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Reply to a Pamphlet, Printed in Glasgow, Entitled "Remarks on Mormonism"

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Abstract: This series is a response to a polemical pamphlet against several aspects of Mormonism. Pratt defends Joseph Smith's use of the Urim and Thummim, discusses the meaning of "other sheep" and "fold," and of the Book of Mormon as a covenant. The first part discusses the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Friends and brethren, will you not contribute a small portion of that wealth which God has blessed you with, to aid in the erection of the new building on Zion? Will you not assist our poor brethren in Jerusalem, who are looking to you for aid in this interesting project? Will you not give a trifle, that you might have the gratification of saying, "I assisted to erect this edifice dedicated to the Most High in his own—his cherished city of Jerusalem?" I know you will: when was an appeal made to the charitable feelings of the Jew to aid his brethren, that it was not cheerfully, liberally responded to? All have an interest, an inheritance in Jerusalem; Jew and Gentile; all expect to unite in pious zeal, in holy charity, in mutual forgiveness, on that day, when the nation is to be gathered together.—The honored messenger, now here, the Rabbi Echiel Cohen, who is to convey the fruits of your bounty to the Holy Land, will be, I hope, enabled to say, "I met my people in the western world, with hands that had hearts in them—who felt and who prayed for the peace of Jerusalem, who gave me the gold of Ophir, as we gave Solomon of blessed memory to erect the temple which yet lives in our hearts, and the prayers and the blessings of the faithful await them." Send him not away to the banks of the Jordan without purse and without scrip. Let us give our mite, no matter how small. I know full well, my friends, how many claims you have upon your bounty—strong and natural ones; engraft this one upon the rest; you will not feel its pressure; but it will be to you a grateful, pleasing remembrance, that when this contemplated edifice is completed, that you have had an interest in its erection, and your names will be impressed upon the hearts of a people whose lives are devoted to piety, and whose prayers are offered for our temporal happiness and eternal salvation.

REPLY TO A PAMPHLET, PRINTED IN GLASGOW, ENTITLED
"REMARKS ON MORMONISM,"

Said to be printed with the approbation of Clergymen of different denominations.

"He that speaketh lies shall perish."—Prov. xix, 9.

Among the numerous productions which have, for the last nineteen years been circulated against the doctrine believed and taught by the Saints, it seems that another pamphlet has been palmed upon the world by some unknown *author*, who was ashamed to have his name appear in connexion with his own glaring misrepresentations.

As this secret author, in the first page of his pamphlet, has used no arguments, therefore there are none to answer; instead of arguments he seems very much inclined to apply to the Saints and their doctrine such phrases as the following, viz.: "*absurd notions*"—"a gross, a stupid, and an unphilosophical fraud"—"*delusion*"—"grovelling sensualism of Mormonism"—"*clumsy and inartistic imposition*"—"Atheism and blasphemy"—"*fanatical followers*"—"weak dupes," &c. Very polite terms, Mr. Author! Genteel epithets! Doubtless the "*clergymen of different denominations*" must feel themselves highly honoured in approbating such irresistible logic!

On the second page of the "*Remarks*," a violent attack is made upon the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and Book of Mormon. The author condemns the revelations given through Mr. Smith, because he supposes they originated in selfishness. One of the extracts to which he refers reads thus:—"Therefore let no man among you (for this commandment is unto all the faithful who are called of God in the church unto the ministry), from this hour take purse or scrip, that goeth forth to proclaim this gospel of the kingdom. Behold, I send you out to reprove the world of all their unrighteous deeds, and to teach them of a judgment which is to come. And whoso receiveth you, there will I be also, for I will go before your face: I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my spirit shall be in your hearts, and my angels round about you to bear you up."

"Whoso receiveth you receiveth me, and the same will feed you, and clothe you, and give you money. And he who feeds you, or clothes you, or gives you money, shall in no wise lose his reward; and he that doeth not these things is not my dis-

ciple; and by this you may know my disciples. He that receiveth you not, go away from him alone by yourselves, and cleanse your feet even with water, pure water, whether in heat or in cold, and bear testimony of it unto your father which is in heaven, and return not again unto that man. And in whatsoever village or city ye enter, do likewise. Nevertheless search diligently and spare not; and wo unto that house, or that village or city that rejecteth you, or your words, or testimony concerning me. Wo, I say again, unto that house, or that village or city that rejecteth you, or your words, or your testimony of me; for I, the Almighty, have laid my hands upon the nations, to scourge them for their wickedness; and plagues shall go forth, and they shall not be taken from the earth, until I have completed my work which shall be cut short in righteousness."

Now we ask the candid reader to compare the foregoing with the commands which Jesus gave to his apostles in ancient days, as recorded in the tenth chapter of Matthew, and he will find a striking analogy between them. A blessing was to attend those who administered to their necessities, while a heavy curse, greater than that which Sodom should receive in the judgment day, was to befall those who would not "receive them nor hear their words." Is it not equally certain that similar blessings or cursings will be apportioned to those who receive or reject the servants of God in any age in which they may be sent? We leave it with our readers to judge whether it is more selfish to travel from city to city, without purse or scrip, trusting in God and to the charity of a cold-hearted covetous generation, than it is to settle down in one place and hire out to preach for a good fat salary of some thousands per year like many modern clergymen.

Mr. Smith is called by this writer an "avaricious impostor," because he obtained a revelation requiring the Saints to contribute a certain portion of their property to build a house unto the Lord, and for other public purposes. But, we ask, Was Joseph, in Egypt, an "avaricious impostor," because he gathered up all the money, cattle, horses, and property in Egypt; and afterwards made a standing law that all the people should pay one-fifth part of all their annual increase. Was Melchisedec an "avaricious impostor," because he received tithes from Abraham? Was Moses an "avaricious impostor," because he received a revelation requiring all Israel to pay their annual tithes for the support of the Levitical priesthood, who officiated at the temple? Were the ancient apostles "avaricious impostors," because "*as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet.*"—Acts iv. 34 and 35.

This author next says that "Smith produces many revelations confirmatory of his headship in the church—that God would reveal his secrets to him only, and to no one else." This, sir, is a glaring misrepresentation: there is nothing in the Book of Covenants that limits the spirit of revelation to Mr. Smith only. The whole tenor of that book goes to show that every faithful person may receive revelation, in a greater or less degree. It is true, Mr. Smith, like Moses, was appointed the only revelator to the church, but this did not prohibit individuals from obtaining revelations for their own personal benefit, though they had no authority to obtain revelations to govern and direct others, or to control the church in its belief: this alone was confined to Mr. Smith, and to such as should be appointed to the same office. The seventy elders of Israel could prophesy and receive revelations in the days of Moses, but we are not aware that they were authorized to obtain laws or commandments for the government of Israel, or to write revelations to control their faith; this appertained to Moses and to such only as were appointed to that authority. Hence the Lord said, "If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house? With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold."—Numbers, xii.

This logical author seems to think that Mr. Smith could not possibly translate the Book of Mormon by the means of the "Urim and Thummim," which was before prepared, (which he contemptuously styles "Moroni's spectacles,") and at the same time translate by a power from on high. But we ask, when Aaron received the sentence of judgment through the "Urim and Thummim," will you not admit that he received it by a power from on high? Did ever any inspired man ancient-

ly receive a revelation through this sacred instrument, that was not given by a power from on high. This ignorant author finds fault with the prophet Moroni because he had written his record, according to his knowledge, in the Egyptian characters. How would he have him write, if not according to his knowledge? Must a prophet write the revelations of God in characters or letters of which he has no knowledge? Every prophet that has ever written a revelation or vision, has written it according to his knowledge. Luke, in writing his history of the doings and sayings of Jesus, wrote according to his memory, at the same time having the Holy Ghost to bring all things to his remembrance, whatever was needful to write.—Luke, i, 3. Luke wrote according to his knowledge, and according to his memory, and yet he wrote by the inspiration of the Spirit; and so did the prophet Moroni; and what he wrote he professes to have written by authority, being commanded of God, though he admits the imperfections of the Egyptian hieroglyphics in which he wrote. Every person will admit that some languages have more imperfections than others. The revelations of God are perfect, though they may, like the Book of Mormon, be recorded in an imperfect language; yet, when they are translated by the inspiration of God into a more perfect language, like the English, they will be more perfectly expressed. Moroni, after acknowledging the imperfection of his record, (it being in the Egyptian characters,) says, “if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.” From this we learn that the imperfection of which he speaks did not appertain to the revelations which God had given, but to the language or characters in which they were written.

This author, finding nothing in the Book of Mormon but what is consistent, is at last compelled to invent a barefaced falsehood; and then he endeavours to palm it off upon the public as though it was in that book. He says, that in the Book of Mormon “the Lord is made to say that they (the remnant of the tribe of Joseph, then inhabiting America) are the other sheep which are not of the fold of Israel.” Now the Book of Mormon says no such thing: it only represents the Israelites in Ancient America as inhabiting another fold, separate and distinct from the fold occupied by the Jews in Palestine. The word “fold,” in the Book of Mormon, has no reference whatever to the *origin* of the sheep, but only to the *place* they inhabited. That there are more folds than one, and that the word fold means place, is evident from Jeremiah, xxiii, 3, which reads thus: “And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their FOLDS.”

In the next paragraph of your pamphlet you have falsely accused the author of the “Divine Authority” of ranking Joseph Smith with former impostors, and you pretend to quote my words to that effect; but you yourself, and all other persons who have read my tract on “Divine Authority,” know that you have grossly misrepresented the same—that your pretended quotation is no where to be found in my tract, but is wholly a production of your own corrupt heart to deceive the public.

The next subject touched upon by this Dunfermline author, is the working of miracles. He seems to think that every person among the Saints, must, immediately upon entering the Church, possess all the promised miraculous gifts, or else, in his estimation, “Joseph Smith is demonstratively proved to be an impostor.” But we know of no revelation, either ancient or modern, which says that these miraculous gifts promised, shall be received and exercised the moment one enters the Church. Christ did not say that these signs shall follow the believer the first day nor the first year after they believe in him. If these signs follow the believer at any subsequent period of his life, either at or near the time of his first entering the Church, or years afterwards, it would prove the promises true, and the message to be of God. Therefore if all the Dunfermline Saints (who are yet in their infancy in the Church) have not attained a full measure of all the gifts of the gospel, they need not be discouraged by their enemies, there is time enough yet to receive many blessings, and for all the promises of Jesus to be fulfilled. Thousands, since the rise of this Church, have been healed, both in the Church and out of it, insomuch that our enemies have been astonished, and have sought to impute these miracles to some other power than that of God. Therefore if miracles be a

proof that this Church is of God, we have an abundance of evidence—in the blind seeing; the deaf hearing; the dumb speaking; the lame walking; the sick recovering, and in the copious manifestations of the power of God. As the Saints increase in faith, in knowledge, and in holiness, these miraculous gifts will increase in their midst, and all the believers in Christ will realise all the blessings promised, and shall eventually be armed with righteousness, and with the power of God in great glory; while all liars, and wicked, corrupt, and adulterous sign-seekers shall perish off the earth, and be thrust down to hell.

On the fourth page of this Dumfermline tract, the author charges one of the Saints in that vicinity of preaching contrary to the doctrines contained in our books, but when the candid reader reflects upon his numerous misrepresentations in many other instances, he will know how far to put confidence in this charge.

On the same page, this sage philosopher says that, "*it is one of the established laws of optics, that no mortal eye can, by any possibility, see a spirit.*" Will this very wise author be so kind as to inform the public by whom this "*law of optics*" was discovered, and by what process of reason and demonstration it became an "*established law*?" Have any of our great modern opticians analyzed a spirit and ascertained its incapacities of reflecting light, so as to effect the optic nerve of the eye? We are bold to assert that such a law of optics never was discovered; and no work on optics, either of ancient or modern times, demonstrates or establishes such a law. Were those three personages spirits who took dinner with Abraham, and afterwards walked with him quite a distance towards Sodom? or did Abraham see them with his mortal eyes? If he did not see them *with* his mortal eyes, we have good reason to suppose that he saw them *through* his mortal eyes as instruments; (all parts of the mortal body are only instruments by which the spirit of man sees, hears, feels, &c.) Abraham does not appear to have been in a vision or a sleep at the time, but apparently enjoyed the exercise of all his senses as at other times, yet one of these personages with whom he conversed the most, was the Lord, whom we all acknowledge to be a spirit. Although we disagree with this author in regard to the spiritual man not being capable of seeing a spirit through his natural eyes, or the eyes of his body, yet we believe in the testimony of Jesus, that "No man (that is *natural* man) hath seen God at any time." The spiritual man may see God even through the *natural* eyes, or the eyes of his body, like Abraham—like Jacob—like Moses. While the natural man, or the man who is not born of God, has not this privilege, not that it is impossible and contrary to the "*laws of optics*," but that it is contrary to the mind of God that such a man should see him and live. This deceptive writer says, the book of Nephi (chapter xiii.) speaks of *nine* persons being caught up into heaven, but if he will read the chapter again, he will find that it speaks of *but three* instead of *nine*, who were so caught up.

(To be continued.)

WHO HAS AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE?

30, James's Street, Southampton, Feb. 27, 1849.

My Dear Friend,—I duly received yours on the 24th, agreeably with my promise, I hastily answer, in the midst of pressing business, so please excuse the brevity of my reply.

Having read your letter carefully, and divesting it of extraneous matter, your particular desire is to know "*who is really an authorized person to baptize?*" Before answering this important question, I would remark your letter controverts itself. In the first place, you think from St. Paul's remarks, on the invidious disposition of some, who "*turned the grace of God into lasciviousness,*" and "*preached out of envy;*" by which you infer, that *any person* who knew what Christ's laws were, might take the liberty of enforcing these upon their fellow men, and be perfectly legal in the sight of God, "*whatever their motives might be.*" Again, without hesitation you affirm, that after discovering in the scriptures that baptism was "*for remission of sins,*" and being anxious to obey that command, your only