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Author(s): Robert C. Webb

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

BY ROBERT C. WEBB, PH. D., A NON-"MORMON"

The latest manifestation of anti-"Mormon" enthusiasm has been Dr. Spalding's symposium on the merits of Joseph Smith's claims as a translator of ancient languages. Although conducted with every last appearance of fairness and good-feeling, it evidently had as its sole object to help the "Mormon" people to see the errors of their beliefs, on the theory that, having so seen, they must become "like the rest of us." Thus, although the Bishop is above repeating the vulgar and un-Christian attacks on the character of Joseph Smith or of his ancestors, and is also too honest to give further currency to the vile lies and slanders against the Latter-day Saints, both of which are sadly too familiar in missionary literature, he seems to assume, with sublime simplicity, that the "Mormon" people will rush in eager jostling crowds from out of the shelter of their Church, because a few selected scholars have declared, as scholars are very liable to do in such cases, that Joseph Smith's professed translations of a few ancient drawings are not wholly in accord with their present standards of knowledge.

The Bishop concludes his 17-page scholarly criticisms with the following joyous climax: "It is in the belief that the honest searchers for truth among the Latter-day Saints will welcome the foreword to his 8¼-page anthology of opinions of authoritative scholars, and, if necessary, courageously readjust their system of belief, however radical a revolution of thought may be required, that the . . . judgments of the world's greatest Egyptologists have been ascertained." All this should happen because, as he has already asserted, "If . . . the translation of the 'Book of Abraham' is incorrect, then no thoughtful man can be asked to accept the Book of Mormon, but, on the other hand, honesty will require him, with whatever personal regret, to repudiate it and the whole body of belief, which has been built upon it and upon the reputation its publication gave to its author."

Sadly for him no part of the original text of this book, whatever that original may have been, is available for examination by scholars, or any other persons. Consequently, if any Latter-day Saints are led into following the suggested program, it will be solely because they accept the very forceful

sylogism, "Since Joseph Smith did not know the picture of God Anubis from an 'idolatrous priest,' nor Abraham from a picture of God Osiris, he knew nothing at all, and is a wholly discredited guide in matters religious or otherwise." Such a method of reasoning, if followed to the letter, would soon dispeople all churches whatsoever, and the perennial "Mormon" problem would cease from troubling.

However, the Bishop has suggested a line of investigation, which should be followed to its logical conclusion, and discussed from all angles, in order that "honest searchers after truth" may miss no possible opportunity to "readjust their system of belief." He has suggested in all apparent honesty sundry difficulties which, in his mind, evidently constitute real obstacles to a childlike faith. These should be removed, if possible, by a proper handling of the subject, which, through misapprehension, undoubtedly, he has mishandled.

Since the originals of the two works which Joseph Smith claimed to have translated from ancient languages, have disappeared, precisely as did the Aramaic originals of the Synoptic Gospels, from which the Greek translations were evidently made, and the tables of stone received by Moses from the hand of God, how can we explain the very real difficulty which has emerged in the mind of Dr. Spalding? Is there any way in which we can form an honest conclusion on the merits of the Prophet's abilities as a translator? Curiously enough, there is, and in following it, we have nearly as sure a method of coming at the truth as if the papyrus of Abraham and the golden plates of Mormon were available for expert examination.

If there is any truth in the accepted accounts, the Prophet followed no ordinary method in his work as a translator. In rendering into English the Book of Mormon, at least, he claims to have been guided by the 'gift and power of God,' whose approval also crowned the completed work. Claims to such assistance are, of course, easy to make, but difficult to justify. Consequently, there is nothing remarkable in the fact that Smith's assertion in this line has been railed at and ridiculed ever since it was first uttered. It is only just to remark,

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however, that Joseph Smith's professed work as a translator was only a part of his total significance—from some points of view, even a nearly negligible part—since in all his life-activities he claimed this same special divine guidance, and in some matters even exceeded his reputation as a translator.

A WONDERFUL CHARACTER.

On any theory we may adopt, Joseph Smith was a wonderfully many-sided character. His reputation does not stand or fall with judgments on any one of his many lines of activity, although all must be judged on a common standard. Failure to recognize this fact has been a serious error in nearly all attacks from the myth of Solomon Spaulding's authorship of the Book of Mormon, to the blunder of Bishop F. S. Spalding's pamphlet on the Book of Abraham. Even with the destruction of his reputation as an author, or translator, there is still a large and healthy body of difficulties. The problem of how a person reputed an ignorant and unprincipled charlatan could originate so splendid an organization as the Mormon Church, or formulate so consistent a body of doctrine as is the theology of that Church, is still to be settled. Ignorant charlatans seldom go to so much trouble in such matters, even when they have the native ability to do large things. Nor are matters much assisted by claiming as have some, that Brigham Young, "a really great man," deserves the credit for the Church organization and the theological system. President Young was, indeed, too great a man to follow with childlike faith the leadership of one who added transparent fraud to defects of other varieties, and to give that other invariable credit for the things he himself is stated to have done.

The enthusiastic devotion to Smith of his early followers, many of them, like Young, Woodruff, Taylor, Kimball, the Pratt brothers, and a score of others, men of strong character and high native ability, is remarkable, when we consider that it has continued apparently unchanged for three generations, and more. By the dictum of Gamaliel, quoted with apparent approval in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, such consideration is something of a bar to the conclusion that Smith was a mere vulgar charlatan, as his critics insist. Again, when we find force and ability coupled with ambition, as in the person of Sidney Rigdon, the fact of consistent adherence to Smith's claims, through all vicissitudes, even to the end, is no other than significant. Men of the Rigdon type are liable to turn against and ex-

pose charlatans, but Rigdon never denied his belief in Smith's claims, nor attempted to "expose" him. In fact, like hundreds and hundreds of others of Smith's disciples, Rigdon was willing to suffer, and actually did suffer, all extremes of persecution for the sake of his belief in these same teachings, and until a late period, for the sake, also, of his devotion to Smith as a man.

The deeper one studies the history of Joseph Smith, and the Church founded by him, the more surprising it seems that, on the assumption that he was an unmitigated charlatan, someone did not expose him thoroughly. We hear perennially that the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon all apostatized at a later period. The people who make this statement always carefully refrain from adding that two of the three crept back to the shelter of the Church, just previous to their deaths—rather a peculiar preparation for the "change," if their original testimony was false—and, that the third founded a sect of his own, in which the Book of Mormon was placed only second to the Bible, as a standard of belief. In this matter the testimony of the three witnesses on the origin of the Book of Mormon appears to have been founded in some real conviction at the start.

Furthermore, even if all this be delusion, Smith was no shirker. The path of the Prophet was none too smooth. Almost any charlatan would have broken down utterly before the terrific assaults which he had to face; properly considering the price of endurance too high, for the sake of any advantages to be had in persisting. Let us hear of any demonstrated charlatan in history who was willing to brave martyrdom as a consequence of persisting in his charlatanry.

JOSEPH SMITH SINCERE.

Apart from the wonderful magnetism of Smith's personality—which moved even so conservative and cool-headed an observer as Josiah Quincy to suggest that he might reasonably be called the most representative great man of his century—a dispassionate study of his utterances reveals indubitable sincerity of conviction; also, evidence of genuine contributions to human thought and aspiration in several notable particulars. The time will come when it will be a recognized shame for any intelligent man to give further currency to the miserable abuse that has been heaped upon his memory. A man who could instill such a measure of enthusiasm into men and women, as would render them willing to endure even the extremes of indignity and injustice, could have exercised nothing other than a real and vital religious influence, whether mistaken

in its fundamental assumptions, or not, and demands to be so considered at the hands of all scholarly and candid students. In view of these facts, the fatuous absurdity of the notion that a demonstration of errors of judgment or scholarship—even when indicated by the "world's greatest Egyptologists"—can suffice to obliterate such a figure as Joseph Smith, is only too sadly evident.

According to claims, Joseph Smith was a "translator" in the broadest sense of the word "translate," one whose function it is, in the words of Webster's Dictionary, "to carry over from any form or mode of expression into another; to interpret into another medium, as for making more tangible, useful, comprehensible, or the like," and, in this sense, to be God's chosen vehicle for restoring the Gospel in its fullness, for the salvation of mankind, spiritually, personally and socially.

Supposing for the sake of argument, as seems to be fashionable, nowadays, that God should really undertake to restate his will to mankind—and to our merely human understanding it might seem "almost time"—in brief, to solve the world's many difficulties in the light of supernal wisdom, what things would one hope, nay, expect, reasonably, to find illuminated? We need scarcely hesitate to say that, among such matters, some of the following should be included, since they are the things that are the sorest occasions of doubt and perplexity among us. We should expect some sane and practical methods of solving the problems of righteousness, and inequalities in human society touching property, opportunity, health and happiness, of securing just and equitable cooperation, instead of the dissociation and rivalry—the treading-down by the strong and crafty of the weak and the "poor in spirit," which beget the multitudes of problems in a social order, professedly infiltrated with the Spirit of God. We should expect to be shown effective ways in which vice, intemperance, poverty, and other social blights might be done away, and the temporal condition of mankind improved. We should expect to derive some notion of a way in which the love of man for man could be made a practical reality, instead of an academic theory, as at present, and in which religion could be brought into the relations of daily life, instead of continuing an incidental embellishment for Sundays and holy days, without particular significance at other times, either in the speech or conduct of too many "believers." We should expect, in fine, some intelligible and rationally be-

lieveable explanation of the relations between the human soul and God; of the nature of justification and salvation; of the love and justice of God, and of the points in which his "glory," so much talked of and so little clarified, may be achieved in his relations with mankind; in brief, some scheme of theology worthy to be called "rational," according to the standards adopted by the wisest among us. Such things as these would certainly be made clear to us, if the message of the New Testament was repeated and restored.

When we consider the gravity and insistence of the social, moral and economic problems of the present day; the total inability of current sects and moral societies to meet and solve them; the hideous conditions of life manifest everywhere under the institutions of our dreadful civilization; the amazing indifference and complacency of numerous "good people," modern microscopic replicas of Nero fiddling while Rome burns, one might almost be inclined to ascribe a "divine mission" to anyone who should suggest even a theory, possessing the barest rudiments of practicable relief.

If Joseph Smith made any approximations to solutions in these matters, it is entirely reasonable to assert that, at the very least, he apprehended the world's needs and made honest and able efforts to meet them. If it can be shown that any of his acts or words serve to complicate the discrediting of his claims to divine guidance, in any extent or degree, or that it may be rationally held that he interpreted or translated God's will and purposes better than they were understood before, his claims to similar direction in the translation of ancient languages seem far more worthy careful consideration. An investigation along this line summons a variety of evidence more relevant to the discussion than even a demonstrated ability to decipher the meaning of a few poor Egyptian drawings; also, it rules out of court the bickerings of already prejudiced scholarship.

Joseph Smith was eccentrically peculiar in one point—he made a distinct effort to justify his claims to a divinely-appointed mission in the world. Many excellent and earnest men have founded sects and churches, each professing to be the restored perfect form of Christianity, but virtually all of them have confined their efforts to revising forms of doctrine, ordinance and polity, with never a thought of making human life in this world better or happier, except through the presumed automatic influence of their new institutions. Con-

sequently, when Joseph Smith, making this same claim, announced in effect, that the test of truth is its ability to redeem the total man, here as well as hereafter, he showed himself the type of a new, and, perhaps, worthier and wiser class of innovator. When, in addition to this, he promulgated the details of an organization eminently calculated to embody his ideals, he displayed the added virtue of consistent intelligence.

JOSEPH SMITH NO THEORIST.

Joseph Smith was no mere theorist. His mind was eminently practical, evidently seeking always to treat actual necessities with operable remedial expedients. Had his lines fallen in a public career, he might have gone down in history as one of our greatest statesmen. Thus, in the foundation of his over-hated Church, he displayed a consistent genius for organization and government that has baffled the best-conceived plans of enemies, bent on undoing his work, during three generations, and half of a fourth. That Church still rears its rugged head, like some old bull of a herd of buffalo, which defies the wolves and jackals, and may not be pulled to the ground for all the prowess begotten of the fury of their famine. Recognizing that the world's need of salvation is demonstrated in its errors and shortcomings, he evidently held that a really vital religious influence should operate to neutralize these, and that practical righteousness is a sign of inward grace. Furthermore, he showed a broad and sufficient grasp of the conditions of human life by discerning the cardinal sins of society—selfishness, rivalries, and pride—and attempting to achieve the propagation of the opposing virtues.

One of his earliest acts was the founding of the United Order, or Order of Enoch, so called from the antediluvian patriarch, held up as the highest type of the godlike life on earth, who with "all his people walked with God, and . . . dwelt in the midst of Zion." By the terms of this organization, each believer in the restored perfect Gospel, should deed his property to the Church, using and administering it thereafter as a stewardship for the common good; thus restoring the practice of the ancient Saints at Jerusalem, who "had all things in common."

This scheme of communism differed from all its predecessors and rivals in the fact that it proposed to regenerate society, and achieve an actual equality among men upon a distinctly religious basis. Smith's disciples were urged to make a common fund of all possessions, not merely

because of love to man, which is not always as powerful an imperative as, perhaps, it should be, but because that, in the good of humanity and of society, the highest service of God is to be achieved. Whatever, as often discussed by hostile critics, may have been the ultimate disposal of the property, thus devoted, is a matter which we need not pause to discuss. Whether or not, as unworthily alleged without proof, the authorities diverted it from its destined use, the significance of the lesson is not lost. Its sufficiency is shown in the fact that people could be persuaded to follow and obey its demands, as a part of religious duty, and then be ready for the even greater sacrifices demanded by the violence of their enemies.

The persecutions of enemies, as alleged, coupled with the innate selfishness of human nature, early compelled the discontinuance of the United Order; but it remains a clear and shining fact that Smith early recognized the fact that the "problems" of society, which still aggravate and perplex, may be met only by a solution distinctly religious. The neglect of sociological theorists to recognize this fact accounts in large part for the failure of their systems: the absence of an all-compelling enthusiasm for the good of mankind in current religious influences accounts for the rest.

Although, as an institution, the United Order failed of permanence, the spirit in which it was founded and the ideals which it embodied—fraternity, solidarity, co-operation—have been adhered to among the Latter-day Saints, as consistently as conditions have permitted. Their Church has always stood primarily for co-operation, as is evident to any candid student of their history, and the conviction that the principle of consecrated property must be established in practice before the in-coming of the Millennium is still held and taught among them.

When it became evident that the time was not yet ripe for the inauguration of the communistic order, the principle of temporal co-operation was embodied in the ancient practice of tithing, and the office of bishop, the administrator of temporal affairs, was established. It is a strong evidence at once of the earnestness of conviction among the Latter-day Saints, also of the vitality of influence in their Church, that the practice of tithing has always been consistently continued. The practice was long followed in England in the form of enforced levies for the support of the established Church, against the protests of very many people whose interests were centered elsewhere. It has also been attempted, it is said,

among some small and eccentric Protestant sects, and, in late years, has been widely recommended as the best available means for raising funds in some of the largest American religious bodies. That the Latter-day Saints alone have been able to maintain the practice of voluntary tithing, for the support of their Church and its activities, is a fact conspicuously in favor of any allegation of exceptional origin and character for them.

AN EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION.

It is probable, however, that no other religious body could possibly duplicate these results, since they seem to follow as a corollary to the peculiar and singularly efficient organization of the Church itself. A study of this organization in its entirety enforces the conclusion that it is not only an efficient engine, but one also well contrived and calculated for the accomplishment of the best results, moral and sociological. How its operation could be other than beneficent it would be difficult, indeed, to see. The ideal in the mind of its founder was undoubtedly in harmony with Paul's saying that the Church is to be a nation of "kings and priests unto God." Whether or not kings, in any intelligible sense, they are certainly priests, since by far the greater proportion of their adult male members hold the priesthood in some degree. This fact makes the Church and its affairs matters of common, even immediate, interest. Instead of leaving its vital concerns in the hands, exclusively or virtually, of a professional class, priestly or ministerial, it realizes the highest ideal of democracy, rendering the cooperation of all members actual and constant, while operating far better than any mechanism of the sort, as yet devised, to conserve the essential principles of their faith. The result of this arrangement is a two-fold advantage—that the Church is secularized, or brought into direct relation with the concerns of everyday life, and that the life of the individual and of society is very intimately associated with interests peculiarly religious. This follows because the Church, being co-extensive with the community, as in any given ward or stake, is the logical and actual center of all interests.

What is popularly termed the "slavish literalism" of the "Mormon" interpretation of the Scriptures prompts these people to expect and contrive for an actual realization in experience of the Pauline principle that "we are all members one of another." Should any of them reflect upon the principle, he would undoubtedly state that the

saying sets forth the inevitable fact at the basis of all human society, and that, consequently, all "members" might better be cared for and nourished—and in this Paul would doubtless have agreed—than allow to suffer and degenerate as among the "rest of us." Nor could any sane and informed thinker gainsay the assertion that the "Mormon" system had proposed one, even if not the only, solution of our ever-present social and economic "problems." Consequently, in a very real and effective sense, the general interest in the Church organization is reflected upon its individual members, and such assistance as any may need is readily forthcoming. In spite of the fact that many people in "Mormon" communities, as elsewhere, are in poor circumstances, there are few, if any, hopelessly indigent among them, and virtually none of these in such condition because of help refused by Church officers.

What other "Christian" body whatever even makes an attempt to secure employment for its unfortunate members? At once a very real and touching evidence of humanitarian activity of the "Mormon" Church is to be seen weekly, at least, in their official newspaper, which includes regular advertisements asking all who desire to employ any variety of classified labor to communicate with the office of the Presiding Bishop. Furthermore, from this office as a center there are constantly sent out to all wards appeals for positions for any and all who are out of employment. Also, this is done systematically, as a distinct branch of "business routine," not in obedience to any occasional and desultory impulse. There is no unctuous benediction and cold charity of "gentile" variety about this proceeding. It displays several of the familiar symptoms of true and practical benevolence. The ward bishop, combining the functions of pastor and leader, renders unnecessary the "scientific" methods of the so-called charity organization societies, with their insolent inquisitions into the private life-affairs of unfortunate people, and their ultra-judicious methods of distributing relief. Such procedures are probably inevitable in communities perverted by generations of so-called "Christian" mistakes and inefficiencies, but should be necessary nowhere. The "Mormons" do things better. Their bishops, as a regular part of their duties, inform themselves on the conditions and necessities of all persons in their wards. If, after acquiring this knowledge, they do not administer relief, the fault is in them, not in the system.

There can be no doubt but that the "Mormon" Church is the most perfect religious and benevolent organization that the world has ever known. To anyone informed upon its workings the various charges against it, and the criticisms made upon it by enemies must appear both absurd and unworthy. When we consider that it is wholly composed of the rank and file of those very people whom it is variously accused of oppressing, and that very many of these hold positions of trust and responsibility in its affairs, there is no more need of attempting to answer representations, which are certainly unintelligent, if not entirely disingenuous. Even if the "men at the top," as variously reported, wholly without respectable evidence, ever betray their trusts in any way, it is they whom we must criticize, not the organization. In such a case they would only be repeating the example so often set before them of using a splendid machine for a wrong purpose.

"MORMON" MISSIONARIES.

When we consider the power of the Church organization to bind men together in a very real bond of brotherhood, it is evident that any wholesale denunciation of its principles and operation must be based upon the assumption that a man cannot be a "Mormon" without also being an imbecile of the most hopeless description. One could seldom find a "Mormon" business man too much engaged to spare time to talk about his Church, and that, also, with a degree of enthusiasm and personal pride that reveals the genuineness of his interest. This is not the rule among "gentile" Christians; not even the clergy, unless we except the Catholic priesthood. Neither could such general interest be found elsewhere as would move the young men of any church to undertake missionary work—often attended with real dangers, even in these days of civilization and refinement—and to leave home for the ends of the earth, "without purse or scrip." Few even of the Protestant clergy who boast so loudly of the self-sacrifice and lofty ideals propagated by their respective sects, have ever been affected with an enthusiasm that would lead them to follow any such course, "for the spread of truth." It seems strange indeed that any body of people, evidently so sincere in their professions, so devoted to the cause of Christ, and so convinced of the necessity of His atonement, should be so constantly hectored, lied about and menaced with the verdicts of complacent and contemptuous "scholarship," by the representatives of sects that are slowly but surely los-

ing their hold on the intelligence of the community, and could not by any possibility duplicate the smallest of the achievements of the much-hated "Mormonism." As a matter of fact the whole thing is simply the protest of inefficiency against superiority. The protests of the Protestant clergy against "Mormonism" are comparable only to the strike of the Scottish weavers at the first introduction of machinery: they saw that the new contrivances could do better work than could be done by hand, and proceeded to destroy them. As another example, we may quote the remark attributed to James Watt, inventor of the steam engine, when he heard that Richard Trevithick proposed to use high pressure boilers, which have made the modern efficient steam engine possible. "Such a man," said Watt, "deserves to be hanged." Evidently, even this great world-benefactor was jealous of the improvements made by his pupil and successor. How much more would the typical denomination be enraged at so efficient an organization as the "Mormon" Church, which gives real advantages to its members, begets a vital form of faith in the rank and file, and utterly eliminates the "hired preacher."

At the present day the situation is clear and unmistakable, and will shortly be recognized by thoughtful sociologists, that, so far as professing Christianity is concerned, the issue is definitely marked as between "Mormonism" and Catholicism. There is no middle ground that contains the slightest hope for struggling humanity, because there is nothing sure and permanent. The sole refuge would otherwise be undenominational or "unbelieving" humanitarianism, which is leading in all the work for social and moral betterment in our great cities.

COLONIZATION ACTIVITIES.

Turning from this sad and sorry spectacle, we find yet other advantages involved in the organization of the "Mormon" Church, which we now see is wholly outside of and beyond anything that other bodies can hope to accomplish. Because the Church practically identifies social and spiritual concerns, the welfare of all her members is of vital concern to her officers. Thus, we find the widespread and continuous colonizing activities of these people efficiently assisted by the authorities. It is solely the influence of the Church in the affairs of everyday life that has made possible the effective co-operation of the people in the great systems of irrigation and reclamation that have made Utah conspicuous. No other influence in modern times, or in ancient times, so far

as we know, has operated so efficiently for the general good. To this fact all candid observers bear cheerful testimony. We could multiply examples here, but the following from a recent article by the Episcopal Bishop, F. S. Spalding, is typical and reliable. In an article contributed to one of his denominational magazines (*Spirit of Missions*, December, 1912) the Bishop writes as follows:

"The Dry Gulch District, of which Roosevelt is the center, is the 'Mormon' part of the reservation and that explains why it has made more progress than the rest of the country. The wonderful organization of the Mormon Church enforces a spirit of co-operation unknown in Gentile communities. Under these leaders in six years (for settlement did not really begin until 1906) the Latter-day Saints have constructed 223 miles of irrigating canals and lateral ditches at a cost of \$300,000, and they have today a debt of but \$30,000. Possibly the Gentile settlers secured better lands than the Mormons, but in their most promising sections they were unable to agree as to methods, and having spent on living expenses most of the money they brought into the country with them, are now in a precarious condition, existing on the hope that some day they 'will get water on their lands.'

"In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 90 per cent of the men are officers. The presidents and bishops are the leading business men. They are able to back up their business judgment as to the course to be taken with the influence they have as heads of the Church. They are well known to the higher authorities in Salt Lake, who are also both religious and financial leaders, and so are able to borrow from the bank on fair terms the needed capital.

"The system has its serious drawbacks. Many prominent Mormons do not believe in the Book of Mormon, the divine mission of its author, Joseph Smith, Jr., and his revelation in favor—under certain conditions—of polygamy, any more than I do. This form of hypocrisy is so general that it has become almost unconscious. When a man's whole business life is tied to an ecclesiastical system it takes a high degree of moral courage to deny the divine authority of that system and its beliefs. Besides, it is argued that all the churches are carrying along a lot of dogmas which are no longer seriously believed by their members, and it takes no greater effort to carry along Mormonism. But practically the system produces this good result: the leading Mormon officers are compelled to take a more helpful interest in the worldly prosperity of their poor brethren

than is taken by the wealthy and influential members of the other societies which profess and call themselves Christians. No doubt their Church influence gives them a chance to become rich themselves, but so far, in the Uintah Basin, the leaders in this system of ecclesiastical finance seem to have earned their reward."

The "serious drawbacks" mentioned by the Bishop form an excellent comment on his now famous Book of Abraham pamphlet. If this religio-economic system of the "Mormon" Church works so well, despite the disbelief of "many prominent Mormons" in Joseph Smith and his mission, why should the additional "disbelief" of sundry scholars, and wiseacres in general require "honest searchers for truth . . . with whatever personal regret, to repudiate the Book of Mormon and the whole body of belief which has been built upon it?" We have learned in these days of science that the judgment of truth follows upon experimental demonstration. If a system reputed false, on theoretical and traditional grounds, works so well in practice, the disbelief of "prominent Mormons" and "capable" scholars ceases to be a perfectly intelligent attitude, assuming very much the character of irrelevance to the main issue. If the findings of the avowedly infidel and destructive "higher criticism," so called, may be believed in and advocated by Protestant preachers, without detracting in their minds from the dignity of their numerous sects, why should the scotching of the Book of Abraham involve the dissolution of "Mormonism," which on the Bishop's own testimony, is exceedingly efficient in some important and righteous particulars? Some such considerations as these may be considered the real "drawbacks" in the premises.

The social and economic benefits of the "Mormon" Church are duplicated by the moral. Apart from the teachings on "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," which are the common stock of Christian tradition, there seems to be some highly efficient method available to them for enforcing these principles in life. The contrary of this statement has never been supported by any order of respectable evidence, despite the bickerings of sundry critics about "impurity" and the like, which are immeasurably graver complications in their own home communities than in the worst "Mormon" neighborhoods.

THE WORD OF WISDOM.

The "Mormons" have a document, a professed revelation of the Prophet, which is entitled the "Word of Wisdom," and which counsels abstinence

from alcoholic drinks, tobacco, and even tea and coffee, and moderation in the use of meat foods. Although every clause of this document is a real "word of wisdom," and all that it states is scientifically true, yet, like the Common Law, in Blackstone's phrase, it is only the "perfection of common sense." Why, then, do these people esteem this document so highly? Why do they quote its statements with such reverence? Because they believe in them, also, because, on the basis of Smith's claim that it is a real revelation, it is their highest ideal of practical personal righteousness. Undoubtedly any spiritual influence that may be at work among these people, enforcing the lesson of obedience, is greatly assisted by the close organization of their Church, and the noble responsibilities of priesthood applying to the majority of their membership. In other words, the faltering among them find themselves "surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses" (i. e., bearers of witness, those who give testimony) that their own strivings cannot fail of a high average of success.

Furthermore, unless history lies, this has always been the case among the Latter-day Saints. While other communities have been wrestling desperately with problems of intemperance and vice, with impassioned preachments urging to righteousness, with vain attempts to secure by legal enactment the virtue their sects are impotent to produce by religious influence, the still, small voice of the "Word of Wisdom" has been heard among these people, and their answer has been to drive out the grosser forms of vice that so dreadfully afflict civilization in general.

Even as recently as 1911 these people made good their profession that they are opposed to the traffic in intoxicating liquors. Without any of the noise or agitation that are popularly supposed to accompany the birth of "righteousness," the popular vote under the new local option law closed the saloons and other drinking places in 85 out of the 103 incorporated towns and cities of the state. Nor in these 85 dry spots were there any of the several "gentile" communities of the state. The "Mormons" closed 135 rum holes in the dry sections, as against the glorious preponderance of 475 in the remaining 18 "wet centers," full of "gentiles" and "Mormon-eaters," but not special objects with the missionary societies. Furthermore, out of a total of 65,654 votes cast in this election, 30,923, or 47 per cent were registered in Salt Lake and Ogden, where the "power of the Church is largely broken," and rum and civilization have things in their own way.

Enough has been said in the foregoing paragraphs to establish the contention that Joseph Smith made a valid contribution to religious, moral and social sciences in the organizations of the "Mormon" Church. While numerous thinkers and theorists have made noble and earnest efforts to grapple and solve the problems that afflict civilization, and with uniform unsuccess, he brought forth an organization that has reduced them to a minimum for his people. And he made a contribution that must be permanent, and must be considered at its full value in the end. The lesson embodied teaches two things: first, that in a sane and permanent solution of the very real and very vital problems of civilization, society must be organized on a basis distinctively religious; second, that, if such solution is to be permanent, religion must be organized on a basis distinctively social or human. The lesson teaches, therefore, that organization is the supreme desideratum, and that the supreme social sin is committed by any influence that contributes to the disassociation of the members of society, or that militates against a community of ideals and interests among them. The matter is serious, paramount in fact, and in its consideration, despite all prejudices against Joseph Smith, it must be recognized that he has struck the keynote of the problem, which the rest of us have been vainly seeking. Therefore, the thought forces itself home; if he was not divinely led, in thus finding what the wisest among us has sought in vain and missed, he was at the least, a genius of immense proportions, and of singular versatility.

IMPOTENCY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The importance of organization is no new idea. The wonderful and vital constitution of the Catholic Church exemplifies its efficiency. But in that body the entire attention is unescapably riveted upon what Herbert Spencer aptly terms "other-worldliness;" and this is the strongest argument that can be urged against it. Thus, whatever may be the title or the Papacy to authority in matters spiritual it does not demonstrate the power to reorganize society on the stable basis of moral and religious truth. It may be, as some argue, that the restoration of the "temporal power" of the Catholic Church would settle all the problems of civilization. There is always the difficulty, however, that this result seems as nearly impossible of accomplishment as could be imagined. Consequently, it would seem futile to argue in favor of it.

While this conclusion regarding Catholicism seems inevitable in our

present lights, it involves no advantage for the traditional foes of Papal "assumptions." Rome at its worst is not offset by Protestantism, which is, and always has been essentially disorganized, uncertain, and impermanent. With the sole probable exception of Lutheranism, which has always been essentially a national faith among the German and Scandinavian nations, and, hence, like Catholicism among the Celtic Irish, an object of patriotic regard, Protestantism has contributed directly to the breaking-down of community sentiment wherever it has appeared. Protestantism, in short, is religious anarchy, the foe of all that makes for stable organization. In the inevitable multiplication of sects and standards, and also in the constant flux and impermanence of its professions, it has written its own doom. Not only is the world growing away from Protestantism, but Protestantism is growing away from itself, repudiating its own old-time standards and supplying their place with even worse examples of the type of weakness known as "clerical logic." Thus, at the present day, we find the Protestant clergy busily preaching anything and everything but the Gospel of faith and salvation. Their preposterous adroitness in assimilating the "infidel" and destructive scheme of the so-called "higher criticism," whose origin and primal impulse consists in the desire to discredit the Bible by reducing it to a scrap heap of "scholia," redactions, elaborations, and incongruous "documents," is exceeded only by their silly excursions into half-assimilated science and philosophy, as found in the so-called "theology of evolution," and other painful neologies.

The "higher criticism" and the hypothesis of evolution may be perfectly true and accurate—we cannot undertake to discuss them here—but one thing is certain in the matter, and that is that they have nothing to do with the kingdom of God, and, while emitting a grateful aroma of "scholarship" around the average preacher, they are of no vital significance to the rank and file, who cannot but see in their spread the dissolution of all that goes to make up a vital faith. The claim that all this is merely symptomatic of an "age of transition," and that the old-time formularies are to be succeeded by "nobler and better" standards of doctrine is as pitiful as it is nonsensical. A poor creed is better than none at all, as it forms a standard of opinion and shapes the aspirations and efforts of believers along definite and intelligible lines. Even Calvinism is better than the sentimental

and half-hearted substitutes now propounded in its stead. They cannot make soldiers, or give the impulse to suffer and achieve, as could the grim fallacies of the atrabilious Dictator of Geneva. Can we wonder at the reported falling-off in membership of some of our greater denominations, or the failure of the annual crop of converts, so large in former years?

NEEDS OF DIVINE AUTHORITY.

But the supreme demand for some order of influence that shall speak with authority, be it real or be it assumed—since who shall judge of ultimate causes, except in their visible and tangible effects—and shall organize all classes of society into a stable whole, is shown to demonstration in the sad disorders, purposeless strivings, futile attempts to achieve social sanity, and the multitude of crazy claimants to ultimate wisdom, coupled with the constant increase of vice, crime and injustice among us, which show only too plainly the "prodromic symptoms" of degeneration. In view of the awful conditions of life everywhere—the logical results of virtual and "constructive" atheism—and the agonized appeal of crushed and struggling humanity for a really vital and efficient religious influence and the order of economic justice so often talked about by the Christ, whom we profess to obey, the energy expended in abusing and lying about Joseph Smith, who has propounded some sane theories of reorganization and done some things resembling what God commands, can be called nothing other than a demonstration in the life that the message of the Gospel of salvation is no more the greatest ideal among us. It seems, indeed, nearly time that someone was saying, in the words of Paul: "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but He now commands" that his professed servants shall preach "Christ and him crucified," and have done with the vile habit of distributing the stones and serpents of theological insufficiency to the children who cry for bread.

In addition to the masterly organization of the "Mormon" Church, Joseph Smith made yet other contributions to the formulation of a sane and rational religion. The theology of his Church compares more than favorably with the enlightened efforts of the highest wisdom among us. Cutting away from the crude and barbarous creeds of his own day, he substituted ideas and ideals, as worthy to be called truly and consistently Christian as are the former to be called otherwise. How many good gentle souls have suffered to distraction over the harsh, and really irrational, preachments of

Protestant scholasticism touching "divine decrees," endless punishment, and the "awful mystery" of how a good and just God could permit sin, and hold faltering, ignorant, finite man responsible for what he himself seems to have created, or, having infinite power, as we are told, certainly permitted; as to how, in short, an infinite and all-wise God could create human beings, foreordained from all eternity to unescapable damnation. But such gentle souls, under the counsel of their "spiritual pastors and masters," imagined themselves bound to accept the conclusions argued by the "iron logic of Calvin"—whose iron was forged and beaten from the nails of the crucifixion—and so wept and suffered beneath the rod of the awful inevitable. These frightful and abominable doctrines, held by and preached to the majority of English and American Protestants, until within a very few years, and still taught, in more or less diluted form, in most divinity schools at the present day, were violently repudiated by the Unitarian and Universalist reformers of New England in the early years of the Nineteenth Century. But these New England reformers merely reacted on the dreadful traditions of their fathers, and asserted doctrines diametrically opposed to them, hence scarcely reasonable substitutes. They taught that all men, good or evil, must be saved, since the goodness of God is incompatible with perpetrating the wicked abominations logically postulated by Calvinism. In this they made no account of the fact that the human instinct of justice demands some punishment for sin, and left the mind only the choice between extremes.

TEACHINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH.

Should God speak again, as we have previously suggested, he would undoubtedly illuminate this situation in such a way as to reconcile mercy and justice, and to show wherein the human soul may justly be held accountable for sin. He would doubtless make it all plain, so that none need suffer at the terror of "His strange and awful work." No one professed, however, that God did so speak to illuminate these matters, except this same Joseph Smith, he whose "ignorance and duplicity" must have become, by this time, nearly synonymous with his name. And "what did this babbler say?" What solecisms were published by this theological tyro, who never sat at the feet of scholarship, nor earned a university degree? How did he presume to enlighten a situation that had puzzled the greatest doctors of all ages? With the "nearly unbelievable materialism," found in

such plenitude through his teachings, he formulated a line of explanations, mostly characterized by a "slavish literalism" in the interpretation of Scripture. He held that God's primeval suggestion of making man "in His own image" was no mere figure of rhetoric, but a precise reality; that the spiritual part of man had existed with God from all eternity—when the "sons of God shouted for joy,"—and needed only the experience of earth-life to win its proper perfection. He held that the fall of man, his lapse into sin, and his banishment from God's presence were only so many necessary steps in the process of exaltation, since "only by passing below all things can we rise above all things." He taught further that the atoning death of Christ operated to blot out this original sin by restoring again the lost union between God and the human spirit—for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive"—and that the fulness of all divine gifts are available to such as believe in him, conform to the ordinances of the Gospel, and lead a life of righteousness. He held, however, that all men are heirs of salvation, howbeit in differing degrees, according to their several capacities and deserts in the eyes of God. To the most blessed was promised the glory of becoming "partakers in the divine nature"—to "sit down with me upon my throne, even as I also . . . sat down with my Father in His throne"—to become gods in short—since "He called them gods unto whom the word of God came; and the Scripture cannot be broken." To others, so taught this "bungling literalist," shall be given lesser glories, since the "glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another . . . so shall be the resurrection from the dead." In short, contrary to all the canons of theological scholarship, he stated, on the professed authority of God, that all shall receive of God as they are able. In the end there must necessarily be some who, by persistence in sin, shut themselves out from the divine presence; and this is the "second death." Yet the condition of these is governed by the same law, and should involve only such things as reasonably follow from sinfulness persisted in—we might almost imagine on the basis of common experience that it would be quite deplorable; it seems very analogous to some conditions involved in our "enlightened" civilization—without need that God should superadd further terrors in the line of "vengeance," and other theological, but un-Godlike, weaklings. Added to these doctrines, which justify God's justice, illuminate His mercy, dignify man, and otherwise

seem sane and reasonable, if, indeed, there is any reality at all to religion, he added yet other grandly "ignorant" principles. Among these is the comforting principle of salvation for the dead, according to which the Gospel is always preached to the "spirits in prison," and the living believer may always fulfil the ordinances of salvation by proxy for those who lived "before the Gospel was in the earth," or who never heard it preached. How many pangs and heartburns imposed by traditional teachings has this doctrine taken away! Most of these teachings seem fairly good working substitutes for a sane and rational theology.

WHO WAS JOSEPH SMITH?

Who was this Joseph Smith who did so many extraordinary things and made so many ambitious claims? Why is it that, in spite of the vile character attributed to him by his enemies, he still seems to have contributed really and vitally to the world's knowledge of things moral and religious; who is at once nearly the most hated, by some, and the most beloved, by others, of all men living in the Nineteenth Century? He has been compared to young Thomas Chatterton, who, through unusual genius, or by "automatic writing," forged an alleged ancient book, which deceived some of the great scholars of his time. Yet, poor Chatterton did nothing more, and died alone in a garret. He has been compared to Nicola di Rienzi, an Italian of the Fourteenth Century, who "drew much people after him," and seized the government of Rome. Yet Rienzi was later seized with madness, his followers were scattered, and his government came to nothing. He has been compared to sundry others, reformers, innovators, would-be rebuilders of the world, "who rose before us, and as prophets burned." Yet most of these have failed of permanent significance; "their words to scorn are scattered, and their mouths are stopped with dust."

No man presuming to claim divine guidance ever made it quite so difficult to shatter his assumed dignities. We may enlarge upon the worthlessness of his family and of his own character, only to repeat in the opinion of his devoted followers, the old retort, "Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?" We may enlarge upon his ignorance, cupidity, and other faults, but they remind us that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," also, the "base things, and things that are despised." And after we are done blackening his character, motives, life and achievements, the echo comes back, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?"

Like poor little Chatterton, Smith

produced a remarkable book, but he did not die in a garret. Like Rienzi, he obtained a large following, but he did not go crazy, and his followers were not scattered. Like numerous others, he professed a message from God to the world, but it has never been discredited, except by being made a "laughing stock" to those who "know better;" quite a dignity for the teachings of Joseph Smith! Is it possible that he made good his claim to divine guidance in founding the first and only institution of modern times capable of meeting our social and moral problems, while the wisest among us have failed constantly and ignominiously? Is it possible that God revealed to him the true principles of the Gospel, while sundry of us have done wondrous strange things with the Gospel of Christ, in the frantic effort to achieve a "rational theology?" Evidently, if others wish to do better things themselves, and efface his memory from the world, they will have to regard him as a personified sermon on the text, "Go thou, and do likewise."

In view of these things, it may be proper to ask this question: Did God, then, through some mysterious working of providence, really impart to Smith the contents of an ancient sacred record, which, certainly, was never composed as a novel, nor written by a yokel. Since his claims to divine guidance are so curiously beyond disproof in his other activities, we may reasonably assume them tolerable in regard to his professed "translations." If it is good and fair logic to argue that the supposed discrediting of the Book of Abraham involves that the Book of Mormon must also be rejected, no matter what the cost in regrets, etc., together with the whole body of doctrine built upon it, why is it not also reasonable to assume that Joseph Smith's undeniable achievements as a sociologist and theologian involve similar accuracy and authority for his literary efforts? If his claim to divine guidance in the one particular seems difficult of disproof, in view of the exceptional things achieved, there is no imperative demand for denying it in other matters in which it is claimed with equal emphasis.

A SIMPLE TEST.

This is the test, simply and honestly proposed. It demands an honest answer, and no more of the lying and abuse which have disgraced the past. The world is waiting for an answer to its problems: it is waiting for the manifestation of a real and vital religious influence—the "power of God unto salvation." These solutions it must and

will have ere many years more. If our traditional sects, hitherto powerless in the premises, have nothing more to offer, let them keep decently silent. The time for evasions and wordy explanations is almost past. If they wish to silence Joseph Smith, or any other heretic, for that matter, let them do so by filling the world with the contagion of a vital and immense faith, and thus striking speechless all deceit and pretence, as well as all that is ineffective. Joseph Smith deserves credit for one thing, and this credit none can take away: he restored in modern times the ancient law, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and by this rule must he be judged, and the rest of us also.

But Smith seems to have made one mistake—at least, it seems somewhat like a mistake at present. He promulgated a theory of marriage that has given his willing enemies a wonderfully convenient leverage against him. They have wallowed in the joyous opportunity of charging him and his people with "impurity," a thing unheard of elsewhere, we may suspect, although some of our foremost scholars in scientific sociology—and at this time the all-sufficiency of scholarship seems to be a fundamental principle with "honest searchers after truth,"—are none too sure but what it was a real and vital message to the world. The assertion of the right of maternity for all honorable women seems very like the promise of divine benediction, in these days of bellicose termagants, who declare, without a blush of shame, that there is a "higher mission for the modern woman than maternity." However, this whole matter is a question proper to statesmen and scientists, not to sundry others of us.

The American people, under the lash of the clergy—and to these persons the world still seems to owe a living—are agitating an amendment to the United States Constitution forbidding polygamy forever. We are told that many state legislatures have already declared in favor of this innovation, and that it is certain to be carried. Well, so be it. Some years ago there was another widespread agitation, this time to place the name of God in this same Constitution, so that our lawmakers and our people would declare themselves directly responsible to the Almighty. Sundry promoters of this cause made themselves conspicuous in the public prints, and had their portraits printed in the magazines and newspapers, generally with poses and expressions denoting great determination and firm conviction of right. But the movement aborted, and we hear little or nothing of it nowadays. Is it possible that the American people, as expressed in their state legislatures, and in congress, actually would rather "smash Joe Smith" than glorify Almighty God? This is certainly a strange situation. Joseph Smith is evidently among the number of those "who have honors thrust upon them."

It might be an excellent and highly creditable performance in our Christian public, if we should hearken to a certain voice which speaks to us across the night of the ages, giving this wise and temperate advice: "Refrain from these men and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God."

· ROBERT C. WEBB, Ph. D.

An Open Question to Dr. Spalding

BY DR. FREDERICK J. PACK, DESERT PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

My Dear Bishop Spalding:

I am forced to confess that the methods you have employed in your recent "inquiry" concerning the Book of Abraham have seriously shattered my faith in your fairness and love of truth. I give below one of the reasons for my loss of confidence in you. The matter is self-explanatory.

A short time ago I sent from my study the following letter:

January 16, 1913.

Dr. John Peters, University of Pennsylvania.

Dear Sir: I have read with great interest your communication to Dr. Spalding which he recently published

in a small pamphlet dealing with the claims of Joseph Smith, the "Mormon" prophet.

The last paragraph of your article closes thus: "The text of this chapter, as also the interpretation of the plates, displays an amusing ignorance. Chaldeans and Egyptians are hopelessly mixed together, although as dissimilar and remote in language, religion and locality as are today American and Chinese. In addition to which the writer knows nothing of either of them."

I confess that I do not know just what you mean by this statement. Perhaps you would be good enough to outline your meaning in greater detail for me.