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## Internal Evidences of the Book of Mormon: Showing the Absurdity of the "Spaulding Story"

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**Abstract:** Refutes the Spaulding manuscript as a basis for the creation of the Book of Mormon, pointing out wide differences between the two, including background, dates, characters, and content. Argues that if Joseph Smith were “too illiterate” to write the Book of Mormon, he was equally as incapable of changing the Spaulding manuscript into the Book of Mormon.

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because we have been accustomed to something else. To them, our customs are just as novel and surprising.

The funny-looking shoes, which you see under the bench and behind the boy, are made of wood. Such shoes, being cheap and durable, are worn by hundreds and thousands of the children of the poorer classes of people. They are made a little larger than the foot, and the spare room is sometimes filled up with straw, and sometimes with old cloths. It would not be very pleasant to have the noise made by children walking across the floor with wooden shoes in the schoolroom, and they therefore leave them at the door. The other two children have shoes made of cloth, which are also worn very much in Germany.

In both Germany and Switzerland education is compulsory. It is believed by the authorities of these nations that "education is a preventive of crime," and they therefore compel all children between the ages of six and fourteen years, who are not prevented by sickness, to attend school. Here they are taught the common branches of education, and in addition the boys are taught drawing and the girls various kinds of needle work, while all receive some instruction in music. Our little boy in the picture seems to have commenced his studies in drawing quite early, for we have an exhibition of his skill on his slate.

After the term of compulsory attendance at school is past, those who desire to continue their studies further, must enter one of the high schools or academies, of which there are a great many in that country. The females can here quietly pursue their studies as long as they wish, but the young men on arriving at the age of twenty years, are claimed by the government, and every one who is sound in body and mind is compelled to serve three consecutive years as a soldier. While receiving this training or education, a knowledge of vice and a familiarity with it is also in most instances gained. Thus the young men are prepared to face the enemy in the shape of man, but they flee before the great enemy of their souls—the devil, and allow him to conquer them in the great battle of life. We must therefore conclude that such an education as is received by the youth of Germany does not decrease the number of criminals, but rather tends to make them smart enough to avoid being detected in the committal of their crimes.

This country can boast of possessing some of the largest and best institutions of learning in the world, and some of its educated men have gained a world-wide reputation. The university of Berlin, which is the largest in Germany, has an attendance of three thousand six hundred students. Heidelberg, Dresden, Leipsic and many other cities are noted for the excellence of their schools and colleges.

To write a description of all the costumes seen in different parts of this country, and to explain the dissimilarity of the dialects, would require more time and space than we have at our command, for in almost every city and town a change is noticeable in the dress and language of the people. Some of the women wear short dresses with hoops; flashy stockings with low shoes, or slippers; showy jewelry, and their hair in braids over the shoulders, like that of the little girl in the picture, and covering for the head; while others prefer the long black dress, with white lace front; a gaudy hat or a broad black ribbon, which is tied in a double bow knot and fastened on the back of the head, reminding one who is not used to them of the wings of a butterfly. Some of the men apparently take delight in purchasing and exhibiting gold or silver-plated buttons, in conjunction with embroidered vests, knee breeches and low shoes with large buckles.

The language is as different in the various districts as are the customs. It has even been remarked by a traveler that if a person were to walk through the country, he would hear a new dialect in every hour's walk of his journey.

## INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

SHOWING THE ABSURDITY OF THE "SPAULDING STORY."

BY G. R.

IT is our purpose in this article to demonstrate from the Book of Mormon itself, the absurdity of the "Spaulding Story" and the utter impossibility of the Prophet Joseph Smith ever having used Mr. Spaulding's reputed romance, "The Manuscript Found," as the groundwork for that divine record.

At different times since the publication of the Book of Mormon various writers have undertaken to explain the plot and contents of the "Manuscript Found," and to show how remarkable is the resemblance between it and the Book of Mormon.

We are told by one reverend author that when the Book of Mormon was read to Solomon Spaulding's widow, brother and six other persons, well acquainted with Mr. Spaulding's writings, they immediately recognized in the Book of Mormon the same historical matter and names as composed the romance, although this reading took place some years after they had read the latter work. The writer further states that they affirmed that with the exception of the religious matter, it is copied almost *word for word* from Spaulding's manuscript.

Another writer affirms that the romance of Spaulding was *similar in all its leading features* to the historical portions of the Book of Mormon. While a third writer maintains that the historical part of the Book of Mormon was immediately recognized by all the older inhabitants of New Salem, Ohio, as *the identical work* of Mr. Spaulding, in which they had been so interested twenty years before.

Those who claim to have been acquainted with the writings of Mr. Spaulding, differ materially as to the incidents and plot of "The Manuscript Found." According to their widely different statements, his romance was based upon one of two theories. The first on the idea of the landing of a Roman colony on the Atlantic seaboard shortly before the Christian era. The second (now the most generally known and accepted) on the supposition that the present American Indians are the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel, who were led away captive out of their own land into Media, where historically the world loses sight of them, but where Mr. Spaulding's romance finds them and transports them to America. It is upon this idea of the transportation of this great and numerous people from the land of their captivity to the western world that this gentleman's novel is generally said to have been founded.

We will examine this statement first, and strive to discover how nearly this agrees with the historical narrative of the Book of Mormon, which we are told was immediately recognized as being *identical and copied almost word for word* from the pages of the "Manuscript Found."

In the first place, it is well to remark that the Book of Mormon makes but very few references to the ten tribes, and

in those few, it directly, plainly and unequivocally states that the American Indians are not the descendants of the ten tribes, and further, that the ten tribes never were in America, or any part of it, during any portion of their existence as a nation.\* On the other hand, the Book of Mormon as directly informs us from whom the aborigines, or natives, of this continent are descended. This being the case, how is it possible for the two works to be identical?

But admitting, for the sake of argument, that Joseph Smith might have changed the statement of the author of "The Manuscript Found" in this one particular, we will proceed to show that such a supposition is utterly impossible; for to have retained the unities of the work and the consistencies of the story (for the story of the Book of Mormon is consistent with itself), he must have altered not only the leading features but also the minor details of the whole historical narrative. He must have altered the place of departure, the circumstances of the journey, the route taken by the emigrants, the time of the emigration and every other particular connected with such a great movement. We must recollect that the Book of Mormon gives the account of a small colony (perhaps of about thirty or forty souls) being led by the Lord from the city of Jerusalem through the wilderness south and east of that city, to the borders of the Red Sea, thence for some distance in the same direction near its coast, and then across the Arabian peninsula to the sea eastward. What insanity could have induced Mr. Spaulding to propose such a route for the ten tribes? for of all out-of-the-way methods of reaching the American continent from Media, this would be one of the most inaccessible, difficult, round-about and improbable, and would carry them along the two sides of an acute angle by the time they reached the shore where the ship was built. It would almost certainly have taken these tribes close to, if not through, a portion of their own ancient homes, where it is reasonable to suppose nearly all would have desired to tarry, when we consider how great was the love that ancient Israel held for that rich land given to them by divine power.

Mr. Spaulding, as a student of the Bible, would have made no such blunder. But even supposing that he was foolish enough in his romance to transport the hosts of Israel from the south-western borders of the Caspian Sea (where history loses them) by the nearest route, most probably over the Armenian Mountains, across the Syrian desert, and by way of Damascus through the lands of Gilead, Moab and Edom into the wilderness of the Red Sea, where, we ask, is there an account of such a journey in any portion of the Book of Mormon? There is none, for the Book of Mormon opens with the description of Lehi's departure from Jerusalem with the causes that led thereto, he having been a resident of that city all his days, and never a captive in Media. Therefore we

our crucified Redeemer, in His teachings to the Nephites, thus refers to the ten tribes of the house of Israel:

"And behold this is the land of your inheritance, and the Father hath sent it unto you. And not at any time hath the Father given me commandment that I should tell it unto your brethren at Jerusalem; neither at any time hath the Father given me commandment, that I should tell unto them concerning the other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath set away out of the world." III Nephi, xv. 12-15.

"They thus (the Jews) may receive a knowledge of you by the Holy Ghost, and also of the other tribes whom they know not of." III Nephi, xvi. 1.

"The other tribes, hath the Father separate I from them?" (III Nephi, xv. 20).

"But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for He knoweth whether He hath taken them." III Nephi, xv. 21.

are justified in asking, at the very outset of this inquiry, where, from the opening pages onward, is there any identity between the two books?

Then, again, is it not obvious to every thinking person that the moving of a nation, such as the ten tribes were, must have had associated with it events and circumstances entirely inconsistent and at variance with the simple story of the journey of Lehi and his family as given, frequently with minute detail, in the Book of Mormon. How numerous were the host of the captive Israelites we have no means of definitely ascertaining. We learn, however, that in one invasion alone, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, carried off two hundred thousand captives from the kingdom of Israel. Even admitting that in their captivity these two hundred thousand did not increase in numbers, and entirely ignoring all the other thousands that were led away captives in other invasions, we should necessarily expect that Spaulding in his account of the moving of this mass of humanity—men, women and children—with their flocks, herds and supplies would write a narrative consistent with the subject and not one such as the Book of Mormon contains. But whether he did or did not, the Book of Mormon contains nothing whatever of the kind. In that work no vast armies are led out of Media by any route whatever to the American continent.

We have an entirely different story, more dissimilar indeed from Spaulding's supposed narrative than the history of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, under Moses, is from the story of the departure from the old world, the voyage across the Atlantic and the landing on this continent of the Pilgrim Fathers, of revered memory. In the narrative that the Book of Mormon gives of the journeyings of Lehi and his little colony, all the incidents related are consistent with the idea of a small people and entirely inconsistent with that of a vast moving multitude.

For instance, let us take as an example, the story of Nephi breaking his bow by which the little caravan was placed in danger of starvation. If there had been a vast host, numbering nearly a quarter of a million souls, such an incident could have had no weight; for surely Mr. Spaulding never wrote that one hunter alone supplied such a multitude with all the necessary food, and it would be equally absurd to imagine that that gentleman would tell such an improbable story as that all the hunters broke all their bows at the same time. Again, the Book of Mormon tells us that Lehi and his companions depended on the chase for their entire food. Where, we would ask, in the midst of the Arabian desert, could game enough be found to supply the entire wants of the migrating ten tribes? And further, what would they do for water for such a company in the trackless Arabian desert without divine interposition and the manifestation of miraculous power? But the Book of Mormon hints at no such a contingency.

Again, the story of the building of the ship by Nephi must have been entirely altered, for no one ship, be it twenty times as large as the *Great Eastern*, could have carried Mr. Spaulding's imaginary company and their effects, across the wide waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

We must now draw attention to the time when the Book of Mormon states Lehi and his company were led out of Jerusalem. There is no ambiguity on this point. It is repeatedly stated that this event took place six hundred years before the advent of our Savior, that is, it was previous to the Babylonish captivity. The ten tribes were not lost sight of at that time; they were undoubtedly still in the land of their captivity, and

if Mr. Spaulding was foolish enough in his romance to set a date to his exodus, he certainly would not have placed it during the lifetime of Jeremiah the prophet, and of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; for not only would such a date have marred the consistency of the story but it is also utterly impossible for us to conceive as an historical probability that the mighty king of Babylon would have permitted the ten tribes to escape from their captivity at that time and above all things to have taken such a route as would have brought them near the borders of the Red Sea. If they escaped at all, it necessarily would have been to the uninhabited regions northward. From a political standpoint it would have been suicidal and utterly inconsistent with the polity of the king of Babylon to allow the captive Israelites to march forth in the supposed direction; for it would have placed them in immediate contact with the kingdom of Judah and enabled them to have formed an alliance with their former brethren antagonistic to his interests and policy.

To pursue the subject still further: when the colony reached the land of promise, which we call America, the incidents related in the Book of Mormon are entirely consistent with the story of the voyage and of the peopling of the land by a small colony and not by a vast host. If Joseph Smith, as some claim, had changed Mr. Spaulding's romance, he must have still continued to alter the narrative throughout the entire volume, for the story still maintains its consistency, and through it from beginning to end there runs a thread, possible only on the theory that it was a single family with their immediate connections through marriage that first founded the nations of the Nephites and Lamanites. The entire history hinges on the quarrels of the sons of Lehi and the results growing therefrom; for from the division of this family into two separate and distinct peoples grew all the wars, contentions, bloodshed, troubles and disasters that fill the pages of this sacred record; while on the other hand, the blessings flowing to both nations almost always resulted from the reconciliation of the two opposing peoples and the inauguration of a united and amicable policy beneficial alike to both. Had the American continent been peopled at the commencement by a vast host, the whole current of the story must have been vastly different, not only in the events that took place but also in the motives that controlled the hearts of the actors who took part in those events, and in the traditions of the masses. The traditions did in the case of the Nephites and Lamanites, have an overwhelming influence in the shaping of public affairs, which shape they never could have received by any set of traditions incidental to Mr. Spaulding's story.

What, too, shall we say of the Jaredites? From whence did Joseph Smith beg, borrow or steal their history? Did Mr. Spaulding bring his ten tribes from the tower of Babel, and give them an existence ages anterior to the lifetime of their great progenitor, Jacob? If not, will somebody inform us how this portion of the Book of Mormon was manufactured?

From the above it is evident that if Mr. Spaulding's story was what its friends claim, then it never could have formed the ground work of the Book of Mormon, for the whole historical narrative is different from beginning to end. And further, the story that certain old inhabitants of New Salem, who, it is said, recognized the Book of Mormon, either never made such a statement, or they let their imagination run away with their memory into the endorsement of an impossible falsehood. Either way there is a lie; if they asserted that the Book of Mormon is identical with the Spaulding story,

then they are guilty of having violated the truth; if they did not make this statement, then the falsehood is with those who, in their hatred to modern revelations, have invented their testimony. The same statement applies to those who assert that the Book of Mormon was copied almost word for word from "The Manuscript Found." A book that is entirely dissimilar in its narrative cannot be exact in its wording. As well might we say, and be just as consistent and every way as truthful, that the history of England was copied from the adventures of Robinson Crusoe; the first is a truth, the other a fable. So it is with the Book of Mormon and the Spaulding romance.

If then the resemblance is so small between the Book of Mormon and "The Manuscript Found," when we consider the ten tribe version of the latter work, where is it possible there can be the shadow of similarity when we examine the Roman colony theory? For instance:

Lehi left Jerusalem; Spaulding's heroes sailed from Rome.

Lehi started on his journey not knowing whither the Lord would lead him; the Romans were bound for Britain.

Lehi and his companions wandered for several years on land; the Roman party made the entire journey by water.

Lehi traveled by way of the Arabian peninsula and the Indian and Pacific Oceans; Spaulding's imaginary characters sailed by way of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

The travels of one party were considerably south of east; the voyage of the others west or north-west.

One party landed on the South Pacific shore; the other on the North Atlantic.

Mormon's record was written in reformed Egyptian; the imaginary "Manuscript Found" in Latin.

Mormon's record was engraved on plates of metal; Spaulding's pretended manuscript on parchment.

The original of the Book of Mormon was hid in the Hill Cumorah, State of New York; Mr. Spaulding's manuscript is claimed to have been discovered in a cave near Conneaut, State of Ohio.

The Book of Mormon gives an account of a religious people, God's dealings with whom is the central and dominant idea; Spaulding's romance tells the story of an idolatrous people. Such is the positive statement of his widow and daughter.

There is another point worthy of our thought: If Joseph Smith did make use of "The Manuscript Found," it must have been for one of two reasons: Either because he was not able to write such a work himself, or that he might save himself trouble and labor. In the first place he could not have done this for the lack of ability; for any one who could have so adroitly altered a history of the ten tribes so that it now reads as a distinct, detailed and consistent history of a small company of the tribe of Joseph, most assuredly could have written such a history for himself if he had felt so disposed. Then again, he could not have done it to save himself work, for to so change a long history from one end to the other, until it contradicted all it had previously asserted, and became the harmonious history of another people, would save no man trouble. Then, again, in considering these points, we must remember what an "idle vagabond" Joseph was, according to some people's stories. What could have possibly possessed him to do such an enormous amount of copying, when, as illiterate as he was, such an operation would have been immensely hard work? Though it must be

remembered all this time he was loafing round the street corners, telling fortunes and doing every thing but honest toil—that is, if some folks' tales are to be believed.

Aud. again, supposing for a moment Joseph was an impostor, to show the weakness of our opponents' arguments, then he ran the risk of detection by copying another man's work, he ran that risk without a single motive, except it was the privilege of toiling for nothing, or the pleasure of being exposed, when by writing it himself he need have no risk at all.

### CATECHISM ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY E. E. B.

- Q.—Who instituted the sacrament of the Lord's supper?  
 A.—Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.  
 Q.—Where and when was it first instituted?  
 A.—In Jerusalem, about 1,849 years since.  
 Q.—Who were present with Jesus on that occasion?  
 A.—The Twelve Apostles.  
 Q.—Were there any others in the Church at that time?  
 A.—Yes, a great many.  
 Q.—Was the sacrament afterwards administered to the whole Church?  
 A.—Yes, ever afterwards, as long as the Church existed.  
 Q.—Can you repeat a passage of scripture on that point?  
 A.—“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in the breaking of bread.”  
 Q.—Has the church of Christ always existed upon the earth, practicing this ordinance, since the Savior's death?  
 A.—No, it has not.  
 Q.—Then have other churches, professing to be churches of Christ, continued the practice from that time until the present?  
 A.—Yes; but they have neither had the authority to do so, nor are they acquainted with the correct form.  
 Q.—What authority is necessary to administer the sacrament?  
 A.—The authority of the holy Priesthood.  
 Q.—What is the proper form to administer it?  
 A.—The one used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.  
 Q.—When Christ, in administering, had blessed the bread, what did He say to the apostles?  
 A.—“Take, eat, this is my body, that is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”  
 Q.—What was it He said after blessing the wine?  
 A.—“This is the new testament, in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink, in remembrance of me.”  
 Q.—How many different accounts of this do we find in the scriptures?  
 A.—Four: those of Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul to the Corinthians.  
 Q.—When did Christ promise to partake of the sacrament again with His disciples?  
 A.—When He could partake of it in His Father's kingdom.  
 Q.—Why do we use water instead of wine in the sacrament?  
 A.—Because the Lord said unto the Prophet Joseph that “it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory.”  
 Q.—Do other denominations use water or wine?

A.—The majority use wine.

Q.—Because others do not administer the sacrament properly, as we do, should we dislike them?

A.—No; we should respect them and try to teach them the proper way.

Q.—Is there no other denomination which administers the sacrament in the same manner that we do?

A.—No, not one.

Q.—How is it partaken of in the Roman Catholic church?

A.—The priest alone partakes of the wine and the congregation the water.

Q.—What is the custom among many other denominations?

A.—Members are initiated into their churches by having the sacrament administered unto them.

Q.—What is the belief of the Romish church with regard to the bread and wine when blessed?

A.—That of transubstantiation, or the changing of the bread and wine into the actual flesh and blood of the Savior.

Q.—Does any other sect hold this doctrine?

A.—We think not.

Q.—What ancient Israelitish ceremonies correspond with the sacrament?

A.—The sacrificial laws of Moses.

Q.—In what manner did they indicate the atonement by the Lord?

A.—By the sacrifices being the firstling of the flock, a male without blemish, just as Jesus, our elder Brother, was without sin.

Q.—In those ceremonies, did the blood form a prominent feature?

A.—It did, being shed in all cases.

Q.—Prior to the institution of the Mosaic laws, what corresponded with the sacrament?

A.—The offering which God commanded Adam and His posterity to make, namely, the first fruits of the vine, of the flock, of the herd, etc.

### LETTER TO THE YOUNG FOLKS.

SALT LAKE CITY,

July 16, 1882.

MY DEAR YOUNG CORRESPONDENTS:

No doubt you have decided that I had taken a draught out of that far-famed river of Lethe, or had passed to that “bourne from whence no traveler returns;” but I have great pleasure in assuring you that I am still sub-lunary, and that life is pleasant and agreeable to me.

Let me assure you I have often thought of you all individually and collectively, and I want you all to bear in mind that I shall never forget you and the sweet spiritual communion we have enjoyed by our epistolary correspondence, which I trust will be continued.

I will first address RAY VAN COTT, for it is long ago that I received his nice letter and also one from his dear mother, expressive of her appreciation of my letters to her son. The spirit of her letter was beautiful—yes, angelic! She says, “Accept my thanks and kind regards for the interest you have