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Dialogue on Mormonism, No. I

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Abstract: This two-part series is a fictitious dialogue about the beliefs of the LDS church. During the dialogue an Elder of the Church explains the contents of the Book of Mormon. The first part begins the series.

accept of their offerings; and the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments, I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me saith the Lord your God. Therefore, for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those men whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God; and I will answer judgment, wrath, indignation, wailing, anguish, and gnashing of teeth, upon their heads, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me saith the Lord your God. And this I make an ensample unto you, for your consolation, concerning all those who have been commanded to do a work, and have been hindered by the hands of their enemies, and by oppression, saith the Lord your God; for I am the Lord your God, and will save all those of your brethren who have been pure in heart, and have been slain in the land of Missouri, saith the Lord.

And again, verily I say unto you, I command you again to build a house to my name, even in this place, that ye may prove yourselves unto me that ye are faithful in all things whatsoever I command you, that I may bless you, and crown you with honour, immortality and eternal life.

DIALOGUE ON MORMONISM.

No. 1.

Between Mr. Matthews and Mr. Roberts.

Mr. M. Good morning Mr. R. Did you go and hear the Mormon preach last evening?

Mr. R. No indeed I did not, I think it below my notice to listen to those babblers.

Mr. M. Why Mr. R., do you call them babblers and think so meanly of them? I'm sure I heard nothing objectionable in the discourse last evening.

Mr. R. Why! have you not heard the reports which are in circulation respecting them?

Mr. M. Yes, I have heard a great many stories about this people, but some of them were so extravagant and carried their own refutation on the face of them, that I thought I would hear both sides of the question.

Mr. R. Well, for my part, I am astonished that any respectable person should listen to them. Such imposters should be discarded.

Mr. M. Probably, you may have been misinformed, and have heard reports which have no foundation in truth. I think if you were properly informed on the subject, you would not feel so inimical to them. You know the scriptures say "Prove all things and hold fast that which is good," and you know that public opinion is not always a proper standard for us to judge by, if it were so, our Saviour would not have been crucified by the Jews, nor would the apostles have had to flee from one city to another, and be brought before magistrates and rulers.

Mr. R. Well, well Mr. M., that is good reasoning enough; but the idea of walking on the water, their pretensions of raising the dead, and other extravagant notions, are so absurd and ridiculous that I wonder any men of common sense should join them.

Mr. M. I have heard such stories, but when I talk with them on the subject, I find that they make no such pretensions but speak very rationally, and I assure you they argue very logically on the scriptures.

Mr. R. Why! do you mean to say, that they believe any thing of our bible? Don't you know that they have discarded our scriptures and have got a bible of their own?

Mr. M. Why sir, the preacher last evening confined himself exclusively to the scriptures of the old and new testament, and proved the doctrines he advanced from the same. I afterwards, had some conversation with him, and made some inquiries respecting the Mormon bible as it is termed, and he very freely and very candidly answered my enquiries, and said that the "Book of Mormon," was a re-

cord of the aborigines of this continent which had been preserved on plates, and handed down from generation to generation, until, on account of the wickedness of the people, they were hid up; and that Joseph Smith was informed by a heavenly messenger where those plates were—was instructed to obtain, and power was given him to translate them. I have not had time yet to examine the book, but I shall certainly read it, and then, afterwards, I shall judge; but they certainly believe our bible Mr. R.

Mr. R. Really Mr. M., this is strange news. Why how can people get up such wonderful stories? There must be some foundation for them. Again, you know that the Rev. Mr. H. and other very worthy ministers, who are eminent for their piety and learning, speak hard things against them, and warn their people against receiving them into their houses, and not to countenance such renegadoes.

Mr. M. I am aware that this is the fact, and I am sorry that the preachers should have no better weapons to use than to publish the reports which they have done. If Mormonism is a deception why do they not argue the subject like men and christians? If the doctrines they teach are so monstrous, why do not the ministers of the different denominations, expose them and prove them so from the scriptures? Such a course would be far more honourable than retailing slanderous reports.

Mr. R. But do the Mormons wish to have their religion investigated? Do they not assume a high dictatorial bearing, and refuse to answer any questions; but say, that if reason and scripture come in contact with their doctrines, they do not care, but assert, that they know that their doctrines are true?

Mr. M. Such have been the reports; but when the preacher had got through his discourse last evening, he said, that inasmuch as there were many reports in circulation respecting their church, and the doctrines they advanced, he would give an opportunity for any one to ask any questions on the subject, and if any one had any objections to urge against

the doctrines he advanced, they were at liberty to do so.

Mr. R. Did any one make any objections?

Mr. M. No sir. The doctrines he advanced were elucidated with so much clearness, and proof upon every point he advanced was so abundant, that I saw no possibility of making any. Some questions were asked respecting the book of Mormon which were answered very satisfactory, and then the meeting separated. I remained some time longer and conversed with him on the various subjects he had advanced and found him very communicative indeed, and seemed to take considerable pleasure in giving information respecting their faith and doctrine. I wish you had been there Mr. M. I think you would have a better opinion of these people if you could once hear them preach.

Mr. R. I probably might, but I don't think I should. I can never have a great opinion of any people who will condemn the whole world, and say "The temple of the Lord are we, and heathens all beside."—No Mr. M. they cannot catch old birds with chaff. I should be sorry to indulge in prejudice against any sect; neither would I persecute any man for his religious opinions. But, really Mr. M., this Mormon doctrine is monstrous.

Mr. M. I have ever considered you a liberal minded person, and I really do think, that if you were to hear them preach once, you would think differently of them to what you do now; or, if you were to converse with them on the subject. I invited the preacher to come and spend the afternoon at my house, to converse with him more fully on these subjects; I should be very much pleased indeed, if you and Mrs. R., could make it convenient to come over, and chat with us awhile. I believe you will find the preacher a gentleman, very affable; and probably we may both hear something that may tend to our benefit.

Mr. R. I am obliged to you for your kind invitation and good feelings, probably I shall comply with your request; I shall go home and see if it will be conve-

nient for Mrs. R. to accompany me.— However there is one privilege I wish to have, and that is, if I find the preacher garbling the scriptures, or advancing any erroneous notions, I want to expose him fully, and treat him as he may deserve.

Mr. M. I am not afraid of you overstepping the bounds of a gentleman.— Good morning Mr. R.

Mr. R. Good morning.

TO BE CONTINUED

—*Times and Seasons.*

ARREST OF PRESIDENT JOS. SMITH.

As much excitement has prevailed in England as well as America of late on the subject of this gentleman's imprisonment, we extract the following particulars from the "Times and Seasons" of June 15th:—

Much anxiety undoubtedly exists in the minds of the saints respecting the late proceedings in reference to Pres. Joseph Smith, and many reports have been circulated calculated to mislead the public mind. We shall, therefore, give a brief account of the proceedings as far as they have come under our notice.

On Saturday, the 5th inst., as Pres. Joseph Smith was on his return from Quincy, to which place he had accompanied Pres. Hyrum Smith and William Law, on their mission to the East, he was arrested, at the Bear Creek Hotel, by two officers of Justice, on a warrant from Gov. Carlin, to deliver him up to the authorities of Missouri. He accordingly returned to Quincy, and obtained a writ of *habeas corpus* before C. A. Warren, Esq., Master in Chancery; and Judge Douglass happening to come to Quincy that evening, appointed to give a hearing on the Tuesday following, in Monmouth, Warren county, where the court was then sitting. On Sunday evening, he returned to Nauvoo in charge of the officers, and on Monday morning started for Monmouth, accompanied by several of his friends. On arriving at that place we found great excitement prevailing in the public mind, and great curiosity was manifested by the citizens, who were

extremely anxious to obtain a sight of the *prophet*.

On Tuesday morning, Mr. Little, for the defence, motioned that the case of Mr. Smith should be taken up, but was objected to by the States attorney, on account of his not being prepared, not having had sufficient notice of the trial. It was accordingly, by mutual consent, postponed until Wednesday morning.

Tuesday evening, great excitement prevailed, and the citizens employed several attorneys to plead against the defendant.

At an early hour on Wednesday morning, the Court House was filled with spectators desirous to hear the proceedings.

Mr. Morrison, on behalf of the people, wished for time to send to Springfield for the indictment, it not being found with the rest of the papers.

This course would have delayed the proceedings, and as it was not important to the issue, the attorneys for the defence admitted that there was an indictment, so that the investigation might proceed.

Mr. Warren, for the defence, then read the petition of the Defendant, which stated, that he was unlawfully held in custody, and that the indictment in Missouri was obtained by fraud, bribery, and duress, all of which he was prepared to prove.

Mr. Little then called upon the following witnesses viz: Morris Phelps, Elias Higbee, Reynolds Cahoon and George W. Robinson, who were sworn. The Counsel on the opposite side, objected to hearing evidence on the merits of the case, as they could not go beyond the indictment. Upon this a warm and long discussion occurred, which occupied the attention of the Court through the entire day.

All the Lawyers on the opposite side, excepting two viz: Messrs. Knowlton and Jennings, confined themselves to the merits of the case, and conducted themselves as gentlemen; but it was plainly evident that the design of the gentlemen above named, was to excite the public mind still more on the sub-