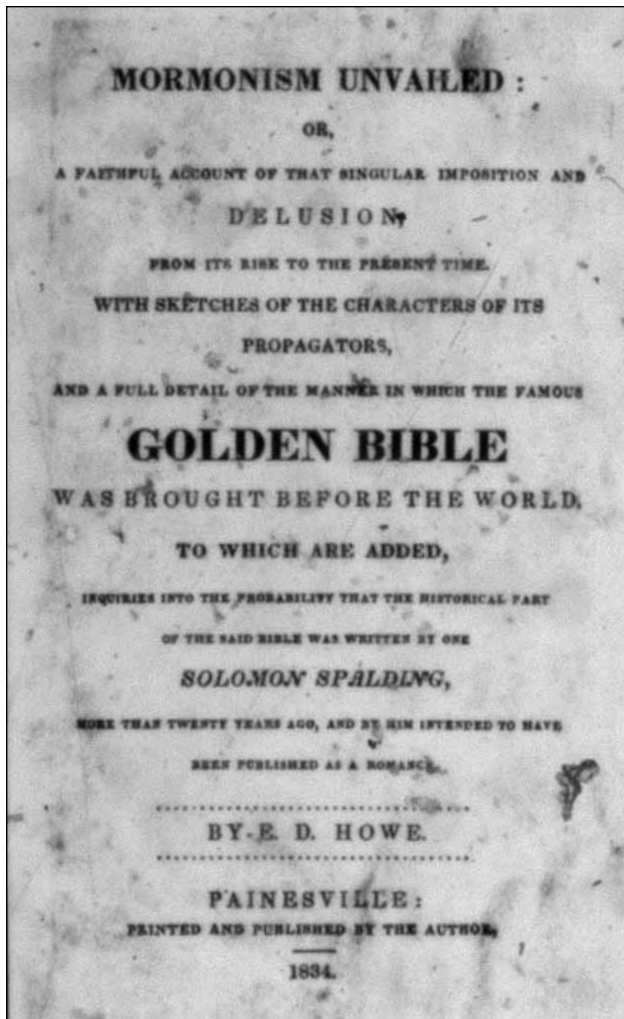
Nancy Towle. Courtesy Judith Bledsoe Bailey.

found the Book of Mormon “full of absurdity, and too dull to charm the soul.”²⁹

Nancy Towle, an itinerant evangelical preacher from England, visited Kirtland, Ohio, in October 1831. A year later, in 1832, she published a little-known account of her visit to the headquarters of the Saints and the Prophet Joseph Smith. Unimpressed, she described the Prophet as “a good-natured, low-bred, sort of a chap”³⁰ and looked upon the meetings of the Saints “with the utmost indignation and disgust,”

though admitting, “I saw nothing indecorous; nor had I, any apprehension, of any thing of the kind.”³¹ She *was* puzzled, however, to find among them former “ministers, of different persuasions: and some, it appeared, who had once been eminent for piety,”³² and she “viewed it strange, that so many men of skill should be thus duped.” When W. W. Phelps told her that she would not be saved unless she believed the Book of Mormon, she heatedly responded, “If I had the Book, Sir, I would burn it!”³³ She then asked the Prophet Joseph if he would take an oath that the angel really appeared to him and showed him the plates, to which he replied, “I will not swear at all!” (see Matthew 5:33–37). Frustrated, she lashed out, “Are you not ashamed, of such pretensions? You, who are no more, than any ignorant plough-boy of our land! Oh! blush, at such abominations! And let shame, cover your face!” The Prophet, she reports, simply replied, “The gift, has returned back again, as in former times, to illiterate fishermen.”³⁴

Others found the Book of Mormon no less difficult to believe than the Bible. “After a pretty careful perusal of the Book of Mormon, or the Golden Bible, as it is usually termed,” wrote William Owen, “I am of the opinion that, setting aside the historical proofs of authenticity, the Golden Bible will bear a very good comparison with the Holy Bible. I find nothing in the former inconsistent with the doctrines or opposed to a belief in the latter; on the contrary, the one seems to corroborate the other; and I can discover no good reason why the generality of Christians should scoff, as I have generally found them to do.” The writer, a skeptic of all religious claims, suggested that believers were inconsistent in rejecting the claims of the Book of Mormon if they truly believed in the Bible. “Christians can hardly read the book of Mormon without remarking a striking similarity to their own scriptures, and



Title page of E. D. Howe’s *Mormonism Unveiled*, the first anti-Mormon book published.



the believers in the Old and New Testaments cannot consistently deny the possibility of a single circumstance related to the Mormon scriptures. . . . For my own part, I should consider satisfactory proofs of the genuineness of the Golden Bible as strong evidence of the divine origin of the Holy Bible, so consistent they are with, and corroborative of, each other.”³⁵

Liberal thinkers and atheists faulted Christians for inconsistency in rejecting the Book of Mormon simply because it required faith in the story of its recovery and belief in the testimony of witnesses, while accepting the Bible at face value. “Every part of the Bible,” claimed one proud critic in 1844, “both of the Old and New Testament, has originated in the same way as the Book of Mormon—that is, ‘been found,’ and then commended to the world.” He cited the story of the discovery of the book of the law during the reign of King Josiah and noted “that the writings of no prophet were received as divinely inspired, until after his death and the fulfilment of his prophecy proved him to be a true prophet.”

Hence even biblical writings, like those of the Latter-day Saints, require faith in the testimony of those who produced them. “We are no Mormon, God knows, or, at any rate, we know. We believe their religion is the same as that of all others, founded in delusion, deceit, and falsehood—in books that are found.” He predicted, however, that “the Mormons will ultimately become the predominant sect, and the Book of Mormon be incorporated in the Bible. . . . For every Mormon slain, ten will rise up to collect [Joseph Smith’s] ashes, embalm his memory, and propagate his faith.”³⁶

Defending the Book of Mormon

While the earliest publications relating to the Book of Mormon tended to be very negative, Latter-day Saints were quite capable of defending themselves, responding to criticisms, and correcting misrepresentation when necessary. Many of the earliest Latter-day Saint publications were written in response to critics. In 1834, when E. D. Howe published *Mormonism Unveiled*, the first anti-Mormon book, Latter-day Saint leaders responded indirectly by publishing an account of Joseph Smith’s early history. In 1840, Apostle John Taylor wrote a rebuttal to several anti-Mormon tracts written by

Boston Investigator, 17 January 1844.

Reverend Robert Heys and Thomas Livesey who had relied heavily on *Mormonism Unveiled*. In his rebuttal, Elder Taylor noted with some amusement:

One says that Joseph Smith junr. is the author and publisher of the Book of Mormon the other says that Solomon Spaulding is the author of it! One says that it was written by Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdry, from the mouth of Joseph Smith, junr., as he looked at a stone, with his face in a hat; the other, that it was written, and altered by Sidney Rigdon, from the "Manuscript Found"!! One makes it out that it was written in Harmony township, Susquehanah county, by Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery; the other, that it was written in Conneaut, Ohio, first by Solomon Spaulding, and afterwards altered by Sidney Rigdon, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania!!! So much, then, for the agreement of the testimony which is brought forth as FACTS concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and yet these gentlemen are both of them good men; both of them accredited ministers of the Methodist connexion; and both of them have got what they call FACTS, diametrically opposed to each other as light is from darkness. But Mr. Heys has got good testimony to his account, so has Mr. Livesey; and I suppose that because both of the testimonies are good, they must both of them be true—although the one contradicts the other—especially as they were supported and held forth by such pious, holy men. I shall leave Messrs. Heys and Livesey, then, to settle this difficulty between themselves.³⁷

Some early criticisms of the Book of Mormon merely show that critics had never read the book or given it serious consideration. When one critic was asked in 1837 why he rejected it, he explained that he "had read the book of Mormon enough to find . . . the terms, 'gunpowder, mariner's compass,' and several others of recent origin, introduced into a silly story of the exploits of one 'Nephi.' . . . There are also references to pistols and other fire arms."³⁸ In an inexplicable comment, Alexander Campbell faulted the Book of Mormon for mentioning "steam-boats."³⁹ Referencing the account in 3 Nephi of the destruction at the time of Christ, another critic wondered how the earth could be carried up upon the city of Moronihah (3 Nephi 8:10). "Tell us what this city stood on; the Moon, or which of



Alexander Campbell's "Delusions" in *Millennial Harbinger*, 7 February 1832.

the planets?"⁴⁰ More sober critics wondered how Nephi could have a sword of most precious steel⁴¹ or be justified in killing a drunken Laban,⁴² why Lehi might write in Egyptian rather than Hebrew,⁴³ or why the Book of Mormon would attribute Yankee nicknames like Sam or Josh to ancient Israelites.⁴⁴ Recent research on the Book of Mormon puts these questions in an entirely different light. The subsequent confirmation of such details once thought to be problematic suggests that the Book of Mormon was much more than a product of its environment and lends support to its claim to be a translation of an ancient record.

Dan Jones on the Book of Mormon

Just two years following the murder of Joseph Smith in 1844, the fiery Welsh missionary Dan Jones, in surveying reactions to the Book of Mormon since its first appearance, noted:

Wherever it goes in every country, the ears of the populace are filled to the brim with stories and tales as numerous and varied as their authors, which consequently contradict each other; many of them published and preached by those who have never seen the book; others by those who have dipped into it here and there, purposely to pick faults, and not infrequently one sees quotations from it greatly distorted and twisted. Some describe it as an invented tale; others say it is a new Bible, to supersede the old. Some condemn it for being the most worthless tissue of foolishness they ever saw; others say that it is the most skillful fraud possible. Some find fault with it because it is too similar to the Bible, that its testimony coincides with it, and is therefore unnecessary; but others assert that

it is a fraud because it is not similar enough to the Bible. Some condemn the principles it contains because they are immoral, totally evil, and blasphemous; but others of their brothers proclaim to their faces that the principles teach morality, chastity, and holiness, as though it had been purposely composed to trick in that way. . . . Some of the great men of the age have proclaimed that its idiom, its language, and its contents prove its antiquity; and others of the same class, that it bears every mark of a recent forgery. Some cannot make out what use it could be, or how to prove its truth, unless there were some prophecies in it to be fulfilled, from which they could prove its divinity; others quote extensively from the prophecies that are about to be fulfilled, and they condemn it for being too clear: the old prophets did not do thus, they say.

Dan Jones, "Revelation of the Gold Plates," in *Prophet of the Jubilee*, trans. and ed. Ronald D. Dennis (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1997), 42–43 (August 1846).

Nineteenth-Century Publications about the Book of Mormon (1829–1844) will be made available in 2010 as one of the digital collections in the Harold B. Lee Library (<http://www.lib.byu.edu/dlib/bompublications>). Other digital collections at BYU (accessible online at <http://www.lib.byu.edu/online.html>) include such diverse electronic resources as the sermons of John Donne, the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, and a collection of Mormon missionary diaries. As noted on the library Web site, "The digital library is a combination of unique collections and services that support learning, teaching, course development, and research and are directed specifically at supporting the institutional objectives of the university through the acquisition of electronically published information, the creation of reformatted digitized resources, and by providing access points to a repository of digital materials." ■

Notes

1. Keith W. Perkins, "Francis W. Kirkham: A 'New Witness' for the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, July 1984, 53.
2. Francis W. Kirkham, *Source Material concerning the Origin of the Book of Mormon: "America's Strangest Book"* (n.p., 1937).
3. The editions for volume 1 are Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon: Evidence of Divine Power in the "Coming Forth" of the Book of Mormon* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1942); Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon: Evidence of Divine Power in the "Coming Forth" of the Book of Mormon*, enl. 2nd ed. (Independence, MO: Zions Printing and Publishing, 1947); Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon: Evidence of Divine Power in the "Coming Forth" of the Book of Mormon*, enl. 3rd ed. (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1951). The editions for volume 2 are as follows: Francis Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon: Attempts to Prove the Book of Mormon Man-made* (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1951); Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon: Attempts to Prove the Book of Mormon Man-made Analyzed and Answered*, new and enl. ed. (Salt Lake City: Utah Printing, 1959).
4. Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ* (1959), v.
5. Kirkham, *New Witness for Christ* (1959), v–vi.
6. For a brief sketch of Kirkham's life and contributions, see Perkins, "Francis W. Kirkham," 52–57.
7. Walter A. Norton, "Comparative Images: Mormonism and Contemporary Religions as Seen by Village Newspapermen in

- Western New York and Northeastern Ohio, 1820–1833” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1991), 13.
8. Norton, “Mormonism and Contemporary Religions,” 22.
 9. “The Golden Bible,” *Painesville Telegraph*, 16 November 1830; for images of this and some other articles mentioned herein, see Donald Q. Cannon, “In the Press: Early Newspaper Reports on the Initial Publication of the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 16/2 (2007): 4–15.
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 11. Orson Hyde, in *Latter Day Saints’ Millennial Star* 26 (19 November 1864): 744.
 12. S. S. Harding to Thomas Gregg, February 1882, in Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: Alden, 1890), 36.
 13. C. C. Blatchley, “Caution against the Golden Bible,” *New York Telescope*, 20 February 1830.
 14. “The Orators of Mormon,” *Catholic Telegraph*, Cincinnati, Ohio, 14 April 1832.
 15. “Martin Harris, the Mormon,” *Rochester Daily Democrat*, 23 June 1841.
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 17. “The Book of Mormon,” *Painesville Telegraph*, 30 November 1830.
 18. Parley P. Pratt, *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion’s Watchman Unmasked, and Its Editor, Mr. L. R. Sunderland, Exposed: Truth Vindicated: The Devil Mad, and Priestcraft in Danger!* (New York: Pratt & Fordham, 1838), 39.
 19. J. N. T. Tucker, “Mormonism—Some Curious Facts,” *The Signs of the Times, and Expositor of Prophecy*, 8 June 1842.
 20. John H. Gilbert to James T. Cobb, Palmyra, New York, 16 March 1879, in *Early Mormon Documents*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:525.
 21. *Wayne Sentinel*, 26 June 1829, emphasis in original.
 22. “Gold Bible,” *The Reflector*, 13 January 1830, emphasis in original.
 23. Chronieler, “From the Golden Bible: Chronicles Chapter III,” *Paul Pry’s Weekly Bulletin*, 8 August 1829.
 24. “Chronicles: Chap. I,” *Paul Pry’s Weekly Bulletin*, 29 August 1829, emphasis in original.
 25. “Blasphemy—‘Book of Mormon,’ alias The Golden Bible,” *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, 2 April 1830.
 26. “The Golden Bible,” *Cleveland Herald*, 25 November 1830.
 27. *Missouri Republican*, 9 August 1833, reprinted in *Niles’ Weekly Register*, 14 September 1833.
 28. Ab’m Palmer, “The Mobbing Spirit of Missouri Rekindling in Illinois,” *Illinois Register*, 20 March 1840, emphasis added.
 29. David Marks, *The Life of David Marks, to the 26th Year of His Age. Including the Particulars of His Conversion, Call to the Ministry, and Labours in Itinerant Preaching for Nearly Eleven Years* (Limerick, ME: Office of the Morning Star, 1831), 340–42.
 30. Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated in the Experience of Nancy Towle in Europe and America* (Charleston: by the author, 1832), 145.
 31. Towle, *Vicissitudes*, 142.
 32. Towle, *Vicissitudes*, 141.
 33. Towle, *Vicissitudes*, 143.
 34. Towle, *Vicissitudes*, 144–45.
 35. William Owen, “A Comparison between the Book of Mormon and the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, or the Golden Bible vs. the Holy Bible,” *Free Inquirer*, 10 September 1831.
 36. “The Bible and the Book of Mormon.—A Prophecy,” *Boston Investigator*, 17 January 1844, emphasis in original.
 37. John Taylor, *An Answer to Some False Statements and Misrepresentations Made by the Rev. Robert Heys . . .* (Douglas: Penrice and Wallace, 1840), 7–8.
 38. “Mormonism: Scene in a Stage Coach,” *Christian Watchman*, 5 May 1837.
 39. Alexander Campbell, “Delusions,” *Millennial Harbinger* 2/2 (7 February 1831): 93.
 40. A Disciple, [Reply to John E. Page], *Morning Chronicle*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 29 June 1842.
 41. E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: by the author, 1834), 25–26. Compare William J. Adams Jr., “Nephi’s Jerusalem and Laban’s Sword,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 194–95.
 42. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 26. See John W. Welch, “Legal Perspectives on the Slaying of Laban,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 119–41; “Better That One Man Perish,” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 17–19; Welch, “Introduction,” *Studia Antiqua* (Summer 2003): 9–12. On the broader issue of law and the Book of Mormon, see Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2008).
 43. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 59–60. Compare “Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters,” in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, 237–43.
 44. Origen Bacheleer, *Mormonism Exposed Internally and Externally* (New York: 1838), 14–15. Compare John A. Tvedtnes, John Gee, and Matthew Roper, “Book of Mormon Names Attested in Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 9/1 (2000): 49, 51.

Joe Smith and the Devil

THE NEW YORK HERALD.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 25, 1844.

Price Two Cents.

In his autobiography Elder Parley P. Pratt wrote in spring 1844: "Visiting North Bridge, a short distance from Boston, and having a day's leisure, I wrote a dialogue entitled 'Joe Smith and the Devil,' which was afterwards published in the *New York Herald*."¹ In this comical parody of popular sectarian criticism of the Latter-day Saints, the Devil acknowledges the absurdity of the Spalding theory but insists that it is the Prophet's fault for publishing the Book of Mormon, thereby exposing sin and corruption and threatening all his evil plans. At length,

the Devil claims to serve at least one useful purpose: "The fact is, you go in for the wheat, and I for the tares. Both must be harvested; are not we fellow laborers? I can make no use of the wheat, nor you of the tares, even if we had them; we each claim our own, I for the burning, and you for the barn. Come, then, give the poor old Devil his due."²

1. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 290.
2. "Joe Smith and the Devil: A Dialogue," *New York Herald*, 25 August 1844.

[For the New York Herald.]

JOE SMITH AND THE DEVIL. A DIALOGUE.

[Enter Devil with a bundle of handbills, which he is in the act of posting.]

WANTED IMMEDIATELY,

All the liars, swindlers, thieves, robbers, incendiaries, murderers, cheats, adulterers, harlots, blackguards, drunkards, gamblers, bogus makers, idlers, busy bodies, pickpockets, vagabonds, filthy persons, hireling clergy, and their followers, and all other infidels, and rebellious, disorderly persons, for a crusade against Joe Smith and the Mormons. Be quick, be quick, I say, or our cause will be ruined, and our kingdom overthrown by that d-d fool of an impostor and his associates, for even now all earth and hell is in a stew.

[Joe Smith happens to be passing, and hails his Majesty.]

Good morning, Mr. Devil. How now, you seem to be much engaged; what news have you got there?

Devil (slipping his bills into his pocket with a low bow)—O! good morning, Mr. Smith; hope you are well, sir. Why—I was just out—out on a little business in my line; or, finally, to be candid, sir, I was contriving a fair and honorable warfare against you and your impositions, wherein piety is outraged, and religion greatly hindered in its useful course. For, to be bold, sir (and I despise anything underhanded), I must tell you to your face that you have made me more trouble than all the ministers, or people of my whole dominion, have for ages past.

Smith—Trouble! what trouble have I caused your Majesty? I certainly have endeavored to treat you, and all other persons, in a friendly manner, even my worst enemies; and I always aim to fulfil the Mormon creed, and that is, to mind my own business exclusively. Why should this trouble you, Mr. Devil?

Devil—Ah! your own business, indeed. I know not what you may consider your business, it is so very complicated; but I know what you have done, and what you are aiming to do. You have disturbed the quiet of Christendom, overthrown churches and societies, you have dared to call in question the truth and usefulness of old and established creeds, which have stood the test of ages; argument or reason, and I even teach them that it is a sin to reason, think, or investigate, as if it would disturb the even tenor of their pious breathings and devout groans and responses. Smith, you must be extremely ignorant of human nature, as well as of the history of the past, to presume that reason and truth would have much effect with the multitude. Why, sir, look how effectually we warded off the truth at Ephesus, when Paul attempted to address them in the theatre. Strange that with all these examples before you, you should venture to raise the hue and cry which has been so oft defeated, and this with no better weapons on your side than reason and truth. Indeed, you may thank my christian spirit of forbearance that you have escaped so far without a grid-iron; but take care for the future, I may not always be so mild.

Smith—But why is your majesty so highly excited against me and my plans of operation, seeing that you consider that you have the multitude perfectly safe; and why so enraged and so fearful of the consequences of my course, and the effect of my weapons, while at the same time you profess to despise them as weak and powerless. Alas, it is too true that you have the multitude safe to all appearance at present, and that truth can seldom reach them; why not then be content and leave me to pursue my calling in peace? I can hardly hope to win to the cause of truth nay but the few who think, and these have ever been troublesome to your cause.

Devil—True, but then you are, in spite of all my efforts, and that of my fellows, daily thinning our ranks by adding to the number of those who think, and such a thinking is kept up that we are often exposed in some of our most prominent plans, and are placed in an awkward predicament, and who knows what defeat, disgrace, and dishonor may befall the pious cause if you are suffered to continue your rebellious course.

Smith—But, Mr. Devil, why, with all these other advantages on your side, do you resort to such mean, weak, and silly fabrications as the Spaulding story. You profess to be a gentleman, a christian, and a clergyman, and you ought for your own sake, and for the sake of your cause, to keep up outward appearances of honor and fairness. And now, Mr. Devil, tell the truth for once; you know perfectly well that your Spaulding Story, in which you represent me as an impostor, in connection with Sidney Rigdon, and that we were engaged in palming Solomon Spaulding's romance upon the world as

are true as the pole stars and firm as the rock of Gibraltar. They laugh at and despise your silly stories, and with nothing but a few plain simple weapons of truth and reason, aided by revelation, we boldly make war upon your whole dominion, and will never quit the field, dead or alive, till we win the battle, and deprive you of every foot of ground you possess. This is our purpose; and although your enemy, I am bold and generous enough to declare it. So you see I am not for taking any unwary advantage, notwithstanding all your pious tricks upon me and the public.

Devil—Mr. Smith, I am so much of the gentleman not to admire your generous frankness and your boldness, and too much of a christian not to appreciate your honesty; but as you commenced this war, and I only acted at first on the defensive, with the pure motive of defending my kingdom, I think this ought in some degree at least to excuse the means I have made use of. And that you may have no reason to complain in future, I will now frankly open to you the plan of my future campaign. Here (pulling out his bundle of hand bills) is what I was doing this morning, when by chance we met; and by the reading of which, you will see my course. Hereafter I have endeavored to throw contempt upon your course, in hopes to smother it and to keep it under, as something beneath the notice of us well-informed christians. For this cause I have generally caused it to be represented, that you was a very ignorant, silly man, and that your followers were made up of the unthinking, and vulgar, and not worthy of notice. But the fact is, you have made such rapid strides, and have poured forth such a torrent of intelligence, and gathered such a host of talented and thinking men around you, that I can no longer conceal these facts under a bushel of burning lies, and therefore I now change my purpose and my manner of attack. I shall endeavor to magnify you and your success from this time forward, and to make you appear as much larger than the reality, as you have heretofore fallen short. If my former course has excited contempt, and caused you to be despised, and thus kept you out of notice, my future course will be to excite jealousy, fear and alarm, till all the world is ready to arise and crush you, as if you were a legion of Samsons, commanded by Bonaparte. This, I think, will be more successful in putting you down, than the ignominious course I have heretofore taken—so prepare for the worst.

and have even caused tens of thousands to come out in open rebellion, not only against wholesome creeds, established forms, and doctrines, well approved and orthodox, but against some of the most pious, learned, exemplary, and honorable clergy, whom both myself and all the world, love, honor and esteem, and this is not all. But you are causing many persons to think who never thought before, and you would fain put the whole world a thinking, and then where will true religion and piety be? Alas! they will have no place among men, for if men keep such a terrible thinking and reasoning as they begin to do, since you commenced your business, as you call it, they never will continue to uphold the good old way in which they have jogged along in peace for so many ages; and thus, Mr. Smith, you will overthrow my Kingdom, and leave me not a foot of ground on earth, and this is the very thing you aim at. But I, sir, have the boldness to oppose you by every lawful means in my power.

Smith—Really, Mr. Devil, your Majesty has of late become very pious; I think some of your Christian brethren have greatly misrepresented you. It is generally reported by them that you are opposed to religion. But—

Devil—It is false; there is not a more religious and pious being in the world than myself, nor a being more liberal minded. I am decidedly in favor of all creeds, systems, and forms of Christianity, of whatever name or nature; so long as they leave out that abominable doctrine, which caused me so much trouble in former times, and which, after slumbering for ages, you have again revived; I mean the doctrine of strict communion with God, by new revelation. This is hateful, it is impious, it is directly opposed to all the divisions and branches of the Christian Church. I never could bear it. And for this very cause I helped to bring to condign punishment all the prophets and apostles of old, for while they were suffered to live with this gift of revelation, they were always exposing and slandering me, and all other good pious men in exposing our deeds and purposes, which they called wicked, but which we considered as the height of zeal and piety, and when we killed them for these crimes of dreaming, prophesying, and vision seeing, they raised the cry of persecution, and so it is with you miserable, deluded Mormons.

Smith—Then your most Christian Majesty is in favor of all other religions but this one, are you?

Devil—Certainly. I am fond of praying, singing, church building, bell ringing, going to meetings, preaching, and what I have quite a missionary zeal. I like also long faces, long prayers, long robes, and learned sermons; nothing suits me better, than to see people who have been for a whole week oppressing their neighbor, grinding the face of the poor, walking in pride and folly, and serving me with all their heart, I say nothing suits me better, Mr. Smith, than to see these people go to meeting on Sundays with a long religious face on, and to see them pay a portion of their ill-gotten gains for the support of a priest, while he and his hearers pray with solemn groans and awful faces, saying, "Lord, we have left undone the things we ought to have done, and done the things we ought not;" and then, when service is ended, see them turn again to their wickedness and pursue it greedily all the week, and the next Sabbath repeat the same things. Now, be candid, Mr. Smith; do you not see that these, and all others, who have a form and deny the power, are my good Christian children, and that their religion is a help to my cause?

Smith—Certainly, your reasoning is clear and

the Book of Mormon, is a lie; a base fabrication, without a shadow of truth, and you know that I found the Original Records of the Nephites, and translated and published the Book of Mormon from them, without ever having heard of the existence of Spaulding, or his romance, or of Sidney Rigdon either. Now, Mr. Devil, this was a mean, disgraceful, and underhanded trick in you, and one of which even you have reason to be ashamed.

Devil—Well, Mr. Smith, to be candid, I acknowledge that what you say is true, and that it was not the most honorable course in the world. But it was you who commenced the war, by publishing that terrible book which we readily recognized as a complete expose of all our false and corrupt Christianity, not even keeping back the fact that we had continued during the dark ages, to rob the Scriptures of their plainness, and we feel the utmost alarm and excitement, and without much reflection, in the height of passion, we called a hasty council of Clergy and Editors, and other rascals, in Painesville, Ohio, and, thinking that almost any means was lawful in war, we invented the Spaulding Story, and fathered it upon the poor printer, Howe, of Painesville, although Doctor Hubbert (thanks to my aid) was its real author. But mark, Mr. Smith, mark one thing, we had not a face so hard, nor a conscience so abandoned, as to publish this Spaulding Story at the first as a positive fact; we only published it as a conjecture, a mere probability, and this, you know, we had a right to do; without once thinking of the amount of evil it would eventually accomplish. But, sir, it was some of my unfortunate clergymen who, more reckless, hardened and unprincipled than myself, have ventured to add to each edition of this story, till at last, without my aid or consent, they have set it down for a positive fact, that Solomon Spaulding, Sidney Rigdon, and yourself, have made up the Book of Mormon out of a romance. Now, Mr. Smith, I am glad of this interview with you, as it gives me the opportunity of clearing up my character. I acknowledge with shame that I was guilty of a mean act in helping to hatch up and publish the Spaulding story as a probability, and that I associated with rascals far beneath my dignity, either as a sovereign prince, or religious minister, or even as an old, honorable and experienced Devil, and for this, I beg your pardon. But, really, I must deny the charge of having assisted in making the additions which have appeared in the later editions of that story, in which my former probabilities and mere conjectures are set down for positive facts. No, Mr. Smith, I had no hand in a trick so low and mean; I despise it—as the work of priests and editors alone, without my aid or suggestion, and I do not believe that even the meanest young devils in our dominion would have stooped to such an act.

Smith—Well, I must give your majesty some credit for once at least, if what you say is true, but how can you justify your conduct in dishonoring yourself so far, as to stoop to the level of the hireling clergy, and their followers, in still making use of this humbug story (which you affect to despise), in order to still blind the eyes of the people in regard to the origin of the Book of Mormon.

Devil—O! Mr. Smith, it does take so readily among the pious of all sects, that it seems a pity to spoil the fun, and I cannot resist the temptation of carrying out the joke, now it is so well rooted in their minds. And you can't think how we devils shake our sides with laughter when we get up in the gallery in some fine church, put on our long face, and assist in

Smith—I care as little for your magnifying powers, as I have heretofore done for your contempt; in fact, I will endeavor to go ahead to that degree, that what you will say in regard to my great influence and power, though intended by you for falsehood, shall prove to be true, and by so doing I shall be prepared to receive those whom you may excite against me, and to give them so warm a reception, that they will never discover your intended falsehood, but will find all your representations of my greatness to be a reality—so do your worst, I defy you.

Devil—Well, time will determine whether the earth is to be governed by a profit, and under the sway of truth, or whether myself, and my Christian friends will still prevail. But, remember Smith, remember, I beseech you for your own good, beware what you are doing. I have the Priests and Editors, with a few exceptions, under my control, together with wealth, popularity and honor. I will the cost before you plunge again into this warfare. Good bye, Mr. Smith, I must away to raise my recruits and prepare for a campaign.

Smith—Good bye to your majesty (They both took their hats and turn away.)

Devil—(Recollecting himself and suddenly turning back) O! say, Mr. Smith, one word more, if you please, (in a low and confidential tone, with his mouth close to his ear)—after all, what is the use of parting as enemies; the fact is, you go in for the wheat, and I for the tares. Both must be harvested; are not we fellow laborers? I can make no use of the wheat, nor you of the tares, even if we had them; we each claim our own, I for the burning, and you for the barn. Come, then, give the poor old Devil his due, and let's be friends.

Smith—Agreed; I neither want yours, nor you mine—a man free from prejudice will give the Devil his due. Come, here is the right hand of fellowship, you to the tares, and I to the wheat—(they shake hands cordially)

Devil—Well, Mr. Smith, we have talked a long while, and are agreed at last—you are a noble and generous fellow; and would not bring a railing accusation against even a poor old Devil, nor cheat him of one cent. Come, it's a warm day, and I feel as though it is my treat. Let us go down to mammy Brewer's cellar and take something to drink.

Smith—Agreed, Mr. Devil, you appear very generous now.

(They enter the cellar together.)

Devil—Good morning, Mrs. Brewer; I make you acquainted with my good friend, Mr. Smith, the prophet. (The landlady smiling, and looking a little surprised.) why, Mr. Devil, is that you; sit down, you're tired; but you don't say this is Mr. Smith, your greatest enemy?—I am quite surprised. What will you have, gentlemen, for if you can drink together, I think all the world ought to be friends.

Devil—As we are both temperance men, and ministers, I think perhaps a glass of spruce beer a piece will be all right—what say you, Mr. Smith.

Smith—As you please, your majesty.

(They now take the beer.)

Devil—(Holding up his glass)—Come, Mr. Smith, your good health, I propose we each offer a toast.

Smith—Well, proceed.

Devil—Here's to my good friend, Joe Smith; may all sorts of ill luck befall him, and may he never be suffered to enter my kingdom, either in time or eternity, for he would almost make me forget that I am a devil, and make a gentleman of me.

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