



## Editor's Table

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### "Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator"

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We give considerable space in this number of the ERA to some articles in reply to a criticism of the Prophet Joseph Smith, published by the Episcopal Bishop of Utah, Rev. F. S. Spalding, in a recent brochure circulated especially among the students of the Latter-day Saints high schools. The criticism deals with the Pearl of Great Price, and especially with the Book of Abraham, but specifically with the engravings and their significance accompanying the Book of Abraham, and which are designated in the Pearl of Great Price as facsimiles from the Book of Abraham.

The argument which Bishop Spalding sets forth appears to be an attack not only on the Book of Abraham, but on the Book of Mormon as well—in fact his purpose seems to be to discredit the divinity of Joseph Smith's inspiration as a translator. He wishes to show that since we have only the facsimile plates, which are a small accompaniment to the Book of Abraham, if it can be proved that these are incorrectly translated, we must infer and decide that Joseph Smith, Jr., was not an inspired translator, and conclude that not only the Book of Abraham but also the Book of Mormon and the "whole body of belief must be repudiated."

He argues that it can only be decided, whether these facsimiles in the Book of Abraham are correctly translated by submitting the original records to scientific men. So he has submitted them to eight recognized authorities of Egyptology in Europe and the United States. Their apparently hurried and seemingly poorly considered replies are printed in his book, and they agree in this much, though they differ from one another in many other points, that Joseph Smith's translation is not correct. Their testimony, however, to Dr. Spalding is complete, and hence his conclusion that "Joseph Smith, Jr., as a Translator" is incorrect and in consequence "Mormonism" is doomed to failure.

In the articles presented in this number of the ERA, and in others on hand and to be printed, issue is taken with the Bishop

in his conclusions. We believe it is clearly shown that his argument, in the first place, is misleading if not fallacious; that the savants consulted may have been prejudiced beforehand, and made no real scientific investigation of the translations of the prophet; that they differ from each other materially in their conclusions; that upon investigation the translation of the Prophet Joseph agrees with, rather than differs from, the most modern and reliable information that can be obtained; and that therefore Joseph Smith was inspired in the translation of the facsimiles from the Book of Abraham.

This becomes clearer when it is considered that, at the time he made the translation of the Book of Abraham, little was known of Egyptology, and scant study had been made of Egyptian writings. Furthermore, he was young and inexperienced in the lore of the world, and it would have been impossible to accomplish what he did without the inspiration of God. The Latter-day Saints maintain that while there was some difference between the methods of translation used by the prophet in the translation of the Book of Abraham and the Book of Mormon; that while he applied his own mind as far as he could, in all his work, (and his mind expanded in intelligence as he grew in age and experience,) yet in all his work he was divinely inspired—in his translations, his revelations, and his wonderful personal direction in the establishment of the work of God known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "the marvelous work and a wonder" predicted by the ancient prophets that should be founded upon the earth in the latter days.

Men may not believe it, but nevertheless we testify to these truths. They did not believe that Jesus was the Christ—he was repudiated by his own generation, unto whom he was a sign calling to repentance. He said:

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon: and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."—Luke 11:31.

As they did not believe in the divinity of the Christ, so also men repudiate the divine inspiration of the Prophet Joseph, who is a true witness of Jesus. But it is the testimony of the Latter-

day Saints that Joseph Smith is an inspired prophet sent of God with the true message of salvation to the sons of men; that the work he did was inspired; that the Church which he was instrumental in founding is the Church of God, and that the doctrines which he taught are the restored, plain, and simple principles of the gospel taught by the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of all mankind. We invite all men, in all the earth, to investigate, to repent of their sins, and to be baptized by those who have received divine authority, thus submitting their lives to the saving ordinances of the gospel, and the unfailing promise is that they shall receive the Holy Ghost to be their surpassing daily light and joy, and their eternal guide and comfort.

Not only do we testify that Joseph Smith was inspired when he gave to the world the Pearl of Great Price, but we declare that it was by the inspiration and power of God that he translated the Book of Mormon, organized the Church of Christ, and gave mankind the precious revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants; and it is our firm belief that scientific investigation and discovery will confirm our testimony, rather than weaken or repudiate it.

JOSEPH F. SMITH.

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### Messages from the Missions

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Elder E. W. Richardson writes from Toluca, Mexico, November 13: "We are almost completely surrounded by rebels, making it difficult for us to visit friends and investigators, but we are able to keep busy and are making many friends, particularly among the well-to-do people. Our only danger in visiting is in being robbed, since we would be counted among the rich by the revolutionists who appear to be fighting the power of wealth, or the haciendas, who are owners of large tracts of land and are little better than slave drivers. Our lives are in no danger, and we desire to set the minds of our families and friends at rest on that score. The newspaper reporters, some of them, are much inclined to exaggerate the conditions. The work here is prospering as well as if there were no war in the land. We expect to baptize from eight to twelve people at our next conference, making twenty-five in the last six months in this conference where two to six elders have been working."

Elder Wilford C. Brimley, clerk of the Nottingham conference, writes, November 14: "At our conference on November 8, we had