

WHO WROTE THE BOOK OF MORMON

ROBERT PATTERSON

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BY
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THE BOOK OF MORMON

THE conviction has become almost universal, except among Mormons themselves, that the "Book of Mormon" was founded upon Rev. Solomon Spaulding's romance, entitled "Manuscript Found." It is eminently fitting, therefore, that a history of Washington County, Pa., in one of whose villages Spaulding spent his last years, and where, after a checkered life, his wearied body found its resting-place, should contain at least a brief notice of the man whose pen has been the guiltless cause of one of the most remarkable delusions the world has ever witnessed.

Solomon Spaulding was born in Ashford, Conn., in 1761; graduated at Dartmouth College, N. H., in 1785; entered the ministry of the Congregational Church; preached for three or four years, and then, on account of impaired health, relinquished the sacred office, removed to Cherry Valley, N. Y., and engaged in mercantile business; in a few years failed in this enterprise, and in 1809 removed to Conneaut (formerly New Salem), Ashtabula Co., Ohio, where he engaged in building a forge. This business also proved unsuccessful, and he became involved in debt. Residing at Conneaut for three years, his attention was arrested by the numerous Indian mounds and fortifications in its vicinity, and being a man of literary tastes, and particularly fond of history, he conceived the project of writing a romance which would purport to account for the presence of the mound-builders on this continent, and to narrate their history. This employment beguiled the tedious hours of his enforced leisure, and when, the romance approached completion, the idea suggested itself that its publication, by the profits arising from its sale, might enable him to discharge his debts.

The time of Spaulding's residence at Conneaut was chiefly spent in the preparation of this historical romance, and as the work progressed the author was accustomed to inform his neighbors, who would gladly assemble to hear each new installment read. In this small frontier settlement, where books were few and mail facilities very limited, each additional portion of the romance was awaited with the same interest with which the reader of the modern magazine, looks for the number that will contain a fresh installment of the popular serial of the day. The characters and the incidents became subjects of general discussion, the outlines of the narrative were deeply impressed on the

minds of the hearers, and the names of the prominent personages grew "familiar as household words."

At last, in 1812, with the fond hope that his day-dreams might be converted into something more substantial, Spaulding removed to Pittsburgh, at that time a small but rapidly-growing city (its population in 1810 was 4768, with 767 houses in all), and took his manuscript to the printing-office of Mr. Patterson (father of the present writer) to see if arrangements could be made for its publication. For some reason, probably lack of funds on the part of the author and doubts of success on that of the publisher, it was not given to the world. In 1814, Mr. Spaulding removed to Amity, Washington Co., Pa., where he died Oct. 20, 1816.¹ His widow removed to the home of her brother, W. H. Sabine, Esq., at Onondaga Valley, N. Y.

Thus far all accounts agree. What became of Mr. Spaulding's manuscript is not so clear. That it was not published is matter for profound regret. How many bitter tears had remained unshed, how many homes undesolated, how many hearts unbroken had the printing in 1812 of Spaulding's prose epic rendered forever impossible the imposture under which, eighteen years afterwards, with many incongruous additions, it saw the light!

In this discussion there are manifestly but two points to be considered. The first is to establish the fact that the historical portions of the Book of Mormon are certainly derived from Spaulding's "Manuscript Found;" and the second to show, if practicable, in what way and by whom the plagiarism was probably effected. Of these, the first is the only vitally important one. If the identity can be determined the imposture will be proved, even though it may not be possible to demonstrate absolutely how the fraud was perpetrated.

¹ The headstone which formerly marked the grave of Mr. Spaulding at Amity has almost entirely disappeared. Rev. Aimer Jackson, of Canton, Ohio, when visiting Amity in 1840, thoughtfully copied the inscription, then entire, from the crumbling stone, and records it in his letter published in the *Washington Reporter* of Jan. 7, 1881. It was as follows:

IN MEMORY OF

Solomon Spaulding, who departed this life Oct. 20th, A.D. 1816. Aged 55 years.

"Kind cherubs, guard the sleeping clay
Until the great decision day,
And saints complete in glory rise
To share the triumphs of the skies."

I. THE PLAGIARISM.—In our inquiries upon the first point it merited tribute should be paid to the value of Mr. E. D. Howes “Mormonism Unveiled,” issued by its author at Painesville, Ohio, in 1845, only five years after the publication at Palmyra, N. Y., of the Book of Mormon, by Joseph Smith. Mr. Howe’s work was the pioneer upon this subject, and though long out of print, the few copies extant are still the store-house from which successive investigators derive their most important facts. It contains the statements of eight witnesses, whose testimonials were obtained in 1833, twenty-one years after Mr. Spaulding left Conneaut, seventeen years after his death, and three years after the appearance of the Book of Mormon. Their authenticity has never been impeached. Our limits permit only the extracts given below, but as printed in full by Mr. Howe they show the opportunities of the respective writers to become fully acquainted with Mr. Spaulding’s romance, and this feature, had we room for the entire statements, would give them great additional force. Our transcript is taken at second-hand from D. P. Kidder’s “Mormonism and the Mormons,” Carlton & Lanaban, publishers, New York, 1843.

1. John Spaulding, a brother of Solomon, visited the latter at Conneaut just before his removal, and states as follows:

“He then told me he had been writing a book, which he intended to have printed, the avails of which he thought would enable him to pay all his debts. The book was entitled the ‘Manuscript Found,’ of which he read to me many passages. It was an historical romance of the first settlers of America, endeavoring to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Jews, or the lost tribes. It gave a detailed account of their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till they arrived in America, under the command of NEPHEI and LEHI. They afterward had quarrels and contentions, and separated into two distinct nations, one of which he denominated Nephites and the other Lamanites. Cruel and bloody wars ensued, in which great multitudes were slain. They buried their dead in large heaps, which caused the mounds so common in this country. ... I have recently read the Book of Mormon, and, to my great surprise, I find nearly the same historical matter, names, &c., as they were in my brother’s writings. I well remember that he wrote in the old style, and commenced about every sentence with ‘And it came to pass,’ or ‘Now it came to pass,’ the same as in the Book of Mormon, and according to the best of my recollection and belief, it is the same as my brother Solomon wrote, with the exception of the religious matter.”

2. Mrs. Martha Spaulding, wife of John Spaulding, states in regard to Solomon Spaulding and his writings as follows:

“I was personally acquainted with Solomon Spaulding about twenty years ago. ... The lapse of time which has intervened prevents my recollecting but few of the lending incidents of his writings; but the names of Nephi and Lehi are yet fresh in my memory as being the principal heroes of his tale. They were officers of the company which first came off from Jerusalem, he gave a particular account of their journey by land and sea till they arrived in America, after which disputes arose between the chiefs, which caused them to separate into different bands, one of which was called Lamanites and the other Nephites. Between these were recounted tremendous battles, which frequently covered the ground with the slain; and these being buried in large heaps was the cause of the numerous mounds in the country. ... I have read the Book of Mormon, which has brought fresh to my recollection the writings of Solomon Spaulding; and I have no manner of doubt that the historical part of it is the same that I read, and heard read, more than twenty years ago. The old obsolete style, and the phrases of ‘And it came to pass,’ &c., are the same.”

3. Henry Lake, the partner of Spaulding in building the forge, writes from Conneaut in September, 1833, as follows:

“He [Spaulding] very frequently read to me from a manuscript which he was writing, which he entitled the ‘Manuscript Found,’ and which he represented as being found in this town. I spent many hours in hearing him read said writings, and became well acquainted with their contents, he wished me to assist him in getting his production printed, alleging that a book of that kind would meet with a rapid sale. I designed doing so, but the forge not meeting our anticipations we failed in business, when I declined having anything to do with the publication of the book. This book represented the American Indians as the descendants of the lost tribes, gave an account of their leaving Jerusalem, their contentions and wars, which were many and great. One time when he was reading to me the tragic account of Laban I pointed out to him what I considered an inconsistency, which he promised to correct; but by referring to the Book of Mormon I find, to my surprise, that it stands there just as he read it to me then. Some months ago I borrowed the Golden Bible, put it into my pocket, carried it home, and thought no more of it. About a week after my wife found the book in my coat-pocket as it hung up, and commenced reading it aloud as I lay upon the bed. She had not read twenty minutes till I was astonished to find the same passages in it that Spaulding had read to me more than twenty years before from his ‘Manuscript Found.’ Since that I have more fully examined the said Golden Bible, and have no hesitation in saying that the historical part of it is principally if not wholly taken from the ‘Manuscript Found.’ I well recollect telling Mr. Spaulding that the so frequent use of the words, ‘And it came to pass,’ Now it came to pass,’ rendered it ridiculous.”

It should he stated in explanation of the above that the Book of Mormon, at the time of its publication, was frequently spoken of as the “Golden Bible.” Also that an incongruity occurs in the story of Laban, in the First Book of Nephi, where Nephi says they “did speak many hard words unto us, their younger brothers, and they did smite us even with a rod.” Whereupon an angel appears and says, “Why do ye smite your younger brother with a rod?” Consistency would require that the number, whether plural or singular, should be the same in both sentences. The oversight is in itself a trifle, but its occurrence in both the Spaulding manuscript and the Book of Mormon is an unanswerable proof of identity.

4. John N. Miller writes from Springfield, Pa., September, 1833, as follows:

“In the year 1811 I was in the employ of Henry Lake and Solomon Spaulding, at Conneaut, engaged in rebuilding a forge. While there I boarded and lodged in the family of said Spaulding for several months. I was soon introduced to the manuscript of Spaulding, and perused it as often as I had leisure. He had written two or three books or pamphlets on different subjects, but that which more particularly drew my attention was one which he called the ‘Manuscript Found.’ ... It purported to be the history of the first settlement of America before discovered by Columbus. He brought them off from Jerusalem under their leaders, detailing their travels by land and water, their manners, customs, laws, wars, etc. He said that he designed it as an historical novel, and that in after-years it would be believed by many people as much as the history of England. ... I have recently examined the ‘Book of Mormon,’ and find in it the writings of Solomon Spaulding from beginning to end, but mixed up with Scripture and other religious matter which I did not meet with in the ‘Manuscript Found.’ Many of the passages of the Mormon Book are verbatim from Spaulding, and others in part. The names of Nephi, Lehi, Moroni, and in fact all the principal names are brought fresh to my recollection by the Golden Bible. When Spaulding divested his history of its fabulous names by a verbal explanation, he landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am very confident he called Zarahemla. They were marched about that country for a length of time, in which wars and great bloodshed ensued. He brought them across North America in a northeast direction.”

5

5. Aaron Wright, a former neighbor of Spaulding, writes at Conneaut, August, 1833, as follows:

"I first became acquainted with Solomon Spaulding in 1808 or 1809, when he commenced building a forge on Conneaut Creek. When at his house one day he showed and read to me a history he was writing of the lust tribes of Israel, purporting that they were the first settlers of America, and that the Indians were their descendants. Upon this subject we had frequent conversations. He traced their journey from Jerusalem to America, as it is given in the Book of Mormon, excepting the religious matter. The historical part of the Book of Mormon I know to be the same as I read and heard read from the writings of Spaulding more than twenty years ago; the names more especially are the same without any alteration. He told me his object was to account for all the fortifications, etc., to be found in this country, and said that in time it would be fully believed by all except learned men and historians. I once anticipated reading his writings in print, but little expected to see them in a new Bible. ... In conclusion, I will observe that the names and most of the historical part of the Book of Mormon were as familiar to me before I read it as most modern history."

6. Oliver Smith, another old neighbor of Spaulding, writes at Conneaut, August, 1833:

"When Solomon Spaulding first came to this place, he purchased a tract of land, surveyed it out, and commenced selling it. While engaged in this business he boarded at my house, in all nearly six months. All his leisure hours were occupied in writing an historical novel founded upon the first settlers of this country, he said he intended to trace their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till their arrival in America; give an account of their arts, sciences, civilization, wars, and contentions. In this way he would give a satisfactory account of all the old mounds so common to this country. During the time he was at my house I read and heard read one hundred pages or more. Nephi and Lehi were by him represented as leading characters when they first started for America. ... [Mr. Smith narrates his last interview with Spaulding, when the latter was about starting for Pittsburgh, and solicited Smith's leniency as one of his creditors, not to prevent his going. Mr. Smith then closes as follows:] This was the last I heard of Spaulding or his book until the Book of Mormon came into the neighborhood. When I heard the historical part of it related, I at once said it was the writing of old Solomon Spaulding. Soon after I obtained the book, and on reading it found much of it the same as Spaulding had written more than twenty years before."

7. Nahum Howard, another of Spaulding's neighbors in Ohio, writes from Conneaut, in August, 1833, as follows:

"I first became acquainted with Solomon Spaulding in December, 1810. After that time I frequently saw him at his house and also at my house. I once, in conversation with him, expressed a surprise at not having any account of the inhabitants once in this country, who erected the old forts, mounds, etc. He then told me that he was writing a history of that race of people, and afterwards frequently showed me his writings, which I read. I have lately read the Book of Mormon, and believe it to be the same as Spaulding wrote, except the religious part. He told me that he intended to get his writings published in Pittsburgh, and he thought that in one century from that time it would be believed as much as any other history."

8. Artemas Cunningham, of Perry, Geauga Co., Ohio, who visited Spaulding in October, 1811, at Conneaut for the purpose of securing a debt due him from Spaulding, found the latter "destitute of the means of paying his debts," his only hope resting "upon the sale of a book which he had been writing," and which, he thought, "would meet with a ready sale." Mr. Cunningham, writing in 1833, proceeds to say:

"Before showing me his manuscripts he went into a verbal relation of its outlines, saying that it was a fabulous or romantic history of the first settlement of this country, and as it purported to have been a record found buried in the earth, or in a cave, he had adopted the ancient or Scripture style of writing. He then presented his manuscripts, when

we sat down and spent a good share of the night in reading them and convening upon them. I well remember the name of Nephi, who appeared to be the principal hero of the story. The frequent repetition of the phrase 'I, Nephi,' I recollect as distinctly as though it was but yesterday, although the general features of the story have passed from my memory through the lapse of twenty-two years. He attempted to account for the numerous antiquities which are found upon this continent, and remarked that after this generation had passed away, his account of the first inhabitants of America would be considered as authentic as any other history. The Mormon Bible I have partially examined, and am fully of the opinion that Solomon Spaulding had written its outlines before he left Conneaut."

The testimony of these eight witnesses was published by Mr. Howe in 1835 at Painesville, Ohio, in close proximity to Kirtland, then the headquarters of Mormonism, where Rigdon in that very year delivered his seven famous lectures on faith, which are prefixed to the Mormon "Doctrine and Covenants," where the same year the first "quorum of the twelve apostles" was ordained, and where in the following year the first Mormon temple was dedicated. Through all this portion of Ohio public curiosity in regard to this new fanaticism had been intensely excited, and Mr. Howe's book was widely disseminated by his agents. Of its contents Rigdon and Smith could not possibly have remained in ignorance. Yet no denial, no protest, not the slightest attempt to evade these clear proofs of plagiarism was made, and under such a charge, so direct and public, preferred by persons of intelligence and of unimpeachable veracity, silence was equivalent to a confession of guilt. So strong, moreover, was Mr. Spaulding's disposition to read his history to every willing auditor, that the number of attestants to its general character and contents could at that date easily have been quadrupled. Other witnesses in other places have since 1835 added their evidence to that already given. Extracts from their statements are subjoined:

9. Mrs. Matilda (Spaulding) Davison, the widow of Rev. Solomon Spaulding (married in 1820 to Mr. Davison, of Hartwick, Otsego Co., N. Y.) made a statement in 1839 to Rev. D. R. Austin, of Monson, Mass., which was written down by him and published in the Boston *Recorder* in May of that year. She relates substantially, as already mentioned, the circumstances under which her late husband's "imaginary history" was composed, and adds,—

"It claimed to have been written by one of the lost nation, and to have been recovered from the earth, and assumed the title of 'Manuscript Found.' The neighbors would often inquire how Mr. Spaulding progressed in deciphering the manuscript; and when he had a sufficient portion prepared, he would inform them, and they would assemble to hear it read. ... After the Book of Mormon came out, a copy of it was taken to New Salem, the place of Mr. Spaulding's former residence, and the very place where the 'Manuscript Found' was written. A Mormon preacher appointed a meeting there, and in the meeting read and repeated copious extracts from the Book of Mormon. The historical part was immediately recognized by all the older inhabitants as the identical work of Mr. Spaulding, in which they had all been so deeply interested years before. Mr. John Spaulding was present and recognized perfectly the work of his brother. He was amazed and afflicted that it should have been perverted to so wicked a purpose. His grief found vent in a flood of tears, and he arose on the spot and expressed to the meeting his sorrow and regret that the writings of his deceased brother should be used for a purpose so vile and shocking."

10. Mrs. M. S. McKinstry, the only child of Rev. Solomon Spaulding, made a statement at Washington, D. C., April 1880, which was carefully taken down by Mrs. E. E. Dickinson, and was published in *Scribner's Monthly* for August, 1880, in which, speaking of her father's "Manuscript Found," she says,—

"He read the manuscript, which I had seen him writing, to the neighbor and to a clergyman—a friend of his—who came to see him. Some of the names that he mentioned while reading to these people I have never forgotten. They are as fresh to me to-day as though I heard them yesterday. They were 'Mormon,' 'Moroni,' 'Lamanite,' 'Nephi.'"

11. William H. Sabine, Esq., of Onondaga Valley, Onondaga Co., N. Y., a lawyer of eminence and accustomed to weigh evidence, was the brother of Mrs. Solomon Spaulding, at whose request she gave D. P. Hurlbut authority to receive her late husband's "Manuscript Found" from Mr. Clark, at Hartwick, N. Y., in whose care it had been left. Mrs. McKinstry, in her statement above referred to, says that "Mr. Sabine had undoubtedly read the manuscript while it was in his house, and had faith that its production would show to the world that the Mormon Bible had been taken from it." He based his request for the loan of the manuscript to Hurlbut upon his "desire to uproot this Mormon fraud."

12. To these statements of members of Spaulding's family or connection must be added the testimony of Joseph Miller, of Amity, Pa., born Feb. 1, 1791, and now in his ninety-second year. His memory, notwithstanding his advanced age, is remarkably dear and distinct; he has long been a ruling elder in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and his veracity is unimpeachable. He was intimately acquainted with Spaulding during the entire residence of the latter in Amity; often heard him read his romance; assisted in nursing him during his last illness, in performing the last offices to his remains, and in settling his temporal affairs, he is the oldest of three men who are living witnesses to the identity of the Book of Mormon with the Spaulding manuscript as read in their hearing by its author. Mr. Miller's testimony has been repeatedly published. The following extracts are taken from the record made, with the utmost care to be accurate, by Dr. W. W. Sharp, of Amity, and published in the *Pittsburgh Telegraph*, Feb. 6, 1879. Mr. Miller says,—

"I was well acquainted with Mr. Spaulding when he lived in Amity, Pa. ... Mr. Spaulding seemed to take delight in reading from his manuscript (written on foolscap) for the entertainment of his frequent visitors. Heard him read most, if not all of it, and had frequent conversations with him about it. Some time ago I had in my possession for about six months the Book of Mormon, and heard most of it read during that time. ... On hearing read the account from the book of the battle between the Amlicites and the Nephites [Book of Alma, chapter 1, in which the soldiers of one army had placed a red mark on their foreheads to distinguish them from their enemies, it seemed to reproduce in my mind not only the narration but the very words, as they had been impressed on my mind by the reading of Spaulding's manuscript. ... The longer I live the more firmly I am convinced that Spaulding's manuscript was appropriated and largely used in getting up the book of Mormon. I believe that, leaving out of the book the portions that may be easily recognized as the work of Joe Smith and his accomplices, Solomon Spaulding may be truly said to be its author. I have not a doubt of it."

13. Redick McKee, Esq., formerly a resident of Washington County, Pa., afterwards of Wheeling, W. Va., and now of Washington, D. C., a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, and esteemed for his many Christian virtues, is another living witness to the similarity of the Book of Mormon and Spaulding's manuscript. In a communication from Washington, D. C., April 14, 1869, published in the *Washington (Pa.) Reporter* for April 21, 1869, and suggested by a statement then recently published in the *Reporter* by Rev. J. W. Hamilton of the reminiscences of Mr. Joseph Miller, above mentioned, Mr. McKee writes,—

"In the fall of 1814 I arrived in the village of 'Good Will,' and for eighteen or twenty months sold goods in the store previously occupied by Mr. Thos. Brice. It was on Main Street, a few doors west of Spaulding's tavern, where I was a boarder. With both Mr. Solomon Spaulding and his wife I was quite intimately acquainted. ... I recollect quite well Mr. Spaulding spending much time in writing (on sheets of paper torn out of an old book) what purported to be a veritable history of the nations or tribes who inhabited Canaan. ... He called it 'Lost History Found,' 'Lost Manuscript,' or some such name, not disguising that it was wholly a work of the imagination, written to amuse himself, and without any immediate view to publication. ... I was struck with the minuteness of his details and the apparent truthfulness and sincerity of the author. ... I have an indistinct recollection of the passage referred to by Mr. Miller about the Amlicites making a cross with red paint on their foreheads to distinguish them from enemies in the confusion of battle."

Also, in a letter to the present writer, dated Washington, D. C., April 15, 1879, Mr. McKee says,—

"There can be no doubt that the Book of Mormon was founded on and largely copied from the vigorous romance of Solomon Spaulding."

14. Rev. Abner Jackson, of Canton, Ohio, in a communication to the Washington County Historical Society, dated Dec. 20, 1880, and published in the *Washington Reporter* of Jan. 7, 1881, gives a more minute account of Spaulding's romance, and a fuller outline of its narrative, than any of the preceding witnesses, he also institutes a close comparison between its plot and that of the Book of Mormon, showing the strict adherence of the latter to the former. Just before Mr. Spaulding's removal to Pittsburgh he brought his romance to Mr. Jackson's father, read much of the story to him, and gave him an outline of the whole. The son, being confined to the house with a lame knee, was present, and heard the conversation that passed between them. He is the third surviving witness to the unmistakable resemblance between the Book of Mormon and Spaulding's story. Of the latter he gives his recollections, and adds,—

"Spaulding frequently read his manuscript to the neighbors, and amused them as he progressed with his work. He wrote it in Bible style. 'And it came to pass' occurred so often that some called him 'Old Come-to-pass.' ... The Book of Mormon follows the romance too closely to be a stranger. In both many persons appear having the same name, as Maroni, Mormon, Nephites, Laman, Lamanites, Nephi, and others. Here we are presented with romance second, called the Book of Mormon, telling the same story of the same people, traveling from the same plain in the same way, having the same difficulties and destination, with the same wars, same battles, and same results, with thousands upon thousands slain. Then see the Mormon account of the last battle, at Cumorah, where all the righteous were slain. ... How much this resembles the closing scene in the 'Manuscript Found!' The most

singular part of the whole matter is that it follows the romance so closely with this difference: the first claims to be a romance; the second claims to be a revelation of God, a new Bible! When it was brought to Conueaut, and read there in public, old Esquire Wright heard it and exclaimed, 'Old Come-to-pass has come to life again!' Here was the place where Spaulding wrote and read his manuscript to the neighbors for their amusement, and 'Squire Wright had often heard him read from his romance. This was in 1832, sixteen years after Spaulding's death. This 'Squire Wright lived on a farm just outside of the little village. I was acquainted with him for twenty-five years. I lived on his farm when I was a boy, and attended school in the village. I am particular to notice these things to show that I had an opportunity of knowing what I am writing about.'

The testimony of Esquire Wright was given above (No. 5). The constant recurrence in Spaulding's romance of the phrase, "And it came to pass" has been referred to by a number of the above witnesses, and Spaulding himself was admonished of its undue repetition, yet failed to remedy the defect. It is an important coincidence, worthy of special observation, that in no other volume probably in the whole range of English literature does the same peculiarity occur with one-tenth the frequency of its appearance in the Book of Mormon. This remarkable concurrence of a literary blemish is itself an indication of a common origin. The authorship of the Homeric poems, and even of some portions of the Bible, has been disputed by scholars on the ground of the presence or absence of much slighter peculiarities.

15. Rev. Robert Patterson, to whom the Spaulding manuscript was taken in 1812 for publication, should certainly have been applied to for information among the first. Mr. Howe, in his book already mentioned, states that "Mr. Patterson said he had no recollection of any such manuscript being brought there for publication, neither would he have been likely to have seen it, as the business of printing was conducted wholly by Lambdin at that time." This statement seems irreconcilable with the testimony of the widow and daughter of Spaulding, and also in conflict with the fact that the partnership of R. Patterson and Lambdin was not formed until Jan. 1, 1818. In 1812, Lambdin was a lad of fourteen in the bookstore of Patterson & Hopkins, and afterwards was continued in the employ of R. & J. Patterson. Mr. Howe, on being applied to for his authority for the statement, answered, "I think Hurlbut was the person who talked with Patterson about the manuscript." But Hurlbut himself informed the present writer (Aug. 19, 1879) that he had never seen Mr. Patterson or had any communication with him. There is therefore no known authority for the statement in Mr. Howe's book. Or. being applied to in 1842 by Rev. Samuel Williams, who was preparing for publication a pamphlet entitled "Mormonism Exposed," Mr. Patterson wrote the following brief certificate, which we copy in full from Mr. Williams' pamphlet:

"R. Patterson had in his employment Silas Engles at the time, a foreman printer, and general superintendent of the printing business. As he [S. E.] was an excellent scholar, as well as a good printer, to him was entrusted the entire concerns of the office. He even decided on the propriety or otherwise of publishing manuscripts when offered,—as to their morality, scholarship, &c., In this character, he informed R. P. that

a gentleman, from the East originally, had put into his hands a manuscript of a singular work, chiefly in the style of our English translation of the Bible, and handed the copy to R. P. who read only a few pages and finding nothing apparently exceptionable, he [R. P.] said to Engles he might publish it if the author furnished the funds or good security. He [the author] failing to comply with the terms, Mr. Engles returned the manuscript, as I supposed at that time, after it had been some weeks in his possession, with other manuscripts in the office.

"This communication written and signed 2d April, 1842.

"ROBERT PATTERSON."

It is matter of sincere regret that so meagre a document is all the written evidence that Mr. Patterson has left. Mr. Williams introduces it with the remark (p. 16) that "Mr. Patterson firmly believes, also, from what he has heard of the Mormon Bible, that it is the same thing he examined at that time." So many errors of date have crept into this part of the history of Mormonism that it may be well to note the following: Mr. Lambdin died Aug. 1, 1825, in his twenty-seventh year; Mr. Engles, July 17, 1827, in his forty-sixth year; Mr. Patterson, Sept. 5, 1854, in his eighty-second year. Messrs. Williams, Howe, and Hurlbut are still living (March 4, 1882).

16. A coincidence may here be noted: Mr. Howe, in 1835, had in his possession a story in Spaulding's handwriting, and admitted to be his, which "purported to have been translated from the Latin, found on twenty-four rolls of parchment in a cave on the banks of Conneaut Creek," giving an account of a ship driven upon the American coast, with a party from Rome, previous to the Christian era. The Book of Ether, which is a portion of the Book of Mormon, purports to relate the history of a party which commenced its wanderings at the confusion of tongues at Babel, found its way to America, and whose history, written by Ether upon twenty-four plates whilst he was concealed in the cavity of a rock, was long afterwards discovered by the people of Limhi. Here is a threefold resemblance: each is the history of a colony not Jewish transported to this continent; each is recorded on the same number of plates or parchments, each colony seeming to have perished; and each history is hidden in a cave and is long afterwards discovered. That two plots so much alike should originate so nearly about the same time and place in two different minds seems incredible.

17. The statement which follows is accorded a place here not because it is entitled in its present form to be regarded as evidence, but that attention may be attracted to it and inquiry continued. In "Appleton's Cyclopaedia," under the title "Mormons," occurs the following statement: "As early as 1813 this work [Spaulding's] was announced in the newspapers as forthcoming, and as containing a translation of the 'Book of Mormon.' Spaulding entitled his book 'Manuscript Found,' and intended to publish with it, by way of preface or advertisement, a fictitious account of its discovery in a cave in Ohio." The author of this article, on being interrogated, could not recall his authority for the statement, but was positive that he had ample warrant for it at the time of writing.

Few files of Pittsburgh papers of 1813 are in existence; some perished in the great conflagration of 1845; and all search for the said announcement has thus far been unsuccessful. Any reader of this paragraph who has access to a file of Pittsburgh newspapers of 1813 will do well to institute a search and report the result.

It should be remembered that the evidence adduced above has reference only to the historical portions of the Book of Mormon. Intermingled with these are crude ideas on various theological points that were themes of popular discussion in Western New York about the time when this pseudo-revelation was in preparation for the press. The opportunity of settling disputed points in favor of the side maintained by the medium of revelation was too good to be lost. For all such interpolations, and for the constant disregard of grammatical rules, Mr. Spaulding should not be held responsible.

The candid inquirer after truth cannot fail to be impressed by the concurrent testimony of a dozen witnesses, many of them personally unknown to the others and widely separated from them, yet agreeing in their recollections of Spaulding's romance, its plan and purpose, its general scope, the names of leading characters and tribes, its grand division of the population of this continent into two classes, the righteous and the idolatrous, and the discovery of the history of these people as recorded, and the record concealed in the earth. The same witnesses concur in recognizing precisely the same features in the "Book of Mormon,"—an identity in the names of prominent persons and places; an identity in the amazing frequency of wars and the vast number of sanguinary battles; an identity in events and the order of their occurrence so great that one witness declares that the "Book of Mormon was familiar to him before he read it;" an identity of style, even the blemishes of the original being faithfully adhered to in the transcript; and an identity in the alleged discovery of the record in the earth. All this is established by the united testimony of men and women of unimpeachable veracity. Much of this evidence was published within five years after the appearance of the "Book of Mormon," must necessarily have been known to the Mormon leaders, and was never contradicted by them. The conclusion is irresistible that these two productions must have had a common origin. The adherents of Joseph Smith have never claimed that the "Book of Mormon" was the offspring of his imagination. They freely admit that he was too illiterate and ignorant to accomplish such a task. They contend that the "Book of Mormon" was divinely inspired, as truly so as the Bible itself. The question is thus narrowed down to a very simple alternative: either the "Book of Mormon" was inspired or its historical portion was the work of Solomon Spaulding.

II. THE PLAGIARIST.—If the origin of the "Book of Mormon" has been established by the testimony

cited above, we might at this point lay down the pen, were it not that public curiosity has been busy with the inquiry, How was the plagiarism effected? And we are free to confess that all the evidence thus far elicited creates simply a very strong circumstantial probability. One theory has been advanced that Smith might have stolen the manuscript from Mrs. Spaulding's trunk whilst it remained for some years unlocked in the house of her brother, William H. Sabine, Esq., at Onondaga Valley, N. Y., Smith being at the time, it is said, a laborer in Mr. Sabine's employ. No evidence is offered that Smith was thus employed; if so, he was not more than fifteen years of age, scarcely able to read, and the document would have been of no use to him; and Mrs. McKinstry's statement in *Scribner's Monthly* for August, 1880, effectually disposes of this hypothesis, as she testifies that about 1830 her mother sent to Mr. Sabine for her effects, and "that the old trunk with its contents reached her in safety." We have also the evidence of both mother and daughter that down to 1834 (the date of Hurlbut's visit and four years after the "Book of Mormon" was published) the alleged or suggested theft had not been discovered. Popular opinion has tended strongly towards the adoption of a different theory, that the agent through whom the romance was transformed into a revelation was Sidney Rigdon, and the evidence both for and against that judgment will be given as briefly as possible.

Sidney Rigdon was born near the present village of Library, Allegheny Co., Pa., Feb. 19, 1793; attended in boyhood an ordinary country school; joined the Baptist Church near his home May 31, 1817; studied divinity with a Baptist preacher named Clark in Beaver County, Pa., in the winter of 1818–19, and was licensed to preach; went to Warren, Ohio, where he was ordained, and in the winter of 1821–32 returned to Pittsburgh; became pastor of the First Baptist Church there Jan. 28, 1822, and for doctrinal errors was excluded from the Baptist denomination Oct. 11, 1823. He continued to preach in the court-house to his adherents, but in 1824, according to one account, he removed to the Western Reserve, Ohio; according to another account he engaged in the tanning business in Pittsburgh until 1826, and then removed to the Reserve, residing for brief periods at Bainbridge, Mentor, and Kirtland. At this time he was connected with the Campbellite or Disciples' Church, and preached its doctrines, mingled with extravagant conceits of his own, until in 1830 he joined the Mormons.

The theory hitherto most widely published and perhaps generally accepted has been that Rigdon was a printer in Patterson's printing-office when the Spaulding manuscript was brought there in 1812–14, and that he either copied or purloined it. Having it thus in his possession, the use made of it was an after-thought suggested by circumstances many years later. More recently another theory has been advanced, that Rigdon obtained possession of the Spaulding

manuscript during his pastorate of the First Baptist Church, or soon thereafter, 1822–24, without any necessary impropriety on his part, but rather through the courtesy of some friend, in whose possession it remained unclaimed, and who regarded it as a literary curiosity. The friends of Rigdon, in response to the first charge, deny that he ever resided in Pittsburgh previous to 1822, or that he ever was a printer, and in general answer to both charges affirm that he never at any time had access to Spaulding's manuscript. Taking up for convenience their statement first, we find the following evidence in its support:

1. Rigdon's relatives at Library, Pa., Carvil Rigdon (his brother) and Peter Boyer (his brother-in-law), in a written statement dated Jan. 27, 1843, certify to the facts and dates as above stated in regard to his birth, schooling, uniting with the church, licensure, ordination, and settlement in Pittsburgh in 1822. Mr. Boyer also in a personal interview with the present writer in 1879 positively affirmed that Rigdon had never lived in Pittsburgh previous to 1822, adding that "they were boys together and he ought to know." Mr. Boyer had for a short time embraced Mormonism, but became convinced that it was a delusion and returned to his membership in the Baptist Church.

2. Isaac King, a highly-respected citizen of Library, Pa., and an old neighbor of Rigdon, states in a letter to the present writer, dated June 14, 1879, that Sidney lived on the farm of his father until the death of the latter in May, 1810, and for a number of years afterwards, farming with very indifferent success; "it was said he was too lazy and proud to make a good farmer;" received his education in a log school-house in the vicinity; "began to talk in public on religion soon after his admission to the church, probably at his own instance, as there is no record of his licensure;" went to Sharon, Pa., for a time, and was there ordained as a preacher, but soon returned to his farm, which he sold (June 28, 1823) to James Means, and about the time of the sale removed to Pittsburgh.

3. Samuel Cooper, of Saltsburg, Pa., a veteran of three wars, in a letter to the present writer, dated June 14, 1879, stated as follows: "I was acquainted with Mr. Lambdin, was often in the printing-office; was acquainted with Silas Engles, the foreman of the printing-office; he never mentioned Sidney Rigdon's name to me, so I am satisfied he was never engaged there as a printer. I was introduced to Sidney Rigdon in 1843; he stated to me that he was a Mormon preacher or lecturer; I was acquainted with him during 1843–45; never knew him before, and never knew him as a printer; never saw him in the book-store or printing-office; your father's office was in the celebrated Molly Murphy's Row."

4. Rev. Robert P. Du Bois, of New London, Pa., under date of Jan. 9, 1879, writes: "I entered the book-store of R. Patterson & Lambdin in March, 1818, when about twelve years old, and remained there until the summer of 1820. The firm had under

its control the book-store on Fourth Street, a book-bindery, a printing-office (not newspaper, but job-office, under the name of Butler & Lambdin), entrance on Diamond Alley, and a steam paper-mill on the Allegheny (under the name of R. & T. Patterson). I knew nothing of Spaulding (then dead) or of his book, or of Sidney Rigdon."

5. Mrs. R. W. Lambdin, of Irvington, N. Y., widow of the late J. Harrison Lambdin, in response to some inquiries as to her recollections of Rigdon and others, writes under date of Jan. 15, 1882: "I am sorry to say I shall not be able to give you any information relative to the persons you name. They certainly could not have been friends of Mr. Lambdin." Mrs. Lambdin resided in Pittsburgh from her marriage in 1819 to the death of her husband, Aug. 1, 1825. Mr. Lambdin was born Sept. 1, 1798.

6. Impartial justice requires the addition to the above testimony of the very explicit denial of Rigdon himself, addressed to the *Boston Journal*, dated at Commerce (better known afterwards as Nauvoo, Ill.), May 27, 1839, in reply to the letter of Mrs. Davison, published a few days before, as already mentioned. Another extract from her letter will be found farther on, which provoked the following rejoinder from Rigdon:

"It is only necessary to say, in relation to the whole story about Spaulding's writings being in the hands of Mr. Patterson, who was in Pittsburgh, and who is said to have kept a printing-office, and my saying that I was concerned in the said office, etc., etc., is the most base of lies, without even the shadow of truth. There was no man by the name of Patterson during my residence at Pittsburgh who had a printing-office. ... Mr. Robert Patterson, I was told, had owned a printing-office before I lived in that city. ... This Mr. Patterson, who was a Presbyterian preacher, I had a very slight acquaintance with during my residence in Pittsburgh. ... If I were to say that I ever heard of the Rev. Solomon Spaulding and his hopeful wife until Dr. P. Hurlbut wrote his lie about me I should be a liar like unto themselves. Why was not the testimony of Mr. Patterson obtained to give force to this shameful tale of lies? The only reason is that lie was not a fit tool for them to work with; he would not lie for them, for if he were called on he would testify to what I have here said."

A portion of this letter is too coarse for publication. The first sentence of the above extract does not impress one with its author's grammatical attainments. He is certainly incorrect, also, as to there being no Patterson's printing-office in Pittsburgh during his residence there, as his pastorate there began in January, 1822, and the firm of R. Patterson & Lambdin was in business until Jan. 1, 1823. But whatever may be thought of his testimony, as that of an interested party, there can be no doubt that the five preceding witnesses on this point have conscientiously stated what they firmly believed to be the facts. No one who knew them would for a moment doubt their veracity. On the other side, however, we have the following:

1. Mrs. Davison, in her letter of May, 1839, had used this language, "Sidney Rigdon, who has figured so largely in the history of the Mormons, was at that time connected with the printing-office of Mr. Patterson, as is well known in that region, and, as Rigdon

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himself has frequently stated, became acquainted with Mr. Spaulding's manuscript, and copied it. It was a matter of notoriety and interest to all connected with the printing establishment."

Rigdon's passionate reply to this charge by Mrs. Davison has just been given above; but her impression deserves to be considered in connection with the statements of the four witnesses next following. The question also suggests itself, how could Mrs. Davison have known anything, in her remote Massachusetts home, about Rigdon if he did not come to Pittsburgh until 1822, eight years after her departure?

2. Joseph Miller, of Amity, Pa., in his evidence, part of which has been already quoted, testified also as follows:

"My recollection is that Mr. Spaulding had left a transcript of the manuscript with Mr. Patterson, of Pittsburgh, Pa., for publication; that its publication was delayed until Mr. Spaulding would write a preface, and in the mean time the transcript was spirited away, and could not be found. *Mr. Spaulding told me that Sidney Rigdon had taken it, or that he was suspicioned for it.* Recollect distinctly that Rigdon's name was used in that connection."

On being closely questioned whether he had not possibly confounded subsequent impressions, derived from what he had read and heard, with his personal recollections of what Spaulding had said, he emphatically answered "No!" and affirmed positively that "*it was Spaulding's own statement.*"

3. Redick McKee, Esq., already mentioned as an inmate of Spaulding's family at Amity, says in his letter of April 15, 1879,—

"Mr. Spaulding told me that he had submitted the work to Mr. Patterson for publication, but for some reason it was not printed, and afterwards returned to him. I also understood he was then occasionally re-writing, correcting, and he thought improving some passages descriptive of his supposed battles. In this connection he spoke of the man *Rigdon* as an employee in the printing or book-binding establishment of Patterson & Lambdin, in Pittsburgh; but about him I made no special inquiries."

Mr. McKee differs from Mr. Miller in his recollection as to the return of the manuscript, but agrees with him as to Rigdon being an employee. These two venerable men are above the suspicion of stating anything they did not believe to be true. We are thus confronted with the singular fact to which these witnesses testify, that at least fourteen years before the completion of the plagiarism, and some ten years before even the conception of it, the future perpetrator is an object of note, it would seem of suspicion, in the mind of the man he is one day so deeply to wrong. By what mysterious intuition did Spaulding mark the rustic, uneducated youth, innocent as the latter must then have been of any base intent, whose name was destined to be so strangely and sorrowfully blended with his own?

Rev. Cephas Dodd, who died Jan. 16, 1858, was long the pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Amity, also practiced as a physician, and in this capacity attended Mr. Spaulding in his last illness. Of his testimony Mr. George M. French, now in his eighty-third year, residing near Amity, and whose wife was a relative of Sidney Rigdon, retains a vivid impression.

Shortly after Mr. French's removal from Fayette County, Pa., to Amity in 1832, when the Mormon delusion was beginning to excite remark, Dr. Dodd took Mr. French to Spaulding's grave, and there told him his positive belief that Rigdon was the agent in transforming Spaulding's manuscript into the Book of Mormon. The conviction thus expressed within two years after the publication of the Book of Mormon, and three years before the appearance of Mr. Howe's book, which attributed the plagiarism to Rigdon, shows that Dr. Dodd's judgment was formed independently of any of the testimonies cited above. As to the plagiarism, it must have been based on his own knowledge of Spaulding's romance and comparing it with the Book of Mormon; and as to the agent, his attention, like Mr. Miller's, may first have been directed to Rigdon by Spaulding himself. Mr. French has no personal knowledge of Rigdon's connection with the printing-office.

Mrs. R. J. Eichbaum, of Pittsburgh, now in her ninetieth year, with a memory marvelously tenacious of even the minutest incidents, with the vivacity of a maiden in her teens, with health, until recently, exceptionally good for one of her years, with a still keen enjoyment of the humorous, a clear mind, a kindly heart, and the Christian's hope of a better existence, seems to realize Wordsworth's picture

*"Of an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night."*¹

We give her reminiscence in full, dated Pittsburgh, Sept. 18, 1879, only remarking that one who could hear her relate the incidents of her youth, and specify her reasons for fixing names and dates with unusual distinctness, would find it difficult to resist a conviction of the accuracy of her memory. She says,—

"My father, John Johnston, was postmaster of Pittsburgh for about eighteen years, from 1804 to 1822. My husband, William Eichbaum, succeeded him, and was postmaster for about eleven years, from 1822 to 1833. I was born Aug. 25, 1792, and when I became old enough I assisted my father in attending to the post-office, and became familiar with its duties. From 1811 to 1816 I was the regular clerk in the office, assorting, making up, dispatching, opening, and distributing the mails. Pittsburgh was then a small town, and I was well acquainted with all the stated visitors at the office who called regularly for their mails. So meagre at that time were the mails that I could generally tell without looking whether or not there was anything for such persons, though I would usually look in order to satisfy them. I was married in 1815, and the next year my connection with the office ceased, except during the absences of my husband. I knew and distinctly remember Robert and Joseph Patterson, J. Harrison Lambdin, Silas Engles, and Sidney Rigdon. I remember Rev. Mr. Spaulding, but simply as one who occasionally called

¹ Since above was written Mrs. Eichbaum has died, May 4, 1882.

to inquire for letters. I remember that there was an evident intimacy between Lambdin and Rigdon. They very often came to the office together. I particularly remember that they would thus come during the hour on Sabbath afternoon when the office was required to be open, and I remember feeling sure that Rev. Mr. Patterson knew nothing of this, or he would have put a stop to it. I do not know what position, if any, Rigdon filled in Patterson's store or printing-office, but am well assured he was frequently, if not constantly, there for a large part of the time, when I was clerk in the post-office. I recall Mr. Engles saying that 'Rigdon was always hanging around the printing-office.' He was connected with the tannery before he became a preacher, though he may have continued the business whilst preaching."

These witnesses are all whom we can find after inquiries extending through some three years who can testify at all to Rigdon's residence in Pittsburgh before 1816, and to his possible employment in Patterson's printing-office or bindery. Of this employment none of them speak from personal knowledge. In making inquiries among two or three score of the oldest residents of Pittsburgh and vicinity, those who had any opinion on the subject invariably, so far as now remembered, repeated the story of Rigdon's employment in Patterson's office, as if it were a well-known and admitted fact; they "could tell all about it," but when pressed as to their personal knowledge of it or their authority for the conviction they had none.¹

The remaining testimony which now claims consideration is independent of any connection of Rigdon as an employee with Patterson, and it necessitates no charge of Rigdon's dishonorably acquiring the Spaulding manuscript, and no suggestion of such an improbability as that a young man, not noted for industry or application, would perform the arduous task of transcribing so large a document, clandestinely too, when he had at that time certainly no ulterior object in view.

6. The earliest published intimation we have seen that Rigdon had obtained the Spaulding manuscript occurs in Howe's book, issued in 1865, where it is advanced as "the strongest presumption," and is based on Rigdon's residence in Pittsburgh in 1823-24, on the probability that the manuscript had remained in the printing-office until then, and on Mr. Lambdin's friendship for Rigdon. Says Howe, "We have been credibly informed that he was on terms of intimacy with Lambdin, being seen frequently in his shop." The name of his informant is not given, as it

should have been. In support of the "presumption" of Rigdon's connection with the Book of Mormon, Mr. Howe states that "some new points of doctrine" which Rigdon had commenced preaching "were afterward found to be inculcated in the Mormon Bible." Also his frequent, protracted absences from his home during the year or two preceding the publication of the Book of Mormon are cited as circumstantial evidence pointing to his co-operation with Smith.

7. Rev. Samuel Williams, of Castle Shannon, Allegheny Co., Pa., a successor of Rigdon in the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, published in 1842, as already stated, a pamphlet entitled "Mormonism Exposed." On page 4 he says, "In 1818, and for some years afterwards, Patterson & Lambdin were the principal firm engaged in printing and publishing books. The widow of Mr. Spaulding states that it [her husband's romance] was taken to that printing-office, and Mr. Patterson and many others of this city knew that Mr. Rigdon and Mr. Lambdin, who superintended the printing-office, were very intimate during Rigdon's residence here." On page 16, Mr. Williams expresses his conviction "that the manuscript remained in the office with others from 1814 until Sidney Rigdon came to this place and obtained it from Lambdin."

8. Rev. John Winter, M.D., was one of the early ministers of the Baptist Church, laboring in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio. During a portion of the time when Sidney Rigdon was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pittsburgh, Dr. Winter was teaching a school in the same city, and was well acquainted with Rigdon. Upon one occasion during this period, 1822-23, Dr. Winter was in Rigdon's study, when the latter took from his desk a large manuscript, and said in substance, "A Presbyterian minister, Spaulding, whose health had failed, brought this to the printer to see if it would pay to publish it. It is a romance of the Bible." Dr. Winter did not read any part of it, and paid no more attention to it until after the Book of Mormon appeared, when he heard that Mr. Spaulding's widow recognized in it the writings of her husband.

The authority for the above important statement is Rev. A. G. Kirk, to whom Dr. Winter communicated it in conversation at New Brighton, Pa., in 1870-71. Dr. Winter died at Sharon, Pa., in 1878. Mr. Kirk conveyed this information to the present writer by letter, March 23, 1879. Mrs. Mary W. Irvine, a daughter of Dr. Winter, writes from Sharon, Pa., April 5, 1881, as follows:

"I have frequently heard my father speak of Rigdon having Spaulding's manuscript, and that he had gotten it from the printers to read it as a curiosity; as such he showed it to father; and that at that time Rigdon had no intention of making the use of it that he afterwards did; for father always said Rigdon helped Smith in his scheme by revising and making the Mormon Bible out of Rev. Spaulding's manuscript."

Rev. A. J. Bonsall, pastor of the Baptist Church at Rochester, Pa., and a step-son of Dr. Winter, au-

¹ If anyone would learn an impressive lesson upon the transitory nature of man's hold upon the remembrance of his fellow-men, let him engage in an investigation into some matter of local or personal history dating back a half-century ago. So rapidly, in the very places where a man has lived and labored, does the recollection of him fade into rumor, or myth, or oblivion. The candid reader will doubtless suspend his judgment on this hitherto accepted theory of Rigdon's printership, or set it down; as at most only probable, but certainly not yet proved.

thorizes the statement that he repeatedly heard Dr. Winter say that Rigdon had shown him the Spaulding manuscript romance, purporting to be the history of the American Indians, which manuscript he had received from the printers.

It was the impression of these, three witnesses that Dr. Winter had himself committed his recollections of his above-mentioned interview with Rigdon to writing, as he intended to do, and was even understood to say he had done, but a careful search among his papers has thus far proved unavailing to find it. Dr. Winter was noted for his retentive memory and for his scrupulous accuracy in treasuring up conversations with brethren in the ministry and incidents in their history, many of which he contributed to the press in the form of sketches of Western church history. The reliability of the persons who have, in the interest of truth, related his statement to them will he confidently vouched for by all who know them; and Dr. Winter's evidence, thus attested, is of itself sufficient to establish the certainty that Rigdon, in 1822–23, had possession of Spaulding's manuscript.

9. Mrs. Amos Dunlap, of Warren, Ohio, in answer to inquiries, writes Dec. 7, 1879,—

"When I was quite a child I visited Mr. Rigdon's family. He married my aunt. They at that time lived in Bainbridge, Ohio. During my visit Mr. Rigdon went to his bedroom and took from a trunk which he kept locked a certain manuscript. He came out into the other room and seated himself by the fireplace and commenced reading it. His wife at that moment came into the room and exclaimed, 'What! you're studying that thing again?' or something to that effect. She then added, 'I mean to burn that paper.' He said, 'No, indeed, you will not. This will be a great thing some day!' Whenever he was reading this he was so completely occupied that he seemed entirely unconscious of anything passing around him."

10. Mr. Z. Rudolph, father of Mrs. Gen. Garfield, knew Sidney Rigdon very well, and has stated that "during the winter previous to the appearance of the Book of Mormon, Rigdon was in the habit of spending weeks away from his home, going no one knew where; and that he often appeared very preoccupied, and would indulge in dreamy, imaginative talks, which puzzled those who listened. When the Book of Mormon appeared and Rigdon joined in the advocacy of the new religion, the suspicion was at once aroused that he was one of the trainers of the new doctrines, and probably was not ignorant of the authorship of the Book of Mormon."

Pomeroy Tucker, Esq., a native of Palmyra, N. Y., and well acquainted with all the Smith family from their coming to Palmyra in 1811 from Vermont, was the editor of the paper—the *Wayne Sentinel*—in the office of which at Palmyra, in 1830, the Book of Mormon was printed. He performed much of the proof-reading, and had frequent familiar interviews with Smith. In 1867, Mr. Tucker published a volume entitled the "Origin and Progress of Mormonism," of which he was so well qualified to write. The facts which he records as having occurred in his own vicinity may be accepted as either personally known to him, or as stated upon reliable and convincing testi-

mony. After narrating Smith's vicious and vagrant life down to the summer of 1827, he states (p. 28),—"A mysterious stranger now appears at Smith's residence, and holds private interviews with the far-famed money-digger. For a considerable length of time no intimation of the name or purpose of this personage transpired to the public, nor even to Smith's nearest neighbors. It was observed by some of them that his visits were frequently repeated. The sequel of these private interviews between the stranger and the money-digger will sufficiently appear hereafter." [Great consternation was occasioned by the theft of one hundred and sixteen pages of Smith's translation from the golden plates, as it seems to have been impossible to retranslate the stolen portion. Whereupon (p. 46)] "The reappearance of the mysterious stranger at Smith's was again the subject of inquiry and conjecture by observers, from whom was withheld all explanation of his identity or purpose." [At last the Book of Mormon was printed, Rigdon was among the first converts, and Mr. Tucker says (p. 75):] "Up to this time Sidney Rigdon had played his part in the background, and his occasional visits at Smith's residence had been noticed by uninitiated observers as those of the mysterious stranger. It had been his policy to remain in concealment until all things should be in readiness for blowing the trumpet of the new gospel. ... This man Rigdon now appeared as the first regular Mormon preacher in Palmyra." ... "Who can doubt that he and Smith had become confederates in a grand scheme of cupidity and imposture? They had surreptitiously possessed themselves of a fabulous composition peculiarly adapted to their design. Secrecy and falsehood were necessary to the success of such a scheme, and to these, it is self-evident, they were mutually sworn" (p. 121.)

12. Mrs. Dr. Horace Eaton, for the last thirty-two years a resident of Palmyra, N. Y., has published a brief sketch of the "Origin of Mormonism," in which, after careful and thorough study of the subject, she concurs with Mr. Tucker. She says, "Early in the summer of 1827 a 'mysterious stranger' seeks admittance to Joe Smith's cabin. The conferences of the two are most private. This person, whose coming immediately preceded a new departure in the faith, was Sidney Rigdon, a backsliding clergyman, at this time a Campbellite preacher in Mentor, Ohio." Mrs. Eaton also mentions a theory, which has a strong probability sustaining it, that Parley P. Pratt, a peddler who "knew everybody in Western New York and Northern Ohio," and who was a member of Rigdon's church, was the medium through whom Rigdon made the acquaintance of Smith when seeking a suitable tool for his purpose. Pratt became, of course, an immediate convert to Mormonism, and one of its most famous and successful missionaries. Through his persuasive powers, we are told, Rigdon himself became a Mormon!

13. The "History of Franklin County, Pa.," by I. H. McCauley, published by John N. Pomeroy, Chambersburg, Pa., states, as if a matter too well known to require argument (p. 198), that "Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, and Sidney Rigdon were intimate acquaintances for a considerable time before Mormonism was first heard of."

14. The *Millennial Harbinger*, edited and published at Bethany, W. Va., by Rev. Alexander Campbell, the founder of the "Disciples" denomination, in the volume for 1844, p. 39, contains a letter dated Jan. 22, 1841, from Rev. Adamson Bentley, a very intimate friend of Rigdon (their wives were sisters), and whose testimony is beyond the imputation of doubt or suspicion. Mr. Bentley is writing to Rev.

Walter Scott, another old and cherished companion of Rigdon:

"I know that Sidney Rigdon told me there was a book coming out, the manuscript of which had been *found engraved on gold plates*, as much as *two years before* the Mormon book made its appearance or had been heard of by me."

The editor of the *Harbinger*, the Rev. Alexander Campbell, clinches the above as follows:

"The conversation alluded to ie Brother Bentley's letter of 1841 was in my presence as well as in his, and my recollection of it led me, some two or three years ago, to interrogate Brother Bentley touching his recollections of it, which accorded with mine in every particular except the year in which it occurred, he placing it in the summer of 1827, I in the summer of 1826, Rigdon at the same time observing that in the plates dug up in New York there was an account not only of the aborigines of this country, but also it was stated that the Christian religion had been preached in this country during the first century, just as we were preaching it on the Western Reserve."

According to the testimony of these two unimpeachable witnesses, Rigdon was minutely informed that the Book of Mormon was in process of preparation, and was thoroughly acquainted with the character of its contents, at least three, if not four, years before its actual issue. His own personal responsibility for its appearance is the only basis on which this foreknowledge can be explained. This testimony also shows how little reliance can be placed upon Rigdon's solemn and repeated asseveration that he had never heard of Smith or of the Book of Mormon until he received the information from Parley P. Pratt, in August, 1830, and after a brief struggle accepted the new faith.

15. In Hayden's "Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve," pp. 239-40, occurs a statement from Rev. D. Atwater, a man noted for his strict regard for truth and justice, dated Mantua Station, April 26, 1873, from which the following extract is taken:

"Soon after this the great Mormon defection came on us. Sidney Rigdon preached for us, and notwithstanding his extravagantly wild freaks he was held in high repute by many. For a few months before his professed conversion to Mormonism it was noticed that his wild, extravagant propensities had been more marked. That he *knew before of the coming of the Book of Mormon is to me certain* from what he said the first of his visits at my father's some years before. He gave a wonderful description of the mounds and other antiquities found in some parts of America, and said that they must have been made by the aborigines. He said there was a book to be published containing an account of those things. He spoke of these, in his eloquent, enthusiastic style, as being a thing most extraordinary. Though a youth then, I took him to task for expending so much enthusiasm on such a subject, instead of things of the gospel."

16. As the character established by Rigdon among his brethren in the Baptist Church whilst he was a member of that denomination has a direct bearing upon the question of his probable guilt or innocence, we make two quotations touching his reputation at that time. (1) From Rev. S. Williams' pamphlet, already referred to, pp. 1, 2: "He professed to experience a change of heart when a young man, and proposed to join the church under the care of Elder David Philips. But there was so much miracle about his conversion, and so much parade about his profes-

sion, that the pious and discerning pastor entertained serious doubts at the time in regard to the genuineness of the work. He was received, however, by the church and baptized by the pastor, with some fears and doubts upon his mind. Very soon, Diotrephesiike, he began to put himself forward and seek the pre-eminence, and was wellnigh supplanting the tried and faithful minister who had reared and nursed and fed the church for a long series of years. So thoroughly convinced was Father Philips by this time that he was not possessed of the spirit of Christ, notwithstanding his miraculous conversion and flippant speech, that he declared his belief 'that as long as he [Sidney] should live he would be a curse to the church of Christ.'" (2) In the (Pittsburgh) *Baptist Witness* of Jan. 1, 1875, Dr. Winter, in the course of a historical notice of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, says, "When Holland Sumner dealt with Rigdon for his bad teachings, and said to him, 'Brother Rigdon, you never got into a Baptist Church without relating your Christian experiences,' Rigdon replied, 'When I joined the church at Peters Creek I knew I could not be admitted without an experience, so I made up one to suit the purpose; but it was all made up, and was of no use, nor true.' This I have just copied from an old memorandum, as taken from Sumner himself."

17. As an apology for Rigdon, and probably in reply to Dr. Winter's article, quoted above, a communication appeared in the *Baptist Witness* two months later, March 1, 1875, from A. H. Dunlevy, of Lebanon, Ohio, who, giving as his authority Dr. L. Rigdon, of Hamilton, Ohio, an elder brother of Sidney, states as follows:

"Sidney Rigdon, when quite a boy, living with his father some fifteen miles south of Pittsburgh on a farm, was thrown from his horse, his foot entangled in a stirrup and dragged some distance before relieved. In this accident he received such a contusion of the brain as ever after seriously to affect his character and in some respects his conduct. In fact, his brother always considered Sidney a little deranged in his mind by that accident. His mental powers did not seem to be impaired, but the equilibrium in his intellectual exertions seemed thereby to have been sadly affected, he still manifested great mental activity and power, but he was to an equal degree inclined to run into wild and visionary views on almost every question. Hence he was a fit subject for any new movement in the religions world."

The most skeptical reader will find it difficult to resist the conviction, after an impartial consideration of the preceding testimony, that Rigdon as early as 1823 certainly had possession of Spaulding's manuscript (how he obtained it is unimportant for the present purpose); that during his career as a minister of the Disciples' Church in Ohio he carefully preserved under lock and key this document, and devoted an absorbed attention to it; that he was aware of the forthcoming Book of Mormon and of its contents long before its appearance; that the said contents were largely Spaulding's romance, and partly such modifications as Rigdon had introduced; and that during the preparation of the Book of Mormon Rigdon had repeated and long interviews with Smith,

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thus easily supplying him with fresh installments of the pretended revelation. The conclusion is irresistible that Sidney Rigdon was the agent by whom the plagiarism was effected. The memory of Lambdin should, however, be relieved from any charge of complicity in Rigdon's guilty use of the manuscript, and of any culpable intent in allowing him to peruse it as a curiosity in literature. Lambdin was resting in his early grave before Rigdon had conceived his criminal scheme.

III. THE TWO MANUSCRIPTS.—The question has been propounded with a somewhat triumphant air by Mormons, Why not produce the Spaulding manuscript and publish it with the Book of Mormon in parallel columns, and thus demonstrate the plagiarism?

This was the very work for which Mrs. Davison, in 1834, gave D. P. Hurlbut an order for the delivery to him of her copy of her husband's "Manuscript Found;" and she in her lifetime was fully convinced, as is her daughter now, that Hurlbut obtained that invaluable document and treacherously sold it to the Mormons. In confirmation of this opinion we quote from "Gleanings by the Way," by Rev. John A. Clark, D.D., published by Robert Carter, New York, 1842. This volume is made up largely of letters published in the (Philadelphia) *Episcopal Recorder*. On page 263, Rev. Mr. Storrs, of Holliston, Mass., in a letter dated June 28, 1841, to Rev. Dr. Clark, says, "Dr. Hurlbut took the manuscript. It is reported in Missouri that he sold it for four hundred dollars; that the manuscript is not to be found." On page 265, Rev. D. R. Austin, of Monson, Mass., in a letter to Dr. Clark, dated also June 28, 1841, writes, "He (Dr. Hurlbut) stated some time after he had received the manuscript that he had made \$400 out of it. Mrs. Davison has not the least doubt now but that he obtained it in order to sell it to the Mormons." This is the earliest report we have seen of this alleged embezzlement, dating only seven years after Hurlbut's visit, but the statement has been often repented since. It should be remembered, too, that only with the greatest reluctance did Mrs. Davison authorize the lending of the manuscript to Hurlbut at the solicitation of her brother, W. H. Sabine. The present writer called on Hurlbut at his home, and interrogated him with reference to this charge. The result of this interview is contained in the following paper, which Mr. Hurlbut signed:

"GIBSONBURG, OHIO, Aug. 19. 1879.

"I visited Mrs. Matilda (Spaulding) Davison at Monson, Mass, in 1831 and never saw her afterwards. I then received from her a manuscript of her husband's, which I did not read, but brought home with me and immediately gave it to Mr. D. E. Howe, of Painesville, Ohio, who was then engaged in preparing his book, 'Mormonism Unveiled.' I do not know whether or not the document I received from Mrs. Davison was Spaulding's 'Manuscript Found,' as I never read it; but whatever it was Mr. Howe received it under the condition on which I took it from Mrs. Davison, to compare it with the 'Book of Mormon' and then return it to her. I never received any other manuscript of Spaulding's from Mrs. Davison or any one else. Of that manuscript I made no other use than

to give it, with all my other documents connected with Mormonism, to Mr. Howe. I did not destroy the manuscript nor dispose of it to Joe Smith, or to any other person. No promise was made by me to Mrs. Davison that she should receive any portion of profits arising from the publication of the manuscript if it should be published. All the affidavits procured by me for Sir. Howe's book, including all those from Palmyra, N. Y., were certainly genuine.

"D. P. HURLBUT."

This statement conflicts with the one given in 1834 by Hurlbut to Mr. Howe, as contained in his book, from which it appears that Hurlbut obtained this manuscript from "the trunk referred to by the widow," it being the only manuscript there in Spaulding's handwriting. When his attention was called to this discrepancy, Hurlbut had no explanation to offer, nor did he give any satisfactory reason when asked why, after spending months in securing testimony to the identity of the Spaulding manuscript and the Book of Mormon, he did not avail himself of the opportunity of settling the question beyond dispute when he had, as he supposed, the very document in his hands, without waiting for days until he gave it to Mr. Howe, at Rainesville, and not reading it even then.

Whatever opinion the reader may form of Hurlbut's conduct, and of his refusal to account for it, it is at least clear, from the testimony of Mrs. Davison and her daughter, that Spaulding's "Manuscript Found" had been with his other writings in the old trunk at Hartwick, N. Y., and that it was abstracted either by Hurlbut or by some one else previous to his search. In either case it is simply adding insult to injury to call upon Mr. Spaulding's daughter now to collate the Book of Mormon with her father's manuscript, of which she has been so shamefully robbed. The Mormon who resorts to this dishonorable plea only shows to what a desperate strait he has been reduced in defending his "inspired" book.

Whether the manuscript which Rigdon had in his possession was Spaulding's own or a transcript made by Rigdon, is a matter of comparatively little moment, and it is one which it is impossible now to determine. It would not be strange if Spaulding, being a man of leisure, and fond of writing, had made out a revised copy for the printer, retaining his own first sheets, and that these latter were what he took to Amity, leaving the other at Patterson's office, possibly with a faint hope that some means of putting it to press might yet "come to pass." It is true Mrs. Davison says that the manuscript was returned to him, but she also says that Mr. Patterson was the "editor of a newspaper," which was an error easily made, as he had a job printing office; and, in like manner, after the lapse of twenty-five years, she might readily have forgotten that there were two copies, if such were indeed the case. Be this as it may, the copy passing through Rigdon's hands of course we cannot follow. Thus, unfortunately, both copies (Rigdon's and Mrs. Davison's) of Spaulding's now famous romance would seem to be irretrievably lost.

In the collection of the materials for the above imperfect presentation of a question of no little historical interest, the writer takes pleasure in acknowledging the courtesy of the numerous correspondents to whom he has applied for information, and will be pardoned for mentioning his special obligations to Dr. W. W. Sharpe, of Amity, Pa., to George Plumer Smith, Esq., of Philadelphia, and to James T. Cobb, Esq., of Salt Lake City, at the instance of the last named of whom he commenced this inquiry, and to whom he is indebted for many of the references made.

IV. CLOSING REMARKS.—It was not the object of the present investigation to account for the origin of Mormonism, or to trace its rise and growth, or to describe it as a system of belief. This would have opened a far wider field of research, and would have required sketches of Joseph Smith and his numerous coadjutors, only one of whom has any connection with the question here under discussion. The one topic proposed for consideration was the authorship of the historical parts, constituting much the larger portion, of the Book of Mormon. Hence we have left entirely out of view the absurd fables devised by Smith—or, more probably, invented for him—to account for his possession of the Book of Mormon, namely, that an angel showed him, Sept. 22, 1823, where the golden plates were concealed; that four years afterwards, Sept. 22, 1827, Smith removed them from the place of deposit where they had remained for fourteen hundred years; that these plates were covered with Egyptian characters, which he could not understand, but by looking at them through two transparent stones which had been deposited with them the proper English words, one at a time, became visible to him; and being himself unable to write a legible hand, the words were by him dictated one by one to a scribe, who sat separated from Smith by a blanket hung up as a screen, as it would be certain death for any one but Smith to see the golden plates. In this way his first scribe, Martin Harris, in 1828 wrote one hundred and sixteen pages, which Mrs. Harris (honor to her memory) committed to the flames. As this portion, for some reason, could not be retranslated, the work was suspended until April 17, 1829, when a second scribe, Oliver Cowdery, undertook the labor, and in June, 1829, the manuscript was taken to the printer. To persons who accept Joseph Smith's statements in regard to his angelic visitants it does not seem at all incredible that Cowdery could in two months perform the stupendous task of writing out from dictation a manuscript about equal in magnitude to the Old Testament! And one story is as probable as the other. Such is the Mormon version of the origin of their sacred book, and the intelligent reader can choose between this theory and the only alternative offered, the Rigdon-Spaulding one.

It may not be amiss, in closing this summary of the evidence proving the fraudulent origin of the Book of

Mormon, to remember that whilst honest indignation cannot and ought not to be suppressed against those who wrought this wickedness, nothing but sincerest compassion should be felt and shown for their deluded victims. That multitudes of them are honest in the convictions they express, incredible as at first it may appear, cannot be denied by any one who has acquainted himself with the heroic endurance and patient suffering, even unto death, which numbers of this misguided people have shown. The heart must be hard indeed that would not ache for them in reading Col. Kane's graphic narration of their banishment from Nauvoo and their pitiful pilgrimage to Utah, their pathway marked by the graves of those that perished.

And still more to be commiserated than the fate of those who fell by the way is the inexpressibly sadder lot of those poor women who survived the hardships, and their successors since, whose devotion to their God has been so wrought upon by designing men that, in dread of disobedience to a divine command, they have submitted to a polygamous relation against which every feeling of their souls revolted. The horrors of the hated Inquisition had no torture so terrible for the flesh to endure as that living death of agony to which many a pure spirit has been and is still subjected by this conscience-enforced union with a beastly tyrant. Let the galling chain be broken, but let not the innocent captive be punished for the crime of her cruel master. Surely among these soul-stricken sufferers the compassionate Saviour has his hidden ones.

Should the eyes of any honest believer in the inspiration of the Book of Mormon fall upon these pages, his impartial and unbiased examination of the evidence here adduced is earnestly solicited. The number of attesting witnesses is not a tenth part of what it would have been had a thorough investigation been undertaken even a score of years ago. This has been made painfully manifest in the progress of this inquiry by the frequently-repeated statement that this one and that one had recently died who could have given the very information sought. A conviction that the delusion would be short-lived operated, unfortunately, to prevent the collection of a far more abundant mass of testimony. But what is here presented should convince every sincere searcher for truth that the Book of Mormon, as issued by Smith, originated in fraud, and therefore with it the whole Mormon superstructure falls.

It is scarcely necessary to say that Spaulding himself must be acquitted of all intention to deceive, even though four of the hearers of his romance as read by him have attested his singular presentiment—was it prescience?—that in after-years his romance would be accepted by thousands as veritable history. But even he could not have foreseen that this coinage of his brain would ever pass current as having been enstamped by the authority of heaven. The uncon-

scious prophet of a new Islam, in all his imaginings he did not dream that his hand was outlining the Koran of a dark delusion, that the fables which beguiled his restless hours would be accepted by hundreds of thousands of his fellow-men as the oracles of God, and that in inglorious yet heroic martyrdom some of them would even seal with their blood their faith in the inspiration of his phantasies. Journeying to Pittsburgh in 1812, with the sanguine hope of soon seeing his romance in print, it never entered his mind that in threescore years and ten thereafter the shades of Laman and Nephi, of Mormon and Maroni, evoked by his magic wand from the sepulchral mounds of Conneaut,—the graves of a long-forgotten race,—would be stalking over two hemispheres, and would be leading through the very city of his sojourn their

myriad victims of deception to distant homes of wretchedness and shame. Struggling to escape the burden of his debts, he little imagined how vast the burden he was about unwittingly to lay upon his country.

Sleep on, humble dreamer, in thy lowly bed! Thy fond desire to win a public hearing for thy wondrous story was denied thee in thy toilsome life. Thou knewest not that a strange immortality awaited it and thee. Rest peacefully, for from thine eye, which sought to penetrate the past alone, this saddest of future visions was mercifully withheld. Surely never hitherto have passed such sorrowful processions near the grave of so innocent an author of their woe.¹

¹ Correction of errors or additional information will be gladly received. Address R. Patterson, 198 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh.