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A Little More Evidence

Author(s): William A. Morton

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Abstract: Those who refuse to believe the Book of Mormon because Joseph Smith did not show the plates to more witnesses are not much different than the Jews who would not believe the resurrection because Jesus did not show himself to them. Believing the Solomon Spaulding theory is foolish. The true story about Martin Harris's visit to Professor Anthon is explained.

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A LITTLE MORE EVIDENCE.

THERE is abundant evidence, both external and internal, to convince every reasonable-minded person that the Book of Mormon is a Divine record. The statement by the Latter-day Saints concerning the origin of this book is as follows: That a heavenly messenger revealed the existence of, and finally delivered to, Joseph Smith the plates of the Book of Mormon; that with the plates was an instrument known among the people of God in ancient times as the Urim and Thummim, and that through the power of God and also with the aid of this instrument which He had provided, Joseph Smith translated the record into the English language.

And this is the theory advanced by the opponents of “Mormonism”: The Book of Mormon is, in part, a religious romance, written by one Solomon Spaulding, a clergyman, of Amity, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., supplemented with an imitation of scripture, composed by a man named Sidney Rigdon.

In support of our affirmation we have the testimony of three witnesses, who have declared with words of soberness that they saw the angel, that he brought and laid before their eyes the plates, that they saw the engravings upon them, and that they heard the voice of God bear testimony that they had been translated correctly. Coupled with this is the testimony of eight other witnesses, who have declared in all sincerity that they also saw the plates and the engravings upon them and that they had the privilege of handling the plates and hefting them.

Many people have sought to justify themselves in rejecting the

Book of Mormon on the ground that Joseph Smith did not show the plates to the people generally. And yet these same people will justify God in destroying the wicked antedeluvians because they refused to believe the testimony of fewer witnesses than there are to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. If the people of the world are justified in rejecting the Book of Mormon on the ground that Joseph Smith did not show the plates to all those with whom He came in contact, then the Jews are justified in refusing to believe that Christ rose from the dead, because He did not show Himself to all the people after His resurrection. We have the testimonies of almost twice as many witnesses to the Divine origin of the Book of Mormon as there are concerning the resurrection of the Messiah. But the testimonies of the eleven witnesses is not the evidence of which we wish to speak at this time. There is other evidence which, while not so direct and conclusive as the foregoing, nevertheless carries with it considerable weight. Some of it is as follows:

Soon after Joseph commenced the work of translating, he was visited by a farmer named Martin Harris. This man had heard the story of the discovery of the ancient records, and was anxious to know if what he had heard were really true. If it were he would willingly render the prophet financial and other assistance; if not, he would have nothing more to do with him. So he decided to put the matter to a test. He requested Joseph to let him have a copy of some of the characters, also his translation of them, that he might take them to a recognized authority on ancient languages and ascertain his opinion concerning them. Now, if what the opponents of "Mormonism" say were true—that Joseph Smith never possessed any such records—this placed him in a very embarrassing position. Whatever he did he would have to do quickly. There was no time for parleying: the man was waiting for his answer. What excuse did Joseph Smith make? Did he turn to Martin Harris and say, "It is displeasing to the Lord that you should question the words of His servant. If you cannot rely upon my testimony concerning the truth of these things, you can go your way; I can get men who will believe me?" No, he made no excuse whatever. He handed Martin Harris several sheets of paper containing a copy of some of the characters and their translation and the farmer left.

Now, those characters must have been either genuine or bogus. Had they been bogus is it reasonable to believe that Joseph Smith would have been so willing to expose them to the scrutiny of learned men? No, indeed, he would have known that his fraud would have been instantly detected and himself exposed.

But let us follow the farmer. He goes at once to Professor Charles Anthon, a renowned linguist, and professor of languages at Columbia College, New York. The professor examined a sheet of the hieroglyphs and the accompanying translation. He pronounced the characters ancient characters and said the translation was the most correct of any he had before seen. He, at the re-

quest of Mr. Harris, gave the latter a certificate to that effect. Placing the certificate and the other papers in his pocket, Mr. Harris was about to leave when the professor detained him to ask how Joseph Smith came into possession of the plates. On being told that their existence had been revealed by an angel from heaven, the learned gentleman's demeanor suddenly changed. He requested Mr. Harris to let him have the certificate, and when it was handed to him he tore it into fragments and threw it into the fire, denouncing the whole thing as a hoax and declaring that there are no such things in these days as ministering of angels.

You see, it was all right till the angel was mentioned; then it was all wrong. If Joseph Smith had left the angel out of his story; if he had reported that while digging in the hill Cumorah in the hope of discovering precious metals he had accidentally found the plates, the world would have rang with the news of the remarkable discovery. It has been the same from that day till the present. Thousands of people have listened with delight while our missionaries have explained the doctrines of the Church; they have assented to them, acknowledged them to be true, but on being told that they had been revealed anew to the Prophet Joseph Smith they have turned round and denounced them.

But to go back to our subject. What effect did his visit to Professor Anthon have upon Martin Harris? It so strengthened his faith in Joseph Smith that on his return he gave the prophet a sum of money to assist him in carrying on the work. And more than that, he proffered his services as a scribe to Joseph in the work of translation, which services were readily accepted. During the two following months (from April until June, 1828), Joseph and Martin worked unitedly together. At the end of that time Mr. Harris had written one hundred and sixteen foolscap pages of the translation. Almost every day the scribe was importuned by his wife to see the writings dictated to her husband by Joseph. Twice Mr. Harris petitioned Joseph to permit him to take the translation home that he might show it to his wife and other curious and sceptical persons, and each time he met with a firm refusal. He persisted, however, and finally Joseph appealed to the Lord to reveal to him His mind and will in the matter. The word of the Lord came to the Prophet that he might, at his own peril, allow Martin Harris to take possession of the manuscript and show it to certain persons designated by Joseph in his supplication, but to no others. This the scribe entered into a sacred covenant to do. The result was that through the vanity and treachery of Mrs. Harris the manuscript was stolen, and has never since been recovered. This brought much sorrow to the Prophet and a severe rebuke and chastisement from the Lord, who in a revelation denounced Martin Harris as a wicked man, who had violated a most sacred trust and hindered the progress of the work. He was rejected as the Prophet's scribe, and never after assisted in the work of translation.

While we have always regretted the loss of the precious manuscript, at the same time we have been able to see in that calamity evidence of the Divine origin of the Book of Mormon. Here is the evidence: It is well known that the opponents of "Mormonism" have never believed that anything like the forgoing ever took place. They have looked upon this story as another of Joseph Smith's "fairy-tales." A Liverpool clergyman, commenting on it a short time ago, sarcastically said: "Mrs. Harris, who evidently was far more practical than her husband, was so incensed at his duplicity, that, as Smith himself tells us, she stole part of the manuscript, the part containing the revelation of Mormon, and burnt it. * * * So an angry woman deprives the world of 'the revelation of God'!!! If Joseph Smith's statement concerning the stolen manuscript be false, why, we ask, did Mrs. Harris stand silently by and hear herself denounced as a vain and treacherous woman, nay, worse, as a thief, and not say one word in refutation of the accusation? Why did she hear her husband branded as a wicked and self-confident man, a covenant-breaker, and not utter one word in his defense? Why did Martin Harris suffer all these accusations to be hurled against himself and his wife and never once say they were untrue? What does all this silence prove? It proves that Joseph Smith spoke the truth. Joseph Smith would never have turned against Martin Harris, his best friend, a man who was giving him his services gratuitously, and also rendering him financial assistance, if the latter had not betrayed the trust reposed in him with regard to the one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript.

As we have already said, the theory of the opponents of "Mormonism" is that Solomon Spaulding was the author of the Book of Mormon. Volumes have been written to this effect. That being the case, then why charge all the errors in grammar and other imperfections in the book to Joseph Smith? If Solomon Spaulding be the author, then he and not Joseph Smith is responsible for the imperfections in the Book of Mormon. If no credit be given to Joseph Smith, then no blame can be attached to him. Our opponents must see that this forever closes their mouths.

In the short remaining space at our disposal let us examine a few of the grammatical errors found in the Book of Mormon. Here is a sample: "A *more* history part *are* written upon mine other plates" (II. Nephi 4: 14). "And it came to pass that I *did* make tools of the ore which I *did* molten out of the rock" (I. Nephi 17: 16). There are similar grammatical errors, but these will suffice. Now, we ask, is this at all like the composition of an educated clergyman, a graduate of Dartmouth College? Are we to believe that if Solomon Spaulding were on earth to-day he would permit these grammatical errors to be charged against him?

Just a word with regard to some Book of Mormon doctrine. Solomon Spaulding, it will be remembered, was a Presbyterian

clergyman. Now, it is a well-known fact that all ministers of the Presbyterian Church advocate the sprinkling of infants. Yet this doctrine is strongly condemned in the Book of Mormon (Moroni 8: 14). It is also a well-known fact that ministers of the Presbyterian Church do not advocate immersion as the only proper mode of baptism. Yet this is the only form of baptism sanctioned by the Book of Mormon (III. Nephi 11: 23); every other form is condemned. No Presbyterian minister teaches that if a man is not baptized for the remission of sins he will be damned. But such is the teaching of the Book of Mormon (III. Nephi 12: 34). Presbyterian ministers do not believe in latter-day revelation, yet the Book of Mormon is full of such doctrine; in fact, condemnation is pronounced upon him "that shall deny the revelations of the Lord, and that shall say the Lord no longer worketh by revelation, or by prophecy, or by gifts, or by tongues, or by healings, or by the power of the Holy Ghost" (III. Nephi 29: 6). Do Presbyterian ministers teach that after Christ had risen from the dead He visited the western hemisphere and there organized His Church among the people of that land, the same as He did in the land of Palestine, with apostles, prophets, and other divinely-commissioned officers? They do not. Yet that is what the Book of Mormon teaches. Are we to believe that if the Presbyterian clergyman, to whom the opponents of "Mormonism" give credit for the authorship of the Book of Mormon, were on the earth now he would advocate all these doctrines? Is the Presbyterian Church willing for all this "Mormon" doctrine to be charged to one of its ministers? We think not. So our opponents must either accept the theory of Joseph Smith concerning the origin of the Book of Mormon or look for some other author than Solomou Spaulding.—W. A. M.

FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE.

MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It gives me great pleasure to bear my humble testimony to what I know to be the true gospel of Christ. Those of you who have read the MILLENNIAL STAR through the year 1907 will have read (in the issue of April 25th) the account of "How I found the truth." I will now relate to you a little of my experience in "Accepting the truth." My parents had refused to allow me to be baptized, and were very bitter against "Mormonism." However, I was not to be daunted, and resolved to wait until time would permit me to act for myself. I waited twelve months, and was as desirous for baptism then as I was before. It happened that two elders (James A. Cragun and Jesse Pocock) were laboring at Paignton, and were holding cottage meetings at Torquay. I attended these meetings several Sundays, but at last got into trouble at home through the interference of my brother-in-law,