

THE SPAULDING STORY RE-EXAMINED.

LETTER FROM R. PATTERSON.

“PRESBYTERIAN BANNER.”

PITTSBURG, Pa., Dec. 28th, 1882.

MR. JOSEPH SMITH,

Dear Sir:—You are of course acquainted with the claim advanced in behalf of Rev. Solomon Spaulding, as the author of the historical part of the “Book of Mormon.” I mail to you herewith a statement of the evidence in support of this claim, so far as I have been able to collect it. I solicit your careful and candid examination of the testimony here presented, and shall esteem it a favor to have any errors pointed out, and mistakes corrected. I shall be glad to hear from you personally upon the subject; but if you think proper to notice the pamphlet in your paper, please send me a copy. I mail you two copies of the pamphlet, as you may wish to scissor some portions for extracts.

The truth has nothing to fear from honest, impartial discussion; and in gathering evidence I have been careful to note down and publish as well what conflicts with common opinion, as what sustains it. I pray God to open your mind to the entrance of the truth, and to give you the courage to avow it. Your position is a very peculiar one; I realize its embarrassments; at the same time there is a peculiar responsibility also resting upon you to do what you can to rectify a great wrong. I shall be glad to hear from you on the subject of this pamphlet.

With sincerest wishes that you may be guided into the truth,

I am yours,

R. PATTERSON.

No. 198 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE foregoing letter was received by us some time ago, and as soon after its receipt as practicable, we wrote and mailed to Mr. Patterson an article, of which the following is a copy. This is not published as an exhaustive treatise upon the subject, but in the belief that it contains a sufficient answer to the pamphlet referred to by Mr. Patterson; and that the thoughts suggested can be made available in the defense of truth.

LETTER TO R. PATTERSON.

"HERALD" OFFICE,
LAMON, Iowa, Jan'y 20th, 1883.

MR. R. PATTERSON,
No. 198 Penn Avenue, Pittsburg, Pa.,

Your letter of December 28th, 1882, was duly received, but by reason of busy cares I have not been able to reply. The pamphlet sent by you came two or three days after the letter reached me. One sentence of your letter you would probably resent as an impertinence, or attribute to fanatical cant if I were to repeat it, with a request for you to make it of personal application to yourself: "I pray God to open your mind to the entrance of the truth, and to give you the courage to avow it." Believe me I do not refer to it to resent it, or to refuse to acknowledge the force of the admonition, or to ignore the good influence with which God endows the mind to examine and receive the truth.

You will pardon me when I state that no man living has a greater interest in the question whether the Book of Mormon is a fabrication from Rev. S. Spaulding's romance, or a discovery of deposited records of early inhabitants of this country as it purports to be, and came into being as my father, Sidney Rigdon, Martin Harris, Peter and David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and others, claim.

If the religious teachings and principles that the book contains are true, and comport with the New Testament Scriptures, I am interested in maintaining them and the book because of them. If those principles are false, I am interested in abandoning them and inducing others to do so too. If I become satisfied that the statement respecting the manner in which Joseph Smith became possessed of the records is true, I am interested in maintaining it; and if I become convinced that he was a bad man, and foisted a falsehood upon the world, deliberately, persistently and wickedly, I am interested in denouncing such act.

I have examined every work published against Joseph Smith, Mormonism, and the Mormons, that I could procure; from E. D. Howe's book to the last confession of John D. Lee, and Ann Eliza's exposure. I have given them all a close, and so far as I could, an analytical consideration; and will do the same with your pamphlet. The results I will write you, and you will no doubt read what I send carefully and thoughtfully, whether you do prayerfully or not.

Like all who have essayed to write upon the subject, you have taken Howe's work as the basis, and have considered what is stated there as proved. If, therefore, discredit is thrown upon that work, the premise upon which your argument rests is destroyed. So far as Joseph Smith's possible access to the manuscript of Solomon Spaulding is concerned, whatever previous writers may have done, the theory is abandoned by you. This leaves the question confined to Sidney Rigdon and his possible connection with those manuscripts. The possession of the manuscript is accounted for in the

statement of Mesdames Davison and McKinstry, daughter and wife of Rev. Spaulding, from its inception until its committal to Dr. Hurlbut in 1834, except the possible time it may have been in the care of Silas Engle, as stated by your father, "some weeks," and returned as he supposed, and Mrs. McKinstry states, and as it must have been, because Mrs. McKinstry states that she had access to it at her Uncle Sabine's after Mr. Spaulding's death, after the removal of the family from Amity, Pennsylvania, and before their arrival in Monson, Massachusetts.

This narrows the time in which Sidney Rigdon could have had access to the "Manuscript Found" to these "some weeks" that they were in Engle's or your father's care; the identity of the manuscript insisted upon as the origin of the Book of Mormon and the one left at the office of your father being admitted. If Rigdon had access to it at this time he must have copied it, as Engle returned the original.

The theory that S. Rigdon copied it is untenable for two reasons. One is the time allowed for the work, and the circumstances do not favor it. The other is that Rigdon was not at Pittsburg till 1821-2, five or six years after Spaulding's death and the removal of the family with the manuscript in their possession from that place. This theory of Sidney Rigdon's getting possession of the manuscript through Lambdin subsequently, upon the supposition that Spaulding had transcribed it for the printer is ingenious; but is a supposition only, unsupported by any proof, and shows the first theory to be of doubtful character, or it would not have been resorted to.

The statement that Dr. Hurlbut sold the manuscript of the "Manuscript Found" to the Mormons is disposed of by the Doctor himself, who placed it as he says, in the hands of E. D. Howe, of Painesville, Ohio. The force of these points is seen when you take up and consider one by one the statements made by the witnesses cited by Mr. Howe in his works, respecting the similarity between the names, plot of the work, and history of Mr. Spaulding's suppositious romance, and the Book of Mormon. All these witnesses certify upon their memery, and you should in justice in the absence of direct testimony upon the point, apply your note number 1, page 11 of your work.

The possession of the manuscript being accounted for until long after the publication of the Book of Mormon, and always in the hands of the antagonists of Mormonism, the opposers of Joseph Smith, the principle of the law of evidence holds good that a party is precluded from proving the contents of a written instrument, unless it is shown that such instrument is lost, or destroyed, or in the hands of the opposite party. In this case, so far from proving that the manuscripts are destroyed, or lost, or in the hands of the Mormons, it is distinctly shown as a material fact, that they were in the hands of the original owner, and his heirs and successors, until after the publication of the Book of Mormon, and then went into the hands of E. D. Howe, the publisher of a work against the Mormons, and in ostensible refutation of their theory of the origin of that book. Mr. Howe in direct violation of this well known rule of evidence, proceeds to introduce several witnesses who testify to their recollection of this

manuscript, as having heard it read by Mr. Spaulding, all the way from twelve to sixteen years after his death, and this, too, when the manuscript is shown to be in the possession of Mr. Howe.* When therefore, the Mormon resorts to the plea that the better and more conclusive way to have proven the plagiarism charged, would have been to produce the manuscript, and print it in juxtaposition with the portions of the Book of Mormon said to have been plagiarized from it, that a faithful comparison of the two might be made; he does but insist upon the observance of one of the commonest rules of evidence known to the legal mind. And instead of being himself liable to the charge of resorting to a "dishonorable plea," he shows the weakness of the claim made for the Spaulding romance, and makes apparent the "uncommon straits" to which those who claim the "Manuscript Found" origin of the Book for Mormon, are driven to maintain that claim. And this plea is a just and good one, both against Mrs. McKinstry and Mrs. Spaulding, and all others who claim the manuscript as the origin of the Book of Mormon, for these last make themselves parties to the case upon the side in whose possession the manuscript is found to be. When you present the statement that such a plea is dishonorable, you unconsciously allow yourself to become partizan, and adopt the language of avowed enemies of Joseph Smith and Mormonism; and if the evidence of Mormons, and those friendly to them is to be disposed of as unworthy of belief, because the witnesses are interested, and therefore partial and biased, the rule must apply, and with equal propriety and force, to those at enmity with the Mormons as interested, prejudiced, and biased against them. This only results in leaving the matters at issue to rest upon testimony equally worthy, or unworthy.

Mesdames Davison and McKinstry both aver that the trunk and manuscripts contained in it, were in the possession of the family, the trunk never out of actual or constructive possession, and the manuscript always except the time referred to, when somewhere about 1814 it was presented to your father and Silas Engle for publication, and by them returned to Mrs. Spaulding. It was in the trunk at the time Mrs. McKinstry had access to it at Mrs. Sabine's house. It must have been there when the trunk went to Monson at Mrs. Spaulding's marriage to Mr. Davison; and there it must have been found, when in 1834 Mr. Hurlbut procured it upon the order of Mrs. Davison. Here then is the unbroken chain of its possession found. What follows. Dr. Hurlbut turns the manuscript over to E. D. Howe, with the manuscript copy unfinished of the Mormonism Un-

* Mr. Howe, we are informed, was himself a lawyer, and is presumed to have known, and without doubt did know, that while the manuscript in question was in his possession, or under his control, or in existence anywhere where it could by legal process be reached, oral testimony in regard to its contents was incompetent, and therefore inadmissible; and the fact that he knowingly introduced incompetent testimony to make out his case, is conclusive proof that he knew that the introduction of the manuscript, the only competent evidence under the circumstances, would, instead of supporting his claim, overthrow it entirely. No man can practice law in our courts in this way without being regarded as a low pettifogger, wanting either in the knowledge or honesty necessary to the proper practice of his profession. Lawyers do not resort to such dishonorable "tricks of the trade" as this, except where there is no possibility of making a case without them.

veiled, and the affidavits, etc., which Mr. Howe worked into the book afterwards published. The avowed purpose for which the manuscript was asked for by Hurlbut, was that a comparison should be made with the Book of Mormon then published. The widow "with great reluctance" authorized the loan of the manuscript to Hurlbut upon the solicitation of Mr. Sabine. There can be no doubt from this straight relation that the parties to this transaction, Mrs. Davison, Mr. W. H. Sabine and Dr. Hurlbut, all were satisfied that the manuscript then delivered to Hurlbut was the original "Manuscript Found," the romancing narrative of a suppositious people, whose mythical history a reverend gentleman dying of consumption wrote for amusement, with the hope that it might sell well enough to help him pay his debts. When this manuscript is next heard from, Mr. Hurlbut informs Mrs. Spaulding that it "did not read as he expected, and he would not publish it." It is claimed that it was not returned by Hurlbut, or Howe, up to as late as 1844, when, as stated by Miss E. Dickinson, an effort was made by Mr. Spaulding's family to get possession of it by demanding its return. No part of this manuscript thus obtained by Hurlbut, was ever published by E. D. Howe, in whose possession it is left by those who account for its continued existence; and I believe both E. D. Howe and Dr. Hurlbut are living, the latter at Sturgis, Michigan; the former, at Painesville, Ohio. This is strong presumptive proof that the "Manuscript Found" would not bear out the claim that it was the origin of the Book of Mormon. If it had done there is no more certain conclusion to reach than that Messrs. Hurlbut and Howe would never have contented themselves with attempting to prove from the memory of those who "heard portions of it read" that the manuscript and Book of Mormon were one and the same thing in essence, but would have at once put the manuscript in print and thus silenced the claim to Divine inspiration for all time. It will not do to say that there was "a transcript made by Spaulding," and that from this transcript the Book of Mormon was written and published. This only complicates the difficulty and would have rendered detection all the more certain, if Mr. Howe held the original. One of two conclusions is inevitable, that the "Manuscript Found," the possession of which has been traced, was not the original of the Book of Mormon, or that no manuscript bearing such similarity to the Book of Mormon from which it could have been so plagiarized was ever written; and that the mythical romance referred to, suppressed as it has been, has been made to do mysterious duty by those opposed to and at enmity with Joseph Smith and Mormonism, and who have not the honesty to return the manuscript to Mrs. McKinstry, or to publish it themselves, that the infamy of their course may be made plain; or the presumption of the plagiarism fully established.

The point which you attempt to make on page 14, that it is "adding insult to injury to call on Mr. Spaulding's daughter to collate the Book of Mormon with her father's manuscript of which she has been so shamefully robbed," is very much out of place. Mrs. Spaulding and her daughter and Mr. W. H. Sabine were *Particeps criminis* in whatever robbery was committed; and were parties in an endeavor

to fasten gross fraud upon Joseph Smith; and if Hurlbut did not get the "Manuscript Found" it was not the fault of Mrs. Spaulding and her daughter; and it sounds very like a whine of chagrin at the apparent failure of the scheme, to what Hurlbut essayed to do for them or any one else, to put in such a plea of indignation against a sound charge, that the natural guardians and custodians of that remarkable document, the alleged origin of the Book of Mormon, should either produce the original, or show conclusive and good reason why they do not.

That the "Manuscript Found," either in the original, or a transcribed form, was ever in the hands of Sidney Rigdon, is a matter of assumption only, and based upon the peculiar sort of proof that characterizes the whole affair presented by Howe and others, viz: "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," etc. From this presumption, the existence of two copies is taken as proved. If this were so, it is in proof, and that from the statement of your father and Mrs. Spaulding, that whatever was left at the printing office was returned to Mrs. Spaulding; thus tracing original sheets and transcribed copy into the hands of their rightful owners. Which of these did Hurlbut get? If the original sheets, the transcribed copy was still left with Mrs. Spaulding, and whether the original or transcribed copy, the difficulty of Sidney Rigdon's securing either without detection is increased materially.

It is very singular that the method of proof resorted to by Howe, (upon the supposition that he wrote "Mormonism Unveiled") should have been adopted by you. The witnesses with scarcely an exception are of that class that gives secondary or hearsay evidence. John Spaulding tells what his brother *told* him. Martha Spaulding, states that having read the Book of Mormon, she has no doubt it is the same historically that she read and heard read more than twenty years ago. Nahum Howard states only what he says Spaulding told him. Artemus Cunningham recollects an expression, "I Nephi," as occurring in the reading of a manuscript by Spaulding—but pleads the lapse of twenty-two years, as accounting for a failure to remember more fully the general plot. After a partial examination he believes that Spaulding wrote the outlines before leaving Conneaut. The secondary statement of Mrs. Matilda (Spaulding) Davison, was written down by Rev. D. R. Austin, and printed by him in the *Boston Recorder* in 1839.

In direct reference to this very statement, Parley P. Pratt wrote to the *New Era*, November 27th, 1839, denying Mr. Rigdon's alleged connection with the getting up of the Book of Mormon. As to the truth of the statement then made he writes: "The person or persons who fabricated that falsehood would do well to repent." Mr. Pratt states further: "Mr. Rigdon embraced the doctrine through my instrumentality. I first presented the Book of Mormon to him. I stood upon the bank of the stream while he was baptized, and assisted to officiate in his ordination, and I was unacquainted with the system

until some months after its organization, which was on the Sixth of April, 1830, and I embraced it in September following."

Mr. Pratt further notices that "Mormonism Unveiled" makes Mr. Hurlbut to state that the manuscript of the Spaulding romance was "not to be found," while Mrs. Davison in her *Boston Recorder* letter states, that "it was carefully preserved." Pratt also challenges the production of the manuscript, that its truth may be seen. He writes: "If there be such a manuscript in existence, let it come forward at once, and not be kept in the dark."

Mr. Howe's book was not at that date so old, nor the time and place so remote, but what there was strong probability that such a production of the manuscript might have been had, if it was in existence. Mr. Pratt adds: "The Spaulding story, so far as the origin of the Book of Mormon is concerned, I know to be false."

Jesse Haven passed through Monson soon after the publication of the letter in the *Boston Recorder*, and to him Mrs. Davison denied signing or sending the letter which you quote from. In the same interview she stated that Dr. Hurlbut did get the manuscript, and afterwards wrote to her that it did not read as was expected, and it would not be published. This *Boston Recorder* letter was written by D. R. Austin, and you make it do duty as her own.

In January, 1836, the truth of the statements in Howe's book was specifically denied in the *Messenger and Advocate*, then published in Kirtland by the Church of Christ, or Latter Day Saints, in plain terms, viz: "Witness Mr. Campbell's recommendation of Howe's book, while he knows, as well as every person who reads it, that it is a batch of falsehoods." In the same paper for April is another reference to Mr. Howe's book as an attempt to overthrow Mormonism, which is indirectly denominated as "wicked and scurrilous."

Mrs. Spaulding and Mrs. McKinstry, who had personal access to the effects of Mr. Spaulding, including the manuscript left by him, are very careful in their statements respecting the contents of the manuscript called the "Manuscript Found." Indeed, Mrs. Spaulding does not state anything in regard to her knowledge of that work, and it is certainly reasonable to suppose that she also, if all the neighbors came to hear the manuscript read, would have heard it; but she does not so state. Mrs. McKinstry, however, testifies, only as late as 1880, and then reiterates the names of some that she heard him mention while reading. This is strikingly peculiar; for in the same article written by Miss E. E. Dickinson, from which you quote, Mrs. McKinstry states that she "perfectly remembers the trunk and its contents, one of which was the 'Manuscript Found.'" She had then an opportunity to read it, and if she had so read it could have spoken from her reading and not her hearing. She also states: "I remember that the old trunk with its contents reached her [her mother] in safety." This was when it had been sent from Onondaga Valley to Hartwick, New York. You are not at liberty to deny what Mrs. McKinstry states respecting the safety of the manuscript in the *Scribner*; for you have quoted from it as competent.

The introduction of Mr. Sabine as a witness is also peculiar; Mrs. McKinstry having said "he 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." His "desire to uproot this Mormon fraud" was the motive for urging his sister to loan it to Mr. Hurlbut. If Mr. Sabine had read it, why did he not say so? Mrs. McKinstry states that her mother gave Mr. Hurlbut an order to Mr. Jerome Clark to deliver this manuscript, which she perfectly remembers was in the trunk, to him, which he did. The purpose was that it might be compared with the Book of Mormon. Neither Hurlbut nor Howe ever made this comparison; but Hurlbut does state that he gave what he received to E. D. Howe. Neither Howe, Hurlbut, nor Sabine tells what were the contents of that manuscript.

July 26th, 1881, Mr. E. D. Howe wrote from Painesville, Ohio, to T. W. Smith, then of Chicago, Illinois, now of Stewartsville, Missouri, as follows:

"Sir:—Your note of 21st is before me, and I will answer your queries seriatim.

"1st. The manuscript you refer to was not marked on the outside or inside, 'Manuscript Found.' It was a common-place story of some Indian wars along the borders of our great lakes between the Chicagos and Eries, as I now recollect—not in Bible style, but purely modern.

"2d. It was not the original 'Manuscript Found,' and I do not believe Hurlbut ever had it.

"3d. I never saw or heard read the 'Manuscript Found,' but have seen five or six persons who had, and from their testimony, concluded it was very much like the Mormon Bible.

"4th. Never succeeded in finding out anything more than was detailed in my book of exposure published about fifty years ago.

"5th. The manuscript that came into my possession I *suspect* was destroyed by *fire* forty years ago.

"I think there has been much mist thrown around the whole subject of the origin of the Mormon Bible and the 'Manuscript Found,' by the several statements that have been made by those who have been endeavoring to solve the problem after sleeping quietly for half a century. Every effort was made to unravel the mystery at the time, when nearly all parties were on earth, and the result published at the time, and I think it all folly to try to dig out anything more.

(Signed),

E. D. HOWE."

I have now traced this "Manuscript Found" to its end; and there is not a particle of positive proof showing that either Joseph Smith or Sidney Rigdon ever saw it.

Dr. Hurlbut was a man of some parts, and E. D. Howe was evidently well versed in lore, legal and otherwise; now, if the shrewd lawyer of Onondaga valley, Mr. Sabine, had read the "Manuscript Found," he would have known whether or not it would "uproot Mormonism;" and E. D. Howe must have known also whether it would have done so. But neither Howe, Hurlbut, nor Sabine ever stated what was in it, and all of them can not get away with this fatal conclusion, that the manuscript was strangled in their hands, and they, not the Mormons who never had it, (not even the surmised im-

proved transcript of Mr. Spaulding himself), are the ones who have so shamefully robbed the widow and the fatherless of this fabulous history. The very wail that you set up about their having been so despoiled, in the light of these facts, is a lame confession that you and they believe now that the manuscript suppressed, as I have shown that it was, was the identical "Manuscript Found," or that which was and has been made to do duty as such.

The statement of Mr. Howe in regard to the manuscript which he received from Mr. Hurlbut, that it was a history of war between hostile tribes of Indians "along the borders of our great lakes," opens ground for the presumption that this was the production read to the family and neighbors of Rev. Spaulding, and accounts for the recollection of the destructive battles fought in the regions of western New York and northern Ohio, of which so much is made as to their similarity to the Book of Mormon. This presumption is made still stronger by the fact, that when lying in the trunk as so perfectly remembered by Mrs. McKinstry, (if it was the only manuscript there when the order for it was given to Mr. Hurlbut), it was enclosed in a wrapper marked on the outside, "Manuscript Found." This wrapper would be easily removed by Hurlbut in transmission to Howe, with a view to mislead after inquiry as to the identity of the one he got and the "Manuscript Found," which has been so long and so industriously flaunted in the faces of the people by testimony of such a character that it could not be introduced in any Court of inquiry the world over, by reason of its being contrary to all recognized rules of evidence.

I offer you the following suggestion. The most obvious presumption that those who may yet write upon this question may make, is to dispose of the "Manuscript Found" long before it reaches Howe, in this way. "It is to be presumed that after Rev. Spaulding had taken the transcribed copy of his work, the 'Manuscript Found,' to Mr. Patterson's office, and it had been returned to him as impracticable, he took the copy and the original and destroyed them, as no longer necessary to be kept. But being of an economical turn of mind, he saved the outside blank sheet on which the title was written, and in that wrapped up his work on the history of the Chicago and Erie Indians, and placed it in the trunk with other manuscripts, where it was found by Mr. Clark at Mrs. Davison's order." This would remove the difficulty of accounting for the disappearance of the manuscript in so questionable a manner, as has been done; and losing sight of it while in the hands of its author, and rightful owner, would thus lay a better foundation upon which to introduce the hearsay evidence so much relied on. To me this is far more plausible than the theory so far advanced.

The animus of these witnesses must enter into the account. Dr. P. Hurlbut the actual compiler of the work, the agent of discovery, was an enemy to Joseph Smith, and the Church. He had been a member of said Church and was expelled, either for good cause or otherwise. As a recalcitrant Mormon he essayed to destroy that Church, and its faith, both in the Book of Mormon and Joseph Smith, He completed the compiling of the work and sold it to E. D. Howe;

either because he had scruples about publishing it, or because his own prestige was bad, whichever you choose, and his connection with the work ceased. E. D. Howe does not testify except as I have quoted in regard to what the manuscript received from Hurlbut was. The testimony of the eight witnesses, is not given upon oath, and bears evidence of having been written by the same hand, the product of one brain, that of Hurlbut. Those who make these statements are not friendly, but at enmity with Joseph Smith. The same objection of enmity lies against all of the witnesses. Of several of the statements I have nothing to say, recollections, impressions and opinions are made to do duty as proofs in a very unsatisfactory way.

Rev. Kirk says that Dr. Winter told him that Mr. Rigdon told him.—

Dr. Winter's daughter says her father said that Rigdon got Spaulding's manuscript.—

Rev. Bonsall heard Dr. Winter say so and so.—

And the impression of these three is that Dr. Winter wrote out his recollections—and therefore of course he did.

Mrs. Amos Dunlap saw Rigdon reading a manuscript, therefore it was the Spaulding Romance.

Pomeroy Tucker says "a mysterious stranger visits Joseph Smith," therefore Sidney Rigdon is the man.

Mrs. Horace Eaton makes a similar statement, assuming it as a matter of course.

I tell you, Mr. Patterson, such a system of presumption, based upon foundations so strained and bare of fact, is in no way calculated to impress a candid and legal mind with a sense of fairness and honor in the treatment of the subject.

Mr. James T. Cobb is the son of the woman known as Brigham Young's Boston wife. He was an inmate of Brigham's family and partaker of his bounty, and a member of the church in Utah, as I am informed. His domestic life was poisoned by the defection of his own wife; and subsequently still, his daughter, Luella, became the polygamous wife of John W. Young, supplanting that gentleman's Philadelphia wife. For these reasons he is an intense hater of Mormonism; and I am quite surprised that instead of publishing the work which you have sent me, as portions of it bear the imprint of his genius, he has sent the results of his work to you, as in almost exact accordance with the Hurlbut and Howe work. I do not blame him for not liking polygamy, or Brigham Young's memory, if it is true, as I am informed by residents of Salt Lake City, that mother, wife and daughter fell into its meshes. He has written me copiously, and boasted to me that he would destroy Mormonism, root and branch; and I am persuaded to believe that the many newspaper articles so lavishly scattered over the land, are in the main his work. That he has acted like himself, unscrupulously, I can but believe.

Let me now call your attention to a very strange inconsistency in the train of reasoning adopted by you, in culminating your web of circumstantial evidences.

Sidney Rigdon was the inspiring genius, the black pope of the whole plot, laid at the time of the supposed abstraction of the mythical transcript from the office of Patterson and Lambdin. That Sidney Rigdon was a scamp and had always been.

That he fooled the Baptist Church first, and afterwards the Disciples, and

finally adopted the faith of the Mormons. That he was shrewd, cunning, and so extremely careful in his methods of deception that he so covered up all possible connection with Joseph Smith, whom he was to employ as a tool, that no positive collusion has been, or can be proved between them—and that he was a crack-brained youth, having had his head hurt when a boy. This hurt in his head injured his *intellect*, but did not impair his *mental* faculties, and totally destroyed his moral nature, so that he was capable of any abominable trickery and imposition. Notwithstanding this, he studied for the ministry, was ordained and held the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburg, and was afterwards an able assistant and rival of Alexander Campbell in the Disciple Church, and an eloquent and able man among the Mormons; so much so that when permitted to address an audience of enemies when under arrest in Missouri, in the Court of Judge King, he so won upon the minds of those present, that he was not only discharged from arrest, but a purse was made up for him to aid him in getting out of the state. This statement is made by one who was an attorney and acting general in the militia of the state of Missouri, and present at the time.

I send you marked articles which please read. My mother states that no acquaintance was formed between Sidney Rigdon and the Smith family till after the Church was organized in 1830. That neither my father nor herself ever saw Sidney Rigdon until long after the Book of Mormon was in print. This agrees with the statements of P. Pratt, who says that he first presented the Book of Mormon to Rigdon. It also corroborates what Rigdon says, that the story of his connection with the Spaulding story and the origin of the Book of Mormon is a "base lie," or the "most base of lies."

David Whitmer, whom I saw in April last, at his home in Richmond, Missouri, where he is now living, states positively that the Book of Mormon was published long before Sidney Rigdon was known to his family, or the Smiths. He states further, that he knows that the story told of the same romance in connection with the Book of Mormon, is false.

David Whitmer states that when Joseph Smith was engaged in translating the Book of Mormon, he sat with his face covered, and dictated to those writing for him hour after hour, and day after day, without break or apparent hesitation; and that he would return to the work after a meal or after the night's rest and sleep, and taking his place with his face covered, at once begin to dictate without having any portion of what had preceded read to him. He was asked by another in my presence, and at my suggestion, whether at any time, to his knowledge, Joseph Smith had, or used while ostensibly translating, any book or any manuscript copy of any sort, from which he read. He replied emphatically that he had not. It was suggested that he might have had such document, and possessing himself of its contents secretly, might have dictated from memory. He replied that such a thing was impossible; that Joseph Smith was a poor scholar, could scarcely write a legible hand, and could never have read a written copy of any sort without consulting some one to help him.

Oliver Cowdery tells the same story respecting the translating while it was being done.

My mother, whom I interrogated upon the subject, stated that she wrote for my father, (Oliver Cowdery and one of the Whitmers and Martin Harris also wrote for him), and that she knew the plates to have been in his possession; that they frequently lay upon her table in the room where she was at work; that she had felt of them through the small sack or bag

in which they were kept; that they had the feeling of thin metal plates, and that they rustled under the fingers as do the thick leaves of a book when one thumbs the edges, but with a metallic sound; that father frequently translated from them, (as David Whitmer states), without hesitation or break, hour after hour, as fast as she could write, (and she was a fair scholar for the times), and that without having any passage already written read to him as a starting point. I asked her the same question that I afterwards had put to David Whitmer, whether he had not some manuscript or book, or paper copy, from which he read to the scribe. She replied that he had not, neither at the time she wrote for him, nor when Oliver Cowdery or Whitmer wrote. I suggested that he might have had such manuscript concealed and have committed it to memory day by day, and thus repeated it to be written. She stated that this could not have been done; for he could not have had any such manuscript or book without her finding it out; besides this, such a thing as that would require more of an intellectual effort than she was willing to give my father credit for possessing. My step-father, present at the interview, asked my mother why she had not undone the sack and examined the plates, while she had opportunity, and also if her husband ever forbade her examining them? To this she replied that she had plenty of opportunities if she had so desired; that she had not been forbidden to handle them, but that she did not feel it to be honorable to examine them in his absence, or have curiosity enough to do so even when he was present. She was satisfied as to what they were, and had faith enough in her husband to believe that he came honestly into the possession of the plates. She also stated that when she wrote for my father there was no screen between him and the writer, and that much of the dictating and writing was done in her presence and in the room in which they lived and where she was at work about her daily tasks. I suggested that it might have been possible for father to have had some work from which he would commit to memory and so dictate from memory. This she thought impossible, because when not engaged in translating he was busy at work about the premises, or with other parties, when he had no opportunity to do so by stealth. My aunt Catharine, father's sister, states that Sidney Rigdon was not known to the Smith family, until he came to Kirtland; that soon after his coming he performed the ceremony of marriage for Mr. Jenkins Salisbury and herself. She was an inmate of her father's family until her marriage, and was well acquainted with the family affairs and knows that Sidney Rigdon's acquaintance with any of the family dated after the publication of the Book of Mormon.

There is some reason to believe that the Spaulding manuscript story, as a makeshift origin for the Book of Mormon, did not originate with Mr. Hurlbut, but was suggested by Obadiah Dogberry, who published *The Reflector*, at Palmyra, New York, in 1830-31. This editor furnished the key note for this cry in his paper for February 23d, 1831, as follows:—

"It is well known that Joe Smith never pretended to have any communion with angels, until a long period after the pretended finding of his book, and that the juggling of himself or father went no further than the pretended faculty of seeing wonders in a 'peep stone,' and the occasional interview with the spirit, supposed to have the custody of hidden treasures; and it is also equally well known, that a vagabond fortune teller by the name of Walters, who then resided in the town of Sodus, and was once committed to the jail of this county for juggling, was the constant companion and bosom friend of these money digging impostors.

"There remains but little doubt, in the minds of those at all acquainted with these transactions, that Walters, who was sometimes called the conjurer, and was paid three dollars per day for his services by the money diggers in this neighborhood, first suggested to Smith the idea of finding a book. Walters, the better to carry on his own deceptions with those ignorant and deluded people who employed him, had procured an old copy of Cicero's Orations in the Latin language, out of which he read long and loud to his credulous hearers, uttering at the same time an unintelligible jargon, which he would afterwards pretend to interpret, and explain, as a record of the former inhabitants of America, and a particular account of the numerous situations where they had deposited their treasures previous to their final extirpation.

"So far did this impostor carry this diabolical farce, that not long previous to the pretended discovery of the 'Book of Mormon,' Walters assembled his nightly band of money diggers in the town of Manchester, at a point designated in his magical book, and drawing a circle around the laborers, with the point of an old rusty sword, and using sundry other incantations, for the purpose of propitiating the spirit, absolutely sacrificed a fowl ('Rooster') in presence of his awe-stricken companions, to the foul spirit whom ignorance had created, the guardian of hidden wealth; and after digging until day-light, his deluded employers retired to their several habitations, fatigued and disappointed."

It is too bad that Walters should be cheated out of the honors of his suggestion by the Spaulding Manuscript, mythical as it undoubtedly is.

The doctrinal portions of the Book of Mormon are not those that one would expect from a retired clergyman of the Presbyterian school. They begin with the history and are intimately interwoven with it from first to last; and some of the cardinal features of the Presbyterian confession of faith are discarded. A Baptist writer, Professor Whitsitt, in a lecture delivered before a Baptist Pastors' Conference, and published in the *Western Recorder*, takes the ground that the Book of Mormon was written in the direct interest of the Campbellites, and in support of their confession of faith, that "Jesus is the Christ." He takes up item after item in the book, and emphatically declares that there can be no other conclusion drawn. Mrs. McKinstry and others represent the Spaulding manuscript to be a historical sketch of the early settlers of this continent, who were an idolatrous people; and this peculiarity of the manuscript is attributed to Mr. Spaulding's tendency to infidelity in the latter years of his life, and from 1809 to 16 must have been the latter years of that Reverend gentleman's life. He wrote it as a religious novel, for amusement as the pastime of his invalid hours, and as the passion of his life, and as a means to pay his debts. He was idle for a great portion of his time, etc. It is a little discouraging to think that a good man, a godly man of the strictest sect, would engage in writing a religious romance, and read it to his hearers with such earnestness and fidelity that it would carry them away; telling them that in after times it would be as much believed as any other history, could do all this without a design of imposing upon posterity; and that such a writer should get into debt and seek his way out by the publication of such a work, helps to discourage a belief in the story told of him.

The Book of Mormon was sold at the start at \$1.25. Howe's book was offered for sale at its publication at the same price. The year after its publication it was purchased by the elders of the church at thirteen cents a copy.

Howe's book had but little effect upon the progress of the church in and about Kirtland. Whatever the causes may have been to prevent, it had but little success as a destroyer of Mormonism, even with the prestige of Mr. Howe's character and influence to give it impetus.

Mr. Ebenezer Robinson, now of Davis City, Iowa, a resident of Kirtland, in 1835, and thence till the church moved from there, states that during all the time of his stay there the elders everywhere publicly denied the truthfulness of the statement made by Howe in reference to the origin of the Book of Mormon. Benjamin Winchester, resident of Philadelphia in 1840, and now of Council Bluffs, Iowa, wrote and published a pamphlet against it in Philadelphia in the year 1840. This pamphlet was published by Brown, Bicking and Guilbert, No. 56, North Third Street. In the *Times and Seasons*, a paper published by the Church at Nauvoo, in 1839 to 1844, in the number for 1840, is a specific editorial statement that the Spaulding Romance origin for the Book of Mormon was not true. The editors state that they speak from personal knowledge.

John E. Page wrote a pamphlet called "The Spaulding story refuted," I think at Pittsburgh, and about 1840. The church had it reprinted, but I have not a copy at hand just now to give you the exact date. Mr. Robinson before referred to, states that the story was definitely denied by the elders wherever they went, and I know that it is so done to-day, and the issue shown. Hence the statement made by you that the statements made in Mr. Howe's book were not denied in and about Kirtland, Painesville, etc., the region where it was issued, and are therefore to be taken as confessed, can not be true, and is ingeniously and purposely stated to mislead.

Below in this connection I send you an extract from a letter written for and published in the *Evangelist* for September 30th, 1880, by S. Burnet. I quote it to show you that the logic of evidence is on my side.

"I lived near Kirtland, Ohio, and was seventeen years old in 1830. Sydney Rigdon was uncle to my present wife, and for many years, or until the Smiths left, we knew them all personally. The Spaulding manuscript had no connection with the Book of Mormon, else when Harris' wife, an unbeliever, stole and burnt the first one hundred and twenty pages, they could have copied again, but that changed the whole plan of the work; new plates had to be found, and the translation was delayed a long time, and another scribe, Cowdery, procured. Though Spaulding wrote fiction, he was a man too well informed to make two families, men and women and children, take their tents, provisions and seeds to plant the new country, and leaving Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ, plunge into the wilderness where there was none, and travel on foot three days, and pitch their tents 160 miles from the place of starting, in a valley at the mouth of a river on the border of the Red Sea, where there never was a river for more than 300 miles either way along the shore of the sea."

The long and labored effort of Howe's book to throw discredit upon the literary character of the Book of Mormon, and its crude statements, etc., both in its historic statements and other things, is in itself a rough comment on the Rev. Spaulding, as a scholar and refined gentleman, for he nowhere tells the readers which is Spaulding's and which is Rigdon's or Smith's. If the Rigdon theory is correct, the plot of the story is Spaulding's, and the situations and poses are his. If he was the scholarly man that his eulogists say that he was, how comes it that the book which is said to be his production is of such an abominably wretched construction, as these same eulogists declare it to be. Sidney Rigdon was not a fool, nor to any serious extent ignorant of the rules of the language of the day when he lived. He was not such an ignoramus but what he succeeded in passing muster in examination for the Baptist pulpit, and rivaled Alexander Campbell

among the Disciples; and it is not only unreasonable but absurd to assert that he would take a finished Romance, such as it is said that Rev. Spaulding wrote, written "with such earnestness and fidelity" as to entertain the hearers, and deliberately fill it with incongruities of phraseology, faults of construction, crudities in grammar, violations of common speech, etc., as it is claimed by Howe, whom you have adopted, and as Williams, Tucker, *et al*, have charged upon the Book of Mormon.

Sidney Rigdon, if he had ever attempted a travesty on the Spaulding Romance, would have disguised it after quite another fashion than to make it a butt of ridicule for its inelegancies of speech. To say that the good parts are Spaulding's, the bad are Rigdon's production, is too general, nor would such evidence be allowed in the examination, were strict justness and fairness preserved; but the specific parts claimed to be Spaulding's would have to be named, as in claims of piracy on copyrighted works, or suits for slander or defamation of character. Besides this, the acknowledged good portions of the Book of Mormon are its doctrinal teachings, which are emphatically supportive of the teaching of the New Testament; in maintenance of the Christ is the Redeemer; and this teaching begins with the history, and is found all the way through. Are these doctrinal portions the result of a sick clergyman's pen? "No," says Mr. Howe, and others. "They are Sidney Rigdon's peculiar ideas." They are sound Biblical teachings; how can they then be the vicious production of a finished scoundrel, who hunted up a visionary, idle, bibulous vagabond to make the dupe of his pretensions, and fulminate his doctrines. "But," says Howe and others again: "The historical parts only are Spaulding's." Howe says that these are bad, very bad, the plot crude, the language bad. How then can the bad parts be Spaulding's and Rigdon's at the same time?

No, Mr. Patterson, as ingenious and careful as has been your work, aided as I can but fancy by Mr. Cobb, the presumptive proof you have woven together, must be overborne by the plainest facts in the case. The inconsistencies of the claim made for Spaulding's Romance are so numerous and striking, that I can not receive them. I prefer to believe the statements of my mother, whose character for veracity and honor is as good as that of any reverend gentleman you have named; and she stated that Sidney Rigdon was not in any wise connected with the writing or issuing of the Book of Mormon. Her opportunities to know were superlatively better than those of any who have testified in your pamphlet.

If it can be shown clearly, as I think has been done, that Joseph Smith was alone in producing the Book of Mormon, so far as human agencies are concerned; and that there was no collusion between him and Sidney Rigdon prior to the printing of that book, whether Rigdon had or had not a transcript, or the original of the "Manuscript Found," and that Smith had neither original nor copy, it is clear that every premise upon which your presumptions are built has been proven to be false, and your theory an incorrect one.

Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and Sidney Rigdon maintained their testimony respecting the Book of Mormon to the day of their departure from earth. David Whitmer at seventy-four still maintains it. Dr. W. E. McLellin, though opposing all organizations of Mormons, still maintains his faith in that work. Why not then take the book into examination for its truths? Why accept only those things which libel and traduce it?

I close this long letter by stating, I have for twenty years, heard, read and examined all that came in my way that offered a proof to invalidate the claim made by Joseph Smith respecting the origin of the Book of Mormon; and have had and now have as strong reasons for discarding that claim as any one can possibly have for proving it false; but the methods pursued by those who have offered such proofs have been so uniformly prejudiced and unfair, and the proofs of such doubtful and inconsistent character as to be presumptive only; while those coming to my notice in favor of the claim made for the origin as given by Joseph Smith have been of so direct, plain and unequivocal a nature that I can not yet disprove them. Sidney Rigdon in the two or three years prior to my father's death was not in cordial relation with him; and after my father was killed, was in actual discord with Brigham Young and others, and had an ample and wonderful opportunity to revenge himself, had he been the bad man Howe and yourself have made him to be, by declaring the imposture practiced in foisting the Spaulding Romance upon the credulous as a divine production. That he did not do this, nor ever give the remotest hint in that direction, is as strong presumptive evidence in disproof of the claim that you have made in that regard as any you have cited is in support of your theory.

For your courtesy in sending me pamphlets accept my thanks.

JOSEPH SMITH.

FOOT NOTE.

On page 15 of his pamphlet, Mr. Patterson urges an objection as follows: "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!" This objection is doubtless based upon the fact that the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, section 9, contains a revelation directing Joseph Smith to begin the second time the work of translating the Book of Mormon, and this revelation is dated May, 1829; and that in August, 1829, the manuscript was delivered to the printer, allowing only the intervening time for the work of translating. It is founded upon one of those pernicious errors in dates, which creep in through the mistakes of writers or printers, and are often very difficult to detect; but happily in this case, the detection is both easy and certain. The error is in the date of the revelation which is found in section 9 of Doctrine and Covenants, and which directs Joseph Smith to renew the work of translating, the true date of this revelation being July or August, 1828. This is proven in two ways. By the contents of the two revelations, and by the history concerning their reception, given by Joseph Smith.

The two revelations upon examination are found to refer to the same thing, namely, the manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon which had been lost, and we would naturally expect, therefore, that they were received within "a few days" of the same time. The history of the matter, as given by Joseph Smith, is as follows:

"In the mean time while Martin Harris was gone with the writings, I went to visit my father's family at Manchester. I continued there for a short season, and then returned to my place in Pennsylvania. Immediately after my return home, I was walking out a little distance, when behold the former heavenly messenger appeared and handed to me the Urim and Thummim again, (for it had been taken from me in consequence of my having wearied the Lord in asking for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings which he lost by transgression), and I enquired of the Lord through them and obtained the following revelation: Revelation to Joseph Smith, Jr., given July, 1828, concerning certain manuscripts on the first part of the Book of Mormon, which has been taken from the possession of Martin Harris." The revelation referred to is then quoted. This is the revelation found in section 2 of Doctrine and Covenants. Immediately after the quotation of this revelation, occurs the following:

"After I had obtained the above revelation, both the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from me again, but in a few days they were returned to me, when I enquired of the Lord, and the Lord said thus unto me. Revelation given to Joseph Smith, Jr., May, 1829," etc. Then follows the revelation in full.

Here are two revelations which the historian informs us were given but a "few days" apart, but which, if the dates they now bear are to be trusted, were given *ten months* apart. That there is an error no doubt can exist. But where is it? In the revelation now bearing date July, 1828, or that bearing date May, 1829? Most certainly in the latter, as a further examination of the history clearly shows. Immediately after the quotation of the revelation last referred to by Mr. Smith, he says:

"I did not however go immediately to translating, but went to laboring with my hands upon a small farm which I had purchased of my wife's father, in order to provide for my family. In the month of February, eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, my father came to visit us, at which time I received the following revelation for him." Then follows the revelation referred to. We have already seen that the revelation bearing date May, 1829, was given "a few days after the one bearing date July, 1828. We now see from the above quotation, that it was given some time before a revelation which was received in February, 1829.

By following the historical account farther we discover, that all the revelations which appear in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants from section 2 to section 9, were given after the one in section 9; and that those contained in sections 8 and 10, were given without any revelation between them. It is clear then that there is an error in dates, and equally clear that it is in the date of the revelation now dated May, 1829; and it is farther clearly ascertained, that this should be dated a few days after, sometime in July, 1828.

The history farther shows that the work of translation was re-commenced on April 17th, 1829, which would allow four months for the work, the manuscript having been delivered to the printer the following August.

The historical references to which we call attention, are found in the *Times and Seasons*, published at Nauvoo, Ill., vol. 3, pp. 788, 801, 817, 832, 353, 354, 865, and 884.