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An Open Letter to Bishop Spalding

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I have shown—not ineffectively, I hope, in this hasty review—that while the bishop appears to treat his subject with fairness, that while he tries to impress his reader with his openness, his frankness, his candor, his honesty, yet his every argument is based upon some unfair implication, some false premise. Therefore, by every rule of logic, his conclusion must be false. In fine, the bishop has no case against the Book of

Abraham, no case against the Book of Mormon, no case against Joseph Smith, no case against "Mormonism"—the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Latter-day Saints have nothing to fear. They need only to clean away the wreckage of another unsuccessful attack upon the stronghold of "Mormon" faith, and to proceed triumphantly on their way.

An Open Letter to Bishop Spalding.

BY PROF. N. L. NELSON

My Dear Reverend Sir:—If in these days you hear—and overhear—a certain familiar quotation from an ancient prophet, you will probably have an uneasy feeling that somehow you yourself have furnished the latest occasion for bringing it forward.

The passage occurs in Isaiah 29, a prophecy believed by Latter-day Saints, to refer to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The quotation here given refers to some of the after effects:

"Wherefore the Lord said, for as much as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men; therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."

Moreover, if you should keep your ears alert for current comments on this famous passage, you would probably find many a "Mormon" elder just now classing your late jury of savants among the "wise men" there referred to. You yourself would doubtless be placed among the "prudent men," for up till your latest move among us, that was the mental quality which distinguished you from the rest of your clerical brethren. Let us hope that this fine talent is not to be "hid" very long.

My dear fellow-worker, for a month my bones have been aching for one of our three-hour chats, especially

along the lines of your recent pamphlet; but living as I do just now in the very heart of the desert, I must resort to this one-sided and therefore somewhat unsatisfactory method of "crying out in the wilderness," after having fired your broad-side at us—think, man, of the "imprudence" of it! without a declaration of war, and in a time of profound peace. You must be much oppressed with curiosity to know the exact psychological effect on a "Mormon" elder of being "hit."

Let me assure you, then, that as regards three-fourths of us, the effect was purely spectacular—a compound of smoke and noise. Like Nathaniel of old, such is the assurance with which their shield of faith protects them, that they stop neither to ask nor to entertain negative questions. It is of this type particularly that the Lord has said: "My grace shall be sufficient for you."

As for the rest of us, however, the case is unfortunately different. Our faith, I hope, is no less ardent than theirs; but, Thomas-like, we must make the findings of our heads coincide with the findings of our hearts before we can be completely at peace.

Speaking for myself, I may say that while this discussion has been going on, I have been distinctly at a disadvantage; for contrary to your past vogue, you neglected to furnish me with the "document" in question. I read, therefore—let me confess it frankly—with a growing sense of disturbance, the first three or four articles by the defense; and when you

pamphlet finally reached me, and I had before me the full verdict of your learned jury, that disturbance deepened into a profound disappointment.

"Was it possible?" I asked myself, "that Joseph Smith had presumed upon his reputation as a translator, to set down here the vagaries of an undisciplined imagination? To what purpose?" I asked myself. For these Egyptian cuts and the findings on them, have only an incidental relationship to "Mormonism." The Book of Abraham," like the Book of Mormon, is a vital contribution to our sacred literature; but these curious drawings and their desultory and fragmentary decipherment—what purpose did the prophet have in giving them to the world?

Then I recalled, that as to their translation, it came about differently from that of the Book of Mormon—and for aught I know, from that of the Book of Abraham. In those books the revelation proceeded in a stream, without break or hesitation; but in these superficial bits, Joseph studied diligently and worked the figures over, bit by bit, quite as an uninspired translator might have done.

Did he merely "guess," then, at the meanings he set down? If this jury of experts is to be trusted, he must have done so. But again the question rises, why did he translate these Egyptian plates at all? To gratify vanity? Hardly; for so sure does he seem to be of his work, that he transcribes and publishes in fac-simile the translated scrolls—in effect, throws down the gauntlet to the whole world.

Again, to assume that he guessed at the meanings, would be to credit him with a vanity amounting to fool-hardiness, and certainly, foolhardiness is a quality not to be found in the history of his work as a church builder. Indeed, viewing the prophet in the latter capacity, must we not credit him with the very opposite qualification, that of scientific constructiveness?

On the other hand—this verdict! And so cock-sure do these "savants" seem, that their investigation of the matter appears trivial to them—too "dead easy" to occupy more serious time than the tooth-pick interval after a hearty meal. Nay, one is led to believe from their letters that the veriest tyro in Egyptology, the mere connoisseur in any one of a score of museums, could overthrow the prophet's position.

True, the lazy complacency and irritableness of these experts is a suspicious ingredient in their verdicts; for it is a mental attitude too often formed in so-called intellectual (?) critics of "Mormonism." On the other hand, the cuts themselves lend a most tantalizing

plausibility to these swift, off-hand verdicts.

In the midst of such perplexities the wise man leaves his convictions in statu quo. I concluded to wait.

At this point I am willing to gratify what must be a very natural curiosity on your part as to what was then my mental attitude toward Joseph Smith's divine mission, especially in relation to the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price and the system of belief and conduct based as you affirm, upon them. I will answer by this comparison:

Suppose you had looked day after day upon a glorious landscape, sun-flooded, and perennially renewed before your eyes. Then comes a fog which blurs or blots this view temporarily from your mind. Do you therefore doubt that this landscape is a reality or that the sun is still shining, and will in fact soon dispel the mist?

Well, there is your answer. The sacred books of "Mormonism" and the principles of the gospel set forth therein are in a very definite sense, independent of Joseph Smith; just as the Bible is its own vindication, without reference to high critics or low. For behind the fogs which men may create, shines forever the Sun of righteousness who makes clear to each soul whatever of truth in these divine records is fitted for your soul's assimilation or mine.

"God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

This aspect of my letter will receive further attention later on; for indeed it is my central, if not my only, reason for writing to you at all. Here, however, it will be apropos to resume my narrative, as to the effect of your pamphlet on a sample "Mormon" elder.

The fog your critics spread did not hang long. Dr. Robert C. Webb's masterly explication of these plates restored to me more than your destructive criticisms took away. For up till the date of this discussion, I had given only the most casual attention to this part of Joseph Smith's work as translator. I therefore had no definite convictions with reference thereto. Never having sought the testimony of the Spirit concerning them I held these fragments from the lore of Egypt out in that boundless category of things yet to be investigated. But following Dr. Webb's careful paper, as best I could, by aid of dictionary and encyclopedia, I obtained gratifying glimpses into the mythology of Egypt, and every bit of insight so obtained was a new step in the direction of vindicating Joseph Smith.

The effect upon me was that of a feeling of pure joy—a sense of spiritual triumph, which keeps welling up and overflowing, whenever in thought I review Dr. Webb's findings.

Remember, the needs of my faith require neither a complete nor an infallible translation of these plates by Joseph Smith. No Egyptologist living is able to give that, as the variations among these experts sufficiently indicate. It should suffice, therefore, for the faith of any honest man, if it be made plain that the prophet has shown real and profound insight into the records of this dead and buried age of the world; and such an insight Dr. Webb shows Joseph Smith to have had at a time, moreover, when he could derive no aid from the work of scholars.

Dr. Webb has, indeed, vindicated the prophet better than he knew himself. Let me attempt to make plain at least a single instance of this.

After mentioning that one of the critics, Dr. A. M. Lythgoe of New York, found "snatches of a hymn to the Sun God" on the hypocephalus, or second of the said cuts, Dr. Webb proceeds to quote one of these ancient Egyptian hymns at length. It is sufficient for my purpose to reproduce this quotation only in part:

"Hail to thee, O Amen-Ra Lord of the world's throne. The king of heaven and sovereign of the earth. Thou Lord of things that exist; thou establisher of creation; thou supporter of the universe. Thou art one in thine attributes among the gods . . . thou chief of all Gods, Lord of truth, Father of the Gods; Creator of men. . . . Thou One, thou Only One whose arms are many. All men and all creatures adore thee and praises come unto thee from the height of heaven, from the earth's widest space and from the depths of the sea. . . . Thou One, thou Only One, who has no second, whose names are manifold and innumerable."

Now, inasmuch as Joseph Smith declares figure 3 in the second plate "to represent God sitting upon his throne clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand key-words of the holy priesthood," Dr. Webb is led to remark that if the prophet could really read such "snatches of a hymn to the Sun God," he might well discover symbols typifying the "grand key word of the priesthood."

It is concerning the meaning of this very expression that I desire to enlarge. If a key-word means anything, it must mean that which unlocks a deep mystery. That mystery, faces us

in every word of this hymn, and for that matter in all the God-literature of the Bible. How can there be at once many Gods and yet only one God?

Now, in the sense of Godhood, that is to say of the fullness of the priesthood, there can be only one God in the universe—one truth, one power, one authority, which when wielded by the perfected man, makes that man God. You will please note, my dear doctor, that God as unity may thus be represented as any one or all of the pure abstractions, viz., as truth, power, authority, as noted above, or as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and so on to the end of the category of divine attributes.

But such an abstraction could not even begin to act in the universe; for while the divine office contains all there is of power and authority, it remains inert and indifferent so far as creating and controlling are concerned, without an executive wielding the office. Your own definition of deity as a being "without body, parts or passions" is a fairly good description of this same ineffective abstraction.

Note, now, in the phrase of the hymn above quoted, how superior is the Egyptian definition: "Thou Only One, whose arms are many." Jehovah and Jesus Christ are two examples of such "arms" or executives of the "Only One;" in short, of perfect men now wielding the fullness of priesthood, or in other words, Godhood. Such in brief is the contribution of "Mormon" philosophy to the world's concept of God. But to resume.

In the phrase above noted: "Thou Only One, whose arms are many," or in any of a score of other expressions in this Egyptian hymn, Joseph could have discerned the "grand key-words of the holy priesthood."

In another place, Dr. Webb educes the ideas of authority and truth from the hieroglyphics. "It is respectfully submitted for determination," he then asks, "whether these qualities fully represent the priesthood, or emblem the governance of God." The answer is that they do most fully, and consequently give point to Joseph's translation, viz., "emblematic of the grand presidency in heaven."

Indeed the more carefully one studies Dr. Webb's exposition, the more strongly one is convinced that Joseph Smith read the deeper or esoteric meaning of these symbols; while your panel of experts read the surface or exoteric meaning only; whence Isaiah's words above quoted stand justified: viz., "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish;" that is, come to naught. For no man now honestly investigating "Mormonism," need stum-

ble because of your late contribution to the subject.

It remains to point out in further detail, how the "understanding" of at least one of the "prudent men" was "hid;" for as intimated in the opening of this letter Isaiah's phrase, in my estimation, fits exactly the role you have played in this whole business.

In the first place, consider the indictment brought against you for "unfair fairness" by my friend Elder Osborne J. P. Widtsoe. If it is a just indictment, as it seems to be, it surely indicates a temporary eclipse of your well known prudence. As has been pointed out over and over again, the fac similes published in the "Pearl of Great Price" were no integral part of the ancient manuscripts of the Book of Abraham. They were pages superficially attached to this manuscript, and the translation forms no part of the revelation known as the Writing of Abraham.

As quoted in your pamphlet, page 16, George Q. Cannon says:

"Attached to two of the bodies (mummies) were rolls of linen. . . . Within the linen were rolls of papyrus bearing a perfectly preserved record in black and red characters, carefully formed."

These constituted the writings of Abraham—the text by Abraham's own hand; though there is nothing to show that this text had not been widely copied, and that this particular Ms. may not, in fact, have been a copy 500 years after Abraham's day.

As to the fac-similes under discussion, consider this further remark by Elder Cannon in the same extract: "With other of the bodies were papyrus strips bearing epitaphs and astronomical calculations." Does not this better describe the probable source of these Egyptian cuts?

Be that as it may, I have the testimony of one who handled the Mss. of the Book of Abraham scores of times. This was Dr. John Riggs of Provo, at whose house I lived three years during my student days in the Brigham Young academy. Dr. Riggs was distinguished for a memory almost photographic in its exactness of details. As a boy in Kirtland he had constant opportunity of being present with visitors at the "Museum," a room in Father Smith's house, where the mummies were on exhibition. As I recall his testimony, the Mss. were in the form of a pad about six by eight inches and half an inch thick, and were found lying transversely over the region of the mummy's stomach, directly underneath his hands.

The point of all this, as insisted upon also by Elder Widtsoe, is that your

learned jury were not fairly in possession of the facts, otherwise they would not have presumed to pass judgment on the Book of Abraham, calling it a "pure fabrication," etc. They should have been informed that the Mss. of this book were probably destroyed in the great Chicago fire, and that what they were expected to pass upon was only incidentally related thereto. This eclipse on your part, whether through an advertence or by design, comes to the same thing, in helping to discredit your jury, and is an illustration of how the "understudy" of a really prudent man may be "hid," when he tries his hand at overthrowing the work of God.

This, however, becomes a trivial instance, when compared with the colossal result you anticipate from the verdict of your panel of Egyptologists, viz., the repudiation by every thoughtful and honest Latter-day Saint, "with whatever personal regret,"

(1) Of the Book of Mormon, and (2) of "the whole body of belief, which has been built upon it and upon the reputation its publication gave to its author."

The more I contemplate this gigantic assumption on your part, my dear reverend sir, the more astounded I am at your lapse of mental values. What! are my spiritual intuitions, which are the voice of God to me—nay, are the testimonies of the Spirit to half a million souls—to be counted fact or fiction, according as a certain historical incident shall be passed upon by a jury of Gentiles, prejudiced, ill-tempered and mad with the pride of human learning?

I can find no relief for my amazement, save in the restaging of your proposition, with new but I believe, fairly analogous terms:

"Many years ago a certain noted traveler discovered, floating down the headwaters of the Mississippi a somewhat curious object, which he described as an overturned Indian canoe, much battered. The incident received considerable emphasis at the time from the fact that people took sides as to the correctness of this description. After three-quarters of a century a certain reverend gentleman, desirous of vindicating the truth, discovered this object floating in the Gulf of Mexico, and promptly laid it before a jury of eight expert woodmen, who, though they differed among themselves as to just what the object really was, all agreed in ridiculing the interpretation of the traveler; whereupon the reverend gentleman, by a curious eclipse of 'undersanding' or common sense, made this demand; that every honest and thoughtful person, not only repudiate, 'at whatever personal regret, the original interpretation of the ob-

ject but also discredit the reality of the Mississippi river (the river of faith and spiritual intentions) which had served to keep the object afloat, and carry it out into the sea of worldly speculation!”

Here is another parallel:

“Once upon a time a lover of fine fruit proceeded to plant a noted garden which in time, and by the aid of his successors, became the livest and most fruitful orchard in the whole world. At length a certain wiseacre in ministerial broadcloth came along, and out of pure envy, as some averred, or pure love of truth as he himself maintained, proceeded to throw discredit upon the fruit and upon all the workers in the orchard.

“For I have discovered, said he, by delving into a certain incident of his life, that the founder had but a poor and imperfect knowledge of botany, a science absolutely necessary to the true propagation of fruit; which deplorable ignorance of said founder I have established by a jury of eight scientific men; and I consequently call upon every honest and thoughtful man, ‘at whatever personal regret,’ not only to repudiate the said founder but to deny that said fruit is good and beautiful, and also forthwith to abandon said orchard. Yea, verily. Amen.”

Let me now proceed to uncover the adroit and subtle rhetorical approaches whereby this preposterous assumption was made to seem plausible—first as regards the repudiation of the Book of Mormon.

You start out by commending the logic—from the Latter-day Saint point of view—which places the Book of Mormon before the Bible in point of “correctness.” Next you quote from Elder Orson Pratt:

“This book must be either true or false. If true, it is one of the most important messages ever sent from God to man. . . . If false, it is one of the most cunning, wicked, bold, deplorable impositions ever planned upon the world.”

In order to enhance further the idea that a revelation from God must be “perfect” and flawless, you next quote that splendid burst of eloquence in a speech by Elder E. H. Roberts:

“I am willing to repeat my statement that the Book of Mormon must submit to every test—literary criticism among the rest . . . to historical tests, to the tests of archaeological research, and also to the higher criticism. . . . The Book is flung down in the world’s mass of literature, and here it is: we proclaim it true, and the world has the right to test it to the uttermost in every possible way.”

There are many other deft little touches, tending to build up the idea of a necessary flawlessness in every

divine revelation, which space forbids me to touch upon here. Finally you are prepared to bait your hook, and here is how you do it. I have taken the liberty of placing the barb of that hook in capitals:

“It is surely clear to the reader that the correctness of the translation of the Book of Mormon is a most important question. It was the conviction that he had been selected by the Almighty to give to mankind this Book, which won for Joseph Smith, Jr., the attention of earnest men and women, and gave him leadership over them. If the translation of the plates is inaccurate, he did not deserve that leadership. However sincere he may have been in believing in his mission, if the translation he gave to mankind is false, he is shown to have been self-deceived. More than this. This reliance placed upon the witnesses who testified that God’s voice assured them that the translation was ‘by the gift and power of God’ is broken down. They, too, were self-deceived. They did not hear God’s voice; BECAUSE GOD’S VOICE COULD NOT HAVE ASSURED THEM THAT AN INCORRECT THING WAS TRUE.”

Once your antagonist accepts the proposition I have placed in capitals—and ordinarily who would have the courage not to do so?—your part of the argument is done. You have merely to turn on him the crank of the logic mill, and he is figuratively reduced to sausage.

For instance, the first edition of the Book of Mormon had in it about 2,000 mistakes in spelling and grammar, which have since been eliminated; moreover, the present edition is very far from being flawless, if judged by the best literary standards; especially as regards grammar and rhetoric.

Turn now the logic crank, bishop, Here is the way it will go:

Can God’s voice have proclaimed as “true,” a translation so very “incorrect” in spelling, grammar, and rhetoric? Again, when the Book of Mormon shall come to have the crucial examination invited by Elder Roberts’ outburst of enthusiasm—and every “Mormon” elder welcomes it, just as did Elder Roberts—it is more than probable that the book will fail to measure up to the standard of modern truths in botany, zoology, astronomy, geography, history and many other departments of human endeavor; of which it is at least the indirect record among an ancient people. Indeed, if it be not found full of inaccuracies in details of this type, it will be counted a suspicious document to the real critics; those that realize, once for all, that no ancient document can be more perfect than the best of the life it reflects.

Yet, you with your false standard

of correctness have only to say: "God being perfect, whatever comes from his hands, cannot possibly have inaccuracies in it." It is this same foolish logic that you will try to turn on us, when you find Joseph Smith's translation "incorrect" because, forsooth, your experts unite in ridiculing him. You seem really to think that there is such a thing as "correctness" in an absolute sense. Which then of your eight witnesses is the "correct" one? Your answer must condemn the other seven.

Is it not about time, my dear fellow worker, that we gave up that foolish proposition, which forms the backbone of your inquiry, viz., that any document put forward as a divine revelation must be "flawless" by all the human standards that happen to be in vogue at the time?

Suppose a given revelation, touching upon controversial matters, were in fact pronounced flawless by the best human learning of the day; would it not still be full of "inaccuracies" to advanced intelligences, like the angels, or even to earth-people who are to live a century in the future?

Again, if God's perfection must be mirrored in every document which his voice proclaims to be "true;" then we should have a revelation utterly meaningless to man till such time as he shall attain to the same perfection. To make this plain, we have only to suppose the modern geological explanation of creation to have been given to the ancients instead of the account in Genesis. What meaning could it possibly have had for them? Such a bit of modern truth injected out of relation with all the rest of the thoughts and experiences of the race for several thousand years to come? But could God not have revealed a sufficient arc of creation, as modern science now understands it, so as to bring the ancients nearer to truth?

The answer is no. First, because to do so would violate the fundamental principle of divine education, the absolute need of self-effort to psychic development; and, second, because the more truth he would reveal, as moderns see truth, the more would the mental life of the ancients have been confused; just as the truths now known to intelligences a million ages in advance of us, would, were they imposed upon our intellects by divine fiat, serve only to blight our spiritual development. For though we might hold such "truths" reverently, they would not be "true" to us, any more than a stone would be digestible, because held in the stomach. That only is true to any one, which can be felt to be true; i. e., which can be assimilated, and incorporated with the body of his experiences. Man

may and should hold reverently many things, because of the authority that utters them; but they will become true to him only when the time comes that they can be woven into the tapestry of his soul-life.

In the third place, any considerable revelation of modern science, could not have been made to the ancients, out of sheer failure to find a being able to voice it. Nay, even the symbols necessary to convey the thought were not in existence.

Consider as an illustration the case of the Prophet Mormon himself. Suppose, after God had commanded him to make, from the tomes of Nephite records at hand, the abridgment now known by his name—suppose, I repeat the divine Spirit guiding him, had held him up, whenever there came into his mind an aspect of botany, zoology, geography, astronomy, or any other such Nephite experience, the expression of which would not be up-to-date with what the Spirit might foresee would be known of these things in the twentieth century. Would not his pen have been paralyzed every little while? Suppose the Spirit of Inspiration had then, against his will, seized his hand and written those passages wherein his knowledge failed to measure up to what would be the exactions of modern truth—would he, Mormon, have stood for such passages? Would they not have seemed unintelligible, not to say false, to him? And would they not have been essentially false, as a portrayal of the life of an ancient people?

Now, such a supposition is foolish, from the fact that divine inspiration could not thus have seized the ancient writer's hand, for that would have been violating man's free agency. The Book of Mormon may thus be "true," both as reflecting truly, by its very inaccuracies, an imperfect people, and as being fitted, even by its very shortcomings, for assimilation by the poor and lowly of another people 1,500 years in the future.

That is true for us which is fitted to awaken and keep growing our soul-life, however incorrect it may be as measured by a more perfect standard. Genesis was therefore the "truest" document concerning the creation that could have been revealed to the ancient world; and considering the class of souls God meant to draw together for the foundation of his Church in this dispensation, the Book of Mormon is also "true"—truer, indeed, than a more perfect revelation—a revelation classic in diction and flawless as to scientific concepts—could possibly have been.

The vindication of the truth, as to whether God's voice did or did not

speak to the witnesses, lies, therefore, not in your dinky little verdict of experts, but in the tremendous fact of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints itself.

And this thought, viz., that in your judgment that little pop-gun of opinion had potency enough to blast down the mighty mountain of faith in this ancient record—a faith, mind you, based mainly on the internal evidence of the book itself—brings me to my last topic, viz., the mistaken idea you seem to have concerning the nature and constitution of the Church itself.

To you "Mormonism" is evidently merely a "body of belief built upon it [the Book of Mormon] and upon the reputation its publication gave to its author." Perhaps it was this very feeble estimate of its internal strength, which gave you the confidence, Don Quixote-like, to attack it with a single spear. You probably reasoned: The Book of Mormon is sure to fall; and if it falls, the prophet must also fall; but as it is his reputation as a prophet which—Atlas-like—holds up the whole Church, that also must come down with a crash. One is constantly tempted to smile at the way the "understanding" of a certain prudent man was "hid."

Permit me, my dear fellow-preacher, to enlighten you as to the real genius of "Mormonism."

In a previous paragraph of this letter I state that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was in a very definite sense independent of Joseph Smith. The time is now opportune to explain that the relation between the two is like that between the planter of a tree and the tree itself. Observe that without the planter and his care during the early part of its life, there would have been no tree at all; nevertheless its life comes not from the planter but from God; its growth may be promoted or retarded, and its fruit be scrubby or luscious, according to the care it receives from the husbandmen, but the fact that it lives and bears fruit at all is due ultimately to the Creator.

So also of the Church. It will always stand indebted to Joseph Smith both as founder and protector, but to God and to him only for the spirit which is its life. Nor is this life of the spirit merely a collective possession of the Church, with its voice in the living oracles; it is likewise, or may become, the peculiar endowment of each member.

As for the sacred books of "Mormonism," they are all profitable as sources of truth and guides to correct living, but should they all be taken away at once, the Church would live on by virtue of God's guidance of each member

through the medium of the Holy Spirit. So also of its historical relation of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young or any other of its past leaders. Their names might go into oblivion—which God forbid—yet the life of the Church still go on.

Paul points out the true source of the Church in a single phrase: "The power of God unto salvation," inherent in each true member. Not in tenet, therefore, nor doctrine, nor ordinance, nor ceremony, nor organization, must we look for the secret of its strength, lent in the "power of God unto salvation." In other words to the Holy Spirit poured out upon each member.

Instead of its organization making it strong, the converse is more nearly true; its strength is what makes for a perfect organization. "And as for you," so wrote John to the early Saints, "the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any teach you; but as this anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him."

When each member is thus directly "taught of God" (see John 6:45), do you see how incongruous it is to represent the Church as resting upon a single pillar, and that an historical one? Nor does the Church rest upon 12 or 15 pillars—the presidency and quorum of apostles—as is so often maintained. It rests on thousands of pillars. Indeed, every member with a testimony of the gospel is such a pillar; and new pillars of divine grace are going heavenward every day. Rather a formidable forest of columns—is it not?—for any man to attack with the fragile spear of intellectual negation!

In such a broad foundation of common sense, in such a widely shared superstructure of spiritual intentions, lie that internal strength and cohesiveness.

Bishop, you expect too much from your little flash in the pan. And that brings me to my final word with you. What is your ultimate purpose in hoping to overthrow "Mormonism?" It is surely not a negative one—that of pure destructiveness, for that would brand you at once as an emissary of the "spirit that denies."

Yet what have you and your sectarian confreres to offer, that would in any way compensate for the child-like and simple faith of the Latter-day Saints, their unfeigned trust for daily guidance in spiritual intuitions, and the virile strength of the social life in every ward throughout Zion?

Let me answer for you: All your religious efforts—what do they culminate in?

Chapel services! Exquisitely, beautiful and artistic, no doubt, but still only chapel services.

"Mormon" faith culminates in "Mormon" works; here is the program: "Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it"—the very first command given to the race. Yours culminates—in singing and praising the Lord! You can't develop enough of "works" among you to gather the tithes necessary for your missions, but must rely upon contributions from abroad.

A week ago the house of Brother Hamblin of this place, burned down. Not a shred of anything was saved. A family of 14 members was left destitute and homeless. Today the roof is being put on a comfortable four-roomed log cottage, Bishop Hansen of Roosevelt leading out in the splendid work. This house will be finished in three more days, and presented to the stricken family in the name of the Lord.

The day after the fire nearly \$200 had been collected and the sisters of the ward met at Sister Collet's as a sewing bee to clothe the naked family. That is a sample of the works which demonstrate our faith.

How would any of your fashionable congregations have handled the situation? How—but through the medium of a pink tea! Fancy yourself, Bishop, and a score of your immaculate fellow ministers, like our bishop, and his gang of elders at this minute, clad in overalls and jumper, with

trowel in hand, daubing a log-house in mid-winter!

Oh, come out of her, my brother! Drop once for all the effete and fruitless refinements of scholarship and the higher criticism. The truth of religion is to be felt, not reasoned about. Embalm and lay down gently for ever, in the mauscleums misnamed chapels, a religion which at best is but a Sunday veneering upon life; and come into one which is life itself!—horny-handed, blood-red palpitating life!

You are too good a man to be forced semi-annually into a situation where, like the notorious Dr. Iliff, you must stuff your eastern audiences with whoppers about "Mormonism," in order to milk them. Drop the whole academic, high flying out-of-relation business, which can never yield you divina love and joy and the peace that passeth understanding, drop it, and seek the kingdom of God.

The way is very simple—so simple, indeed, that I fear me much your very learning will prevent you from seeking it. Here it is: "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Do you know why our Lord chose that figure? Here is the reason: A little child looks always for things to believe; not for things to disbelieve—quite a radically different method from that which you are just now pursuing.

N. L. NELSON.

Roosevelt, Utah, Feb. 3, 1913.

Rev. Spalding's Answer to Dr. Widtsoe

My Dear Doctor Widtsoe:-

I trust you will pardon my delay in replying to your letter of January 11, 1913. In that letter you wisely advised against undue haste, suggesting, you will remember, that I should have postponed the publication of the pamphlet—you have been so kind as to discuss—even a "year or two." You will therefore, I am sure, overlook a delay of, not years, but weeks.

If I understand your letter, and I have read it carefully, you criticize the pamphlet "Joseph Smith, Jr. as a Translator" as being unscientific, and you base this opinion upon two considerations which you urge with candor and with spirit. You feel, in the first place that if the pamphlet is to be given scientific standing, it should

have included a careful summary of the evidence, a thorough analysis of the opinions of the scholars quoted and an extended series of "minute comparisons and bibliographic researches." In the second place you insist that the testimony of eight scholarly witnesses is altogether insufficient, and that a man of scientific spirit would have consulted perhaps eighty competent experts.

In reply to the first of these criticisms, I can only urge that you are asking values of the writer of the pamphlet that he does not profess to be able to give. You are judging the pamphlet by a standard which it nowhere claims for itself. You and others who have discussed the opinions of the scholars quoted, are quite as com-

* From the Deseret News, March, 7, 1913.