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Truth Seeking: Its Symptoms and After Effects

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Truth Seeking: Its Symptoms and After Effects*

BY ROBERT C. WEBB, PH. D.

To the Editor of The Deseret Evening News—Sir:

Did you ever stop to consider what a really remarkable phase is this familiar obsession of becoming an avowed and accredited "searcher after the truth?" I do not wish to discredit the earnestness of mind which is ready to accept truth wherever it may be found, nor yet that intellectual honesty that seems to belong almost exclusively to a high average intelligence, because it is willing to acknowledge mistakes and misapprehensions, when honestly pointed out. I am firmly convinced, on the contrary, that real "culture" consists less in what one knows than in the willingness to acknowledge that there is very much more that one does not know. Real culture is intellectual humility; the quality, in short, that enables one to fulfill the scriptural injunction, "prove (test) all things, hold fast to that which is good." Over and above this excellent quality, there may be also the element of earnest conviction, which often acts as a distinct "bias" to the mind, constituting a limit of free thinking in any given line. This, however, as our religious authorities tell us, should also be manifested with "humility." This humility, indeed, is the mark of the "superior man" so eloquently eulogized by Confucius, and other sages. Only such a "superior man" can possibly be a real "searcher after truth."

There is, however, another type of mind, apparently less reflective or less "cultured," possibly, also, more engrossed with practical considerations, which limit its thinking capacity, although, in spite of all this a professed "searcher after truth." This type of mind searches less for truth than for some means to compel others to recognize the ultimate sufficiency of its own beliefs, which eventually partake of the nature of real "fixed ideas," rather than of convictions of the genuine variety. Such a type of mind will not conduct a frank investigation, and honestly acknowledge its mistakes when demonstrated. It is the type that "convinced against [its] will, is of the same opinion still."

To come quickly to the point, I wish to call your attention again to some phases of the recent "controversy" on the meaning of certain Egyptian pictures, usually included in the Book of Abraham, and believed to illustrate it. I had the pleasure of writing to you on this controversy on two different occasions, both times on the assumption that the facts indicated by myself—and they represented the results of considerable study and attention—would move the critics of Joseph Smith's interpretations to some further research, and, possibly, honest acknowledgements that he had certainly "guessed" nearly right in several particulars. When no such evidences of the "honest searcher after truth" were forthcoming, I was not in the least hurt, supposing that further investigations were in progress, and that we should presently read some counter-attacks. If the "conductor" of this "inquiry" really wished to convince the "Mormons" that they were wrong and he was right, some "come-back" might have been expected logically. What was my amazement, therefore, to find that the general public is being deliberately led to believe that Bishop Spalding has thoroughly discredited Joseph Smith's interpretations, and that the "effect" upon the Latter-day Saints is problematical. A fair sample of this sort of thing is shown in the accompanying editorial from one of his denominational magazines:

BISHOP SPALDING'S STUDY OF A "MORMON" DOCUMENT.

Bishop Spalding, of Utah, has consistently refrained from unfriendly controversy with the "Mormons" or bitter denunciation of their religious convictions. He regards many of them as his friends and credits them with being as honest searchers after truth as he himself tries to be. The bishop has recently been conducting an inquiry with regard to the reliability of Joseph Smith, Jr., as a translator. It was Smith who gave to "Mormonism" the Book of Mormon. "If this book be true," Bishop Spalding declares, "it is

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next to the Bible the most important book in the world." This is a fact appreciated by the members of the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints and by them alone. Believers in a book of such transcendent importance must be prepared, as some of the most enlightened "Mormons" have declared themselves to be, to submit it to the test of literary and historical criticism. The Book of Mormon itself cannot be submitted to present-day criticism because it is claimed that the golden plates from which it was translated were returned to the heavenly messenger who originally delivered them to Joseph Smith, Jr. Years ago, to satisfy the questions of a certain Martin Harris, one of his followers, concerning the accuracy of the translation, the prophet drew off from the plates certain characters and authorized Mr. Harris to submit them to expert examination. They were placed before Dr. Charles Anthon, of New York, who pronounced them a very clumsy hoax. This fact, however, has made little impression upon "Mormons" even if it be known to any number of them.

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.

Since under the circumstances the Book of Mormon itself cannot be submitted to the criticism of scholars, Bishop Spalding turns to the Book of Abraham, one of the sections of the Pearl of Great Price, one of "Mormonism's" sacred books. Mr. Brigham H. Roberts, one of the leaders of the Latter-day Saints, has reprinted in his History of the Church, Joseph Smith Jr.'s account of the discovery of the Book of Abraham and its translation. It appears that in 1835 Michael H. Chandler came to Kirtland, exhibiting some Egyptian mummies. With them had been found several rolls of papyrus covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions. Mr. Chandler knew nothing of their meaning but was curious to ascertain it. He was told that Joseph Smith, Jr., could translate them and to him they were accordingly submitted. Soon after the mummies and papyrus were purchased by some of the Saints of Kirtland. Joseph Smith, Jr., began to study them more carefully and "much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writing of Abraham, another the writing of Joseph, of Egypt." The result was the translation and the publication in 1842 of the complete Book of Abraham, described by Joseph Smith, Jr., as "a translation of some ancient records that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt; the writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called

the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand upon papyrus."

THE VERDICT OF SCHOLARS.

While the original papyrus from which it is alleged the translation of the Book of Abraham was made is not available for direct inspection and criticism, the book itself contains certain hieroglyphics which Joseph Smith declared were reproduced from the original papyrus. Bishop Spalding has submitted three of these to such eminent authorities as Dr. A. H. Sayce, of Oxford, England; Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie, of London university; Dr. James H. Breasted, of the University of Chicago; Dr. Arthur C. Mace, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Dr. John P. Peters, who had charge of the University of Pennsylvania's expedition to Babylonia, 1888-1895; Dr. Edward Meyer, of the University of Berlin, and Dr. F. F. Von Bissing, professor of Egyptology in University of Munich. These gentlemen, giving independent opinions, are unanimous in declaring fraudulent the hieroglyphics and the explanations given of them in the Book of Abraham.

THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION.

Bishop Spalding is well within the mark in saying that since the fraudulent character of the Book of Abraham is thus so clearly demonstrated, every thoughtful man will feel compelled to repudiate the authenticity of the Book of Mormon and the whole body of belief built upon it. In adopting this method of studying the "Mormon" documents the bishop has rendered a great service. Whether or not his revelation of the character of the Book of Abraham and the consequent overturning of the claims made concerning the Book of Mormon, will have any effect upon "Mormons" of an older generation, remains to be seen. It is hardly likely that it will. Their attitude is fairly well expressed by one of the bishop's correspondents who says: "For my part, with Joseph Smith on one side and the scientists on the other, I will take Joseph Smith every time."

This method of study and its result will hardly fail, however, to impress deeply the minds of younger "Mormons." There, after all, lies the main hope of freeing a half million or more of the people of this country from a delusion that has wrought such serious personal and social harm.

Now, Mr. Editor, those of us who have followed this discussion know perfectly well that there are several very serious misapprehensions in this editorial, also, as any one can see, a

rather distinct assumption of superior intelligence and virtue. I am sorry that the "cause of Christ" must be furthered in such a state of mind, and wish that it might be otherwise. I have, however, no quarrel with Bishop Spalding, who, as I understand from those who have met him, is an excellent Christian gentleman, but I believe that public attention should be very effectively called to the real nature of this investigation, in order to judge as to what facts have been actually demonstrated. Several of the opinions have evidently been so colored with prejudice, impatience and contempt, that they are much reduced in value. If opinions emitted in this "unscholarly" state of mind furnish acceptable evidence to the American public, either that "Mormonism" has been quashed, or that their own beliefs have been upheld, it is a sad comment on the discriminative intelligence of our people. A "great name" is not always a perfect guarantee, nor does a university degree or a professorial chair always involve completely "ripened scholarship." Intolerance and boastfulness are both "unscholarly" states of mind.

Now, on the assumption that these "experts" have really said anything that constitutes a finality, as viewed from any standpoint of scholarly accuracy, there is positively no room or reason for such a paean of triumph as the above editorial. These "experts" have given us a lot of opinions, which they have not attempted to prove by authoritative demonstration, and which consequently, constitute no nearer approximation to finalities than any other variety of offhand "expert" opinion. The true man of science in any branch of human knowledge is under constant and unescapable obligation to demonstrate the accuracy of his conclusions. There is the advantage of the scientific method. Nor is there the slightest excuse for the attitude of mind which tacitly assumes the infallibility of its own conclusions, where reason indicates the need of adequate demonstration in several particulars. Thus, if an "accredited expert" perpetrates a silly blunder, there is no sense in accepting such dictum as an oracular deliverance. A blunder is no more honorable in him than in the densest ignoramus. Moreover, the true scholar dreads a blunder as the rest of us dread a sin.

There can be no doubt that a physician, making a specialty of insanity, knows immeasurably more about that specialty than the best equipped scholar in Egyptology knows about ancient Egypt and its customs. The insane, like the poor, are "always with us," and it is a comparatively simple matter for a qualified physician to become familiar with their ways and symptoms.

How absurd, then, the spectacle of "distinguished alienists" haggling and cross-testifying on the question of the actual insanity of a murderer at the bar! This sort of thing happens so often that one really doubts whether there is a sharply-marked distinction between sanity and insanity. So much for the value of expert testimony on matters admitting of the slightest margin of doubt. We are concerned wholly with opinion, pure and simple, and not with anything that may be proved conclusively.

Another thing that must not be overlooked in such a discussion is the inevitable narrowing effect of a specialty. The specialist in any branch, with the sole exception of the practical sciences, usually reaches the point at which he knows little or nothing outside his branch, and even suffers from a sad defect of imagination. Thus, a statement made in terms other than those with which he is familiar, or a statement involving any new line of investigation, is obliged to "run the gauntlet" of expert disapproval, until so evidently demonstrated that even scholars cannot deny its accuracy. This has been the ordeal prescribed for every advance in human knowledge from Galileo to railroads. Specialists all along the line have demonstrated their superior intelligence more by propounding difficulties and making criticisms than by honestly investigating to "see if those things are true." The medical profession dealt hardly with Morton, the discoverer of anaesthesia, and the "germ theory of disease" was long debated from the standpoint of "established principles." How many "impossible machines" are now serving the daily needs of mankind! It seems strange that Fulton was actually called "crazy," only a little over a century ago, because he proposed to build a steam-propelled boat. There were numerous difficulties in the way of its success. All these errors of the "learned" rose solely from defective imagination.

In spite of these facts, it would be senseless to deny the value of real attainments in any branch of knowledge or learning. It is necessary only to recognize the essential limitations of the intellectual temperament, and to deal with it accordingly. Nor is it altogether incomprehensible that a person trained in any given line should view with impatience the efforts of one not so trained. He is prejudiced at the start, by the knowledge that the opinions or theories, which he is asked to criticize, have emanated from an "untrained mind." Very often this attitude is justified, but sometimes it is premature. What-

ever may be the truth of the matter in any given case, it is decidedly worthy and scholarly to give careful consideration to all claims and statements under discussion, before "rushing into print."

With the knowledge of what would inevitably be the prejudices of "college professors" and ministers at the mention of Joseph Smith or of "Mormonism," it might have occurred to an "honest searcher after truth," wishing in good faith to investigate the facts about the Book of Abraham, and the interpretation of its accompanying figures, to have removed the captions from these figures, and asked a selected jury of experts to give their significance, as understood by modern scholarship. Such an "honest searcher" should have known perfectly well that "scholars" would object to and denounce Smith as a "scab translator," precisely as the clergy have always denounced him as a "scab preacher," and would have, therefore, given him the "benefit of the doubt," by first obtaining the opinions of Egyptologists on these plates, and comparing their findings with what Smith had said. As it is, the opinions of the Bishop's experts are evidently so colored by their prejudices that they are in no sense conclusive; and this, as I believe, I strongly suggested in a previous communication.

Whether this is the correct method of conducting such an inquiry, or not, the fact remains that it was not Bishop Spalding's method: as he was the "boss of the job," he would probably assert his right to conduct it in his own way. He has no right, however, to allow the public to assume that he has done what he has not done, nor has he any right to ignore plain facts respectfully brought to his attention, on the authority, as elsewhere expressed, of some of his own coterie of witnesses.

The first result of the false method of conducting the inquiry is to blindly prejudice the witnesses. Thus, the Rev. Professor Sayce, himself a scholar of no mean repute, remarks painfully how difficult it is "to deal seriously with Joseph Smith's impudent fraud." If the rest of Professor Sayce's opinions are in line with this sentence, we may justly state that they are based upon no careful thought or attention to the matter in hand, but upon simple resemblances and familiar analogies. How is it that Joseph Smith's professed translation of a papyrus and his interpretation of certain drawings is an "impudent fraud" any more than assumed translations of Seyffarth, Spohn, Young, and others, who worked be-

fore Champollion's discovery, or questioned some points asserted by him? He is in the same category with them, in the sense that he worked before there was any science of Egyptology. Consequently, if Sayce, or anyone else, can prove that he was entirely mistaken, his honesty and sincerity are by no means impugned. No sentiment other than prejudice could express itself in such a phrase, and this is proof number one that the witnesses have been biased at the start.

With this unpromising beginning, the Professor proceeds, as follows: "His facsimile from the Book of Abraham No. 2 is an ordinary hypocephalus, but the hieroglyphics on it have been copied so ignorantly that hardly one of them is correct." The fact that this is an "ordinary hypocephalus" seems very enormous in the Professor's eyes, and blinds him to the fact that far more than one of the figures on this plate are recognizable by any one having before him a list of hieroglyphic characters. He also forgets that this "hypocephalus" character is no necessary refutation of Smith's interpretations of the contained figures.

In the second place, we may judge of the finality of the "scholarly" conclusions, which are now being featured as the "death warrant" of Smith's reputation as a translator, by the ability of these scholars to translate or their own account; and this is an important point to consider. In the issue of your newspaper for March 7, 1913, I note a vigorous rejoinder by Bishop Spalding to Doctor John A. Widtsoe, in which he includes a letter from the Rev. Professor Mercer, which argues, in effect, that the opinions published in the original pamphlet were not, and could not be, contradictory. We will notice this letter later, but, at present, I want to call your attention to the Professor's easy avoidance of one point, on which there seems to be a difference of opinion. This refers to the question of whether the hieroglyphic figures on Plates 2 and 3 are really legible or not. We have it on the authority of Sayce that these "hieroglyphics . . . have been transformed into unintelligible lines;" on the authority of Petrie that "the inscriptions are far too badly copied to be able to read them," although he thinks that the name "Shishak" can be deciphered "so far as the copy shows it." Breasted, however, does not hesitate to state that, although the hieroglyphics "have been much corrupted in copying," they "contain the usual explanatory inscriptions regularly found in such funerary documents;"

while Dr. F. F. von Bissing gains our envious admiration by the confident statement that "none of the names mentioned . . . can be found in the text." As a matter of fact, it is highly improbable that the hieroglyphics on either plate can be read at all, whether they are "ignorantly copied" or not. Consequently, Prof. Breasted's statement about "explanatory inscriptions" is wholly an inference based on some points of resemblance to other known plates; while the German professor's remark is wholly gratuitous—no one, so far as I have heard, has asserted that "the names mentioned" are to be found in the text. As previously indicated, also, Lythgoe of New York states confidently that the hieroglyphics on the second plate contain "snatches of a hymn to the Sun God." It would be an excellent move, if some of these experts should make a translation of these inscriptions, of which they know so much, but which, according to others again, are illegible. Such a translation, however, must be fully justified, or else, it may be, some challenges of its accuracy may appear.

Now, Mr. Editor, while I cannot state, as a fully demonstrated fact, that Smith's interpretations of these plates are wholly accurate, I am entirely satisfied that the judgments of his critics constitute no finalities in a contrary direction. In the first place, as regards plate 1, there are certain points, as indicated in my previous article on this subject, that go far to enforce the conclusions that the pose of the reclining figure is exceedingly unfamiliar, if not unknown, and that the standing figure, also, is by no means regular. Consequently, when Breasted asserts that, "we orientalisks could publish scores of these 'facsimiles from the Book of Abraham' taken from other sources," the thought inevitably occurs to the "honest searcher after truth" that such publication might be valuable. If the doctor would kindly refer such to any books or museum collections in which a few from these "scores" could be found and studied, he would confer a distinct favor. In default of these helps from a "real scholar," I can see no reason for revising my former statement that this plate "as shown in the Book of Abraham, is not familiar to Egyptologists, and that no duplicate is known." I made some extensive researches before I made that statement, and have made others since. I stand for correction.

As regards the third plate, also, I see no reason for modifying my former conclusion that the differences shown are sufficiently great to constitute a real

doubt as to what it really indicates. There are evident variations from the ordinary Book of the Dead scenes, and there are grave difficulties in the way of the assumption that it has been altered. Here is another case, in which a sample "facsimile" or two from the doctor's "scores" would be exceedingly enlightening. It would cost him very little time and trouble to give us a few titles and page references, as a guide in our researches.

Whatever may be the demonstrable truth about plates 1 and 3, the large number of "successful guesses" in plate 2, the "hypocephalus," are interesting. Here, anyone inclined to make the kind of unprejudiced examination, worthy of an "honest searcher, etc.," must admit that there are a few surprising coincidences, to say the least. But, the chorus of condemnation of Mr. Smith's interpretations evidently arises, not so much from his alleged inaccuracy, as from the fact that he uses unfamiliar terms in describing the several figure-elements. Here is a situation very embarrassing to the average specialist, as already hinted. Had any of the usual terms of Egyptology been used here, the result would have been different, undoubtedly. For example, when the German professor writing for Dr. Spaiding, calls Fig. 4 "the God Sokar in the Sacred Book (Boat)," and Prof. Petrie, in his "Abydos" (part I), calls a precisely similar figure on another hypocephalus, "Horus," the Egyptologists have something familiar to discuss, and can weigh the arguments for and against the accuracy of either statement. When, however, there is found a caption containing the statement "signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens," a wholly inadmissible proposition is encountered, in spite of the fact that Horus, at least, seems occasionally to be the "Sky God." As Prof. Breasted remarks, annotating Mercer's letter, "One man says fifty cents, another half a dollar." But, strangely enough, when still a third man says "two shillings," we have to stop and figure it out, before we recognize that there is only about two cents difference.

Misled by unfamiliar terms, or rather by the absence of familiar names, Dr. Friedrich F. von Bissing confidently asserts of the second facsimile, "None of the names mentioned by Smith can be found in the text, and he has misinterpreted the significance of every one figure." In order to demonstrate this sweeping statement, the professor proceeds, forthwith, to mention and name three figures, two of which have been described with perfect accuracy by Smith. "Fig. 5," says he, "is the divine cow of Hathor, 6 are the four

children of Horus as the Canopic Gods, 4 is the God Sokar in the sacred boat, etc." Smith says of Fig. 5, "said by the Egyptians to be the sun." The divine cow Hathor is one of the several symbols of the sky, and is known in some connections as the "eye of the sun," or the "eye of Ra." Hathor represented not only the sky, in general, but, as specified in some places, "that part of the sky where the sun is"—her name, Het-Ier, signifies literally, "house of Horus." She later becomes the goddess of the west, who receives the setting sun. That, both by name and ascribed functions, she is inevitably associated with the sun cannot be denied.

In order still further to enforce his sweeping condemnation of Smith's interpretations, he mentions that "6 are the four children of Horus as the Canopic Gods." Smith said of 6, "represents the earth in its four quarters." The four sons of Horus are the gods of the four quarters, as amply demonstrated in the lengthy quotation from Prof. Budge included in my first article on this pamphlet and its allegations. Why will "great German scholars" make such blunders? In the present case, because Bishop Spalding has chosen to allow his "experts" to become prejudiced at the start. If Smith was wrong in this matter, the German will have to settle the score with Prof. Budge, whose authority upholds the accuracy of Smith's judgment.

On the issuance of Bishop Spalding's pamphlet a number of discrepancies appeared to exist in the experts' testimony, and this fact, of course, seemed to many minds a distinct evidence that these gentlemen were not quite as sure of their ground as should be the case, if, indeed, "scholarship" is to serve any effective part in sectarian propaganda. Rev. Prof. Mercer, accordingly, undertook to neutralize the effect of these "apparent discrepancies" by preparing a line of arguments tending to show that there was complete and harmonious accord among the authorities; indeed, that there could be nothing else. These arguments he composed into a letter, annotated by Prof. Breasted, and it appeared as part of Spalding's rejoinder to Dr. John A. Widtsoe in yours of March 7.

I was exceedingly sorry to read this communication of Dr. Mercer's, not because he had established points against anything I had argued for, but frankly, because it is unworthy of him or of any other person professing to be a careful scholar. Had he been content to allow the obvious facts that human nature, even among the learned, is fallible and liable to mis- of Egyptology is by no means exact

apprehensions, and that the science in any sense—a very large number of things being still entirely unknown or uncertain—one could readily have respected his candor. When, however, he argues, in effect, that scholars in his department can make no mistakes, it is very disheartening. Furthermore, as I do not hesitate to assert, he has proved nothing for all his pains.

With broad confident strokes the reverend gentleman proceeds, as follows. Speaking of fig. 1, Plate 1, which some of Spalding's contributors had called the "soul," others, "Isis," "hawk of Horus," etc., he says: "The layman would naturally see here a discrepancy. . . . The expert sees no discrepancy. It was a regular custom for the Egyptian artist to represent The Soul under the form of the Horus bird or the Hawk of Horus. Further, as any dead Egyptian was referred to as an Osiris so his soul was referred to as an Isis. There is, therefore, no discrepancy."

On fig. 2 he finds several apparently different interpretations, thus, "dead person," "body of the dead," "dead man," "Osiris rising from the dead," and proceeds in the same confident vein: "Again to the expert there is here no discrepancy. Every dead person is an Osiris. Every dead person being an Osiris necessarily, according to Egyptian Theology, rises from the dead. There is no discrepancy in referring to fig. 2 both as the dead person and as Osiris rising from the dead or coming to life, since as soon as embalming takes place the dead, being Osiris, rises."

On fig. 3, he finds several apparently different identifications, thus, "Anubis," "Embalmer," "Officiating Priest," "A priest," "Priest," and continues his reconciliations: "Since Anubis is the God of embalming and conductor of the souls of the dead, the priestly embalmer, fig. 3, is therefore, often represented under the form of the God Anubis. Deveria is not wrong in saying that the God (of) Anubis (the embalmer under that form) effects the resurrection of the dead Osiris. (Note by Dr. Breasted 'The officiating Priest wears the head of a wolf or jackal to impersonate Anubis'). (Of tener Jackal—Mercer).

"As far as the scholars thought it necessary to interpret the other figures of plate No. 1, their interpretations are correct and give no cause for misunderstanding.

"There is also no misunderstanding about plate No. 3, as Mr. Roberts admits. A writer, however, in the *Deseret Evening News* of Dec. 17, 1912, finds some difficulties. The cause, as in the case of Mr. Roberts, is to be found in the fact that the writer is a

layman in things Egyptian. He confuses the interpretation of figures with the translations of hieroglyphics; while the translation of ignorantly copied hieroglyphics is a precarious proceeding, the interpretation of Egyptian figures is a comparatively simple matter."

The process by which Dr. Mercer arrives at his vigorously-asserted conclusions strongly reminds one of what is called, in vulgar parlance, "cooking the evidence." In making this remark, I have no desire to characterize his work in any way beyond insisting on the very obvious propositions: (1) that whatever he has established in these laborious paragraphs is of doubtful value, except in a very general sense; (2) that it is of no value as further interpretation of the plates in question; (3) that it forms a very doubtful contribution to the discussion of the several "scholarly criticisms," which it professes to reconcile. Several of the things said, while true, possibly, in some certain senses or connections, are not strictly accurate in others; and, while good general propositions, if susceptible of proof, are quite out of place here.

Thus, when he states that "as any dead Egyptian was referred to as an Osiris so his soul was referred to as an Isis," he is saying something that is neither accurate nor defensible. It is perfectly true that the spiritual part of the deceased is often represented as a bird, because it "flew away," to dwell in the trees or in the regions of Amenti, the West, or underworld, and that he is called "an Osiris" (thus Osiris Henefer or Osiris Ani), also, the "justified in Osiris," who was the King of the Dead and the righteous judge. It is not equally clear, however, that "his soul was referred to as an Isis." According to the several variations of the Osiris and Isis legend or myth, Osiris, having been killed, is watched over by his sister-wife Isis, until his resurrection, brought about by the filial devotion of their son Horus, who had been conceived and born in the meantime. Carrying out the analogy of this myth in the history of every justified deceased, Isis is represented as watching over his mummy in the death chamber, often accompanied by her sister Nephthys, or Nebhat, both in the form of hawks. In such a connection, Isis does not represent the "soul" of the deceased, but rather his "double," or Ka—his wraith or Doppelgänger, as we have it in modern phrases, as nearly as the idea can be reproduced in our thought—whose duty it is to watch over the mummy until the resurrection. If there are definite cases where there is another identification, they represent only

some of the several variations of this idea. Consequently, it is absurd to argue that, when one man calls the bird "the soul flying away" and another calls it "Isis," both have the same idea in mind, and are merely using, according to preference or habit, one of two perfectly synonymous and interchangeable expressions.

Apart from this, the conclusion reached by Doctor Mercer is evidently forced, a play on words, in fact, and in no sense an explanation of any apparent or real discrepancy. This is true because, when the several Egyptologists were commenting on these plates and figures in the Spalding pamphlet, they were using the names Osiris, Isis, etc., in one sense, and, in this letter Dr. Mercer is using them in a different sense entirely. Thus, in the pictures we would have these deities represented as definite personalities, each with his or her recognized function in the mythology of Egypt. When, however, the names are used in the senses proposed by Dr. Mercer, we use them in a very figurative and "spiritual" sense, which could not have occurred to any one attempting to interpret a picture representing them. I may illustrate this by an example, which, I trust, will not seem irreverent. When Paul says: "Not I, but Christ which is in me, etc.," he is evidently referring to the spiritual presence of Christ, through the "indwelling of the Holy Ghost," and not to the resurrected God-man, who said, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." Similarly, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, we have, as is generally believed, a representation of the defection and return to God of the human soul. But, no one would think of labeling a picture of the "Prodigal's Return" with any such caption as "God Receiving the Repentant Soul." This is a very good example of the very distinction upon which I wish to insist in the present connection. If Dr. Mercer, or any of his colleagues, thinks differently, I would respectfully inquire whether, in commenting on the Third Plate, he would consider himself justified in calling Fig. 1 a "dead Egyptian . . . referred to as an Osiris," or in calling Fig. 2 "his soul . . . referred to as an Isis."

His attempted "reconciliations" in connection with Fig. 2 of this same plate are equally unsatisfactory. Thus, on the assumption that this plate is a part of "the usual equipment of the dead," there occur two perfectly reasonable variations of interpretation, which constitute no possible suspicion in any informed mind that there is a lack of knowledge involved in the difference of opinion. Because of the un-

usual pose of the reclining figure, one of the critics, at least, calls it "Osiris rising from the dead," while others refer to it merely as a dead person about to be mummified. Dr. Mercer, however, will not "let good enough alone," but must improvise a "bull of infallibility" to blanket all Egyptological deliverances. Consequently, he proceeds to deliver the following opinion: "There is no discrepancy in referring to Fig. 2 both as the dead person and as Osiris rising from the dead or coming to life, since as soon as embalming takes place the dead, being Osiris, rises." This is probably accurate, in the sense above explained, but it has nothing to do with the case in hand; as an attempt at "reconciliation of apparent discrepancies," it is a flat-footed failure.

To be sure, as it appears in the Doctor's letter the case is perfectly clear and beautifully concise. Unfortunately, however, he is not making general statements, to apply in the entire range of his science, when one "expert" calls such a figure a "dead man" and another "Osiris rising." He is, or is supposed to be, commenting on a definite document to wit, the Spalding pamphlet. Accordingly, when he attempts to set in contrast the above two judgments by themselves, he is suppressing matter, equally relevant to the discussion, which persists in cold black type on Bishop Spalding's pages. To be sure, Prof. von Bissing calls this figure "the dead man," but he adds immediately after, "The soul is leaving the body in the moment when the priest (3) is opening the body with a knife for mummification." Consequently, if Prof. Bissing's words express his idea, this particular "dead man" is not yet "Osiris rising," which he should become, according to Mercer, "as soon as embalming takes place." Whatever one may insist is meant by the words, "takes place" the clear sense from the Egyptian point of view is that the indicated result follows only when the mummification is completed (not merely begun), according to prescribed ritual. In the same vein, the Doctor quotes Prof. Meyer as saying that this figure represents the "body of the dead" but Meyer sees "the soul in the shape of a bird flying above it and a priest approaching it." Evidently, he, also, believes that the mummification is not yet complete, according to ritual and that consequently, the dead is not yet "Osiris rising." In addition to these two obvious cases of neglected context, we find the opinion of the Reverend Dr. Peters, which has, apparently, slipped Doctor Mercer's attention. This gentleman who, as the Doctor informs us "well knows Egyptian and Babylonian history," also has no patience with the theory that the reclining figure has as

yet become a fully qualified "Osiris," for he declares, without hesitation:

"Apparently, the plate . . . represents an embalmer preparing a body for burial. At the head, the soul (Kos) is flying away in the form of a bird. Under the bed on which the body lies are the canopic jars to hold the organs and entrails removed from the body in the process of embalming. In the waters below the earth I see a crocodile waiting to seize and devour the dead if he be not properly protected by ritual embalming against such a fate."

On the third figure the Doctor follows a similarly inconclusive course, finding three separate identifications, "priest," "embalmer," and "Anubis," he writes: "Since Anubis is the God of embalming and conductor of the souls of the dead, the priestly embalmer, fig. 3, is therefore, often represented under the form of the God Anubis." This is no eminent example of "reconciliation," since the figure accords neither to the conventional representation of Anubis, with a wolf's or jackal's head, nor yet is he attempting to personate an individual so afflicted. It would be much more to the point to indicate instances in which the God Anubis is evidently shown with a human head. That would reconcile the apparent discrepancy created by Prof. Petrie, who calls this figure "Anubis" without qualification. Dr. Lythgoe of New York, to be sure, has asserted that this figure has been changed, and that a "human and strangely un-Egyptian head" has been substituted for the familiar visage and cranium of Anubis. None of the other experts, however, have asserted that this or other figures were changed. And this is very surprising. If they know of a duplicate to Plate 1, where may it be found?

In spite of the evident deficiencies of Doctor Mercer's demonstrations, as above indicated, he writes to Bishop Spalding, in reply to Prof. Widtsoe's criticism that only eight Egyptologists were consulted in the present controversy, in the following words: "He asks why only eight Egyptologists were approached. If he knew anything about linguistic work of the nature of hieroglyphics he would not ask such a question, [Prof. Widtsoe will be more careful after this rebuke] for any ancient linguist knows that the unanimous testimony of eight scholars is the same as that of eighty and eight. This is especially true, as I have already shown, that to an Egyptologist there was absolutely no discrepancy in the replies of the scholars."

I am very much afraid that the Doctor is mistaken in his last statement or else, as we must conclude, the study of Egyptology exercises a singularly maladaptive influence on the reasoning

powers of some of those pursuing it. However the Doctor pursues his chosen course of expression with still further denunciations of Smith's findings:

"As I understood it," he says, speaking of the Bishop's method of conducting his "inquiry" and forming his pamphlet, "you merely wished to know from Egyptologists whether, in their judgment (after comparing their own knowledge of Egyptian with Joseph Smith's as revealed by his interpretation of the facsimiles), Smith knew enough of the Egyptian language to translate texts. All the scholars came to the same conclusion, viz.: That Smith could not possibly correctly translate any Egyptian text, as his interpretation of the facsimiles shows. Any pupil of mine who would show such absolute ignorance of Egyptian as Smith does, could not possibly expect to get more than zero in an examination in Egyptology."

Doctor Mercer evidently agrees with Emerson in the statement that "consistency is a superstition of small minds." In his first letter, previously quoted, he sharply rebukes a certain "layman in things Egyptian" because, un-scholarly enough, "he confuses the interpretation of figures with the translation of hieroglyphics," things which are evidently quite different. In the present instance he seems to forget that one might be quite expert in interpreting Egyptian figures, "a comparatively simple matter," and yet be unlearned in the language; also, that even accomplished linguists are not always able to tell for sure whether the figure of a plain "dead man" or of "Osiris rising from the dead," is before them. However, the Doctor reaches the climax of his argument in the following sentences:

"The science of Egyptology is well established as anyone knows who is acquainted with the great Grammar of Erman, a 3rd Ed. of which appeared in 1911. I speak as a linguist when I say that if Smith knew Egyptian and correctly interpreted the facsimiles which you submitted to me, then I don't know a word of Egyptian, and Erman's Grammar is a fake, and all modern Egyptologists are deceived."

I have not carefully examined the third edition of Doctor Erman's Grammar, but, on the basis of acquaintance with previous editions I am inclined to the belief that Smith might have known some Egyptian without entirely discrediting the great German authority; also, in a previous article, I showed, I believe, that Smith certainly made very good "guesses" at the meaning of some of these figures, at least. I doubt the correctness of the doctor's statement about Erman; that on himself, I will leave to his own judgment. As to

Egyptology being a well established science, if he means entirely certain and accurate, he is wrong: there are too many uncertainties as to translation to admit of such perfection.

But the doctor believes in doing things thoroughly. Thus, having started out to discredit Joseph Smith, he seems determined to carry the fight into every region. He likes his explanations of the Egyptian pictures ill enough, and his method of transliterating Hebrew words even less, if that were possible. He mentions this latter in his communication to the Spalding pamphlet, and by the time he writes his first letter, as quoted by the bishop, it seems to be a very sharp thorn in his flesh. Here he writes: "I am quite aware of the fact that the transliteration of a foreign word is a subjective matter, to a certain extent, yet there are some general rules followed by all scholars. No modern scholar would transliterate Resh, Koph, Yod, Ain [Raukeyyang] or yod, he, vav, he [Jah-oh-eh] as Smith does, nor can my critic find in any scientific grammar of the period of Joseph Smith any transliteration like Smith's. This would show, as I stated, that Smith's transliteration 'is far from accurate.' Moreover, yod, he, vav, he, is NOT an Egyptian word as Smith asserts and believed."

It is, indeed, difficult to read such a statement about "scientific methods" and "scholarly accuracy" from a qualified Hebraist, without some feeling of surprise. As a Hebraist, Doctor Mercer is undoubtedly aware that Hebrew transliteration is a real problem. Why should any man, whether knowing "some Hebrew," or a great deal, transliterate a word, often rendered into English letters as RAQIA, with such a monstrous combination as RAUKEE-ANG? One would logically try to find some explanation for the enormity before denouncing the act as one of "essential ignorance." This does not look like ignorance, but strongly like adherence to some rule of pronunciation, not always followed. There must be a reason for it. It is scarcely remarkable, therefore, although somewhat of a comment on Bishop Spalding's method of presenting a case, that we find, in this same "Reply to Dr. John A. Widtsoe," a letter from the Reverend Dr. Peters containing the following very suggestive passages:

"On page 20, in the explanation of Plate No. 1, No. 12 commences 'Raukeyyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word Shaumayem.' Raukeyyang is evidently a corrupt pro-

nunciation of the letters Resh Koph Yod and Ain in the sixth verse of the first chapter of Genesis; but the spelling shows that it was taken from the pronunciation of a Sephardim Jew. Most Jews, whom we have in this country today are Askenazim, who pronounce quite differently, (the older Jewish immigration, which was small, was Sephardim). Christian teachers have, as a rule, learned their Hebrew from other Christian teachers, going back to the period of the Reformation, and they have a more scientific and accurate pronunciation than either Sephardim or Askenazim. Smith did not get his 'Raukeyang' from a Christian teacher, but from a Jew. Incidentally it appears to be evidence that he was, in his way, at that time studying these old languages."

There can be no doubt but what Dr. Peters has furnished the true explanation of the matter. As related by Joseph Smith ("History of the Church," Vol. II) he actually studied Hebrew, first with a certain Doctor Pixotto, later with a certain Doctor Seixas, both of whose names suggest the Sephardic origin of their bearers. The Sephardim were the Jewish remnants of those expelled from Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century. But, of course, we are "no forwarder," as Herbert Spencer phrases it, by transferring the burden of "ignorance" from the shoulders of Smith to those of one of the Sephardim. What reason, if any, is there for this method of transliteration? Is it habit, or preference, or mere carelessness in the talk of a band of persecuted refugees? It is neither the one, nor the other, nor yet the third: the transliteration is perfectly defensible, although probably very irregular, by the simplest rules of Hebrew. The complete analysis of this word in Hebrew, including the Massoretic vowel points, is Resh, Qames Koph, Chireq (long), Yodh, Ayin, Patach. The Qames represents long "a" (under certain conditions, also, short "o," when it is called Q. chatuph). The transliteration "au" (probably to be pronounced as in the English words "taught," "caught," etc.) emphasizes the guttural tendency of "a," after the analogy of Sanskrit and other oriental languages. The Chireq, regularly long before Yodh ("y"), has a pronunciation closely like "ee" in "meet." The Patach, according to most authorities, has a sound closely resembling the English short "a," as in "cat," "mat," etc. These equivalents are given by Smith.

Undoubtedly, the sorest point in this transliteration is the final "ng." It would naturally occur to a "layman" to inquire as to how it can be that a letter (Ain or Ayin), which is believed

to have "no proper sound," should here assume such aggravated proportions. As a matter of plain, simple fact, the final "ng" in this case shows that the man who first wrote this word as we have it had a very vivid and sufficient sense of the essential difference between the two guttural breathings, Aleph and Ain. We might reasonably expect a professor of Hebrew to recognize this fact, and commend it accordingly. That it is both absurd and slovenly to give the equivalents of these characters as mere unmodified sounds of "a," or of other vowels, according to "pointing," is a fact patent to any Hebrew student. The following passage from Gesenius fully explains the situation.

"Among the gutturals, Aleph is the slightest, a scarcely audible breathing from the lungs, . . . on the principle that an initial vowel is naturally preceded by a soft breathing. Even before a vowel, it is almost lost upon the ear, like the 'h' in the French 'habit,' 'homme,' Eng. 'hour,' but after a vowel it is mostly lost in that vowel sound. . . . Ain is related to Aleph but stronger; and is a sound peculiar to the organs of the Semitic race. Its hardest sound is that of a 'g' slightly rattled in the throat. [The "Septuagint" version of the Old Testament renders into Greek many words, having initial Ain in Hebrew, with initial "g," thus; Gaza, Gomorra, etc.] It is elsewhere a weaker sound of that sort, which the Septuagint (translators) indicate only by a breathing [rough, as in 'Eli (hEli) or smooth, as in 'Amalek (aAmalek)]. In the mouth of the Arabs, the first often strikes the ear like a soft guttural 'r,' the second as a sort of vowel sound like 'a'.—To pass over (Ain), as many do in reading and in the expression of Hebrew words by our letters (e.g. Eli, Amalek), and to pronounce it as 'g' or as nasal 'ng', are both incorrect. An approximation to its stronger sound would be 'GH' or 'rG'.—Grammar (Mitchell's Ed.) 1883. pp. 26-27.

We learn here three things: first, that there is a very real and sensible difference between Aleph and Ain, which should be carefully remembered by any Hebrew student; second, that the proper sound of Ain is often hard, having been given as "g" in some recognized transliterations; third, that the sound is peculiar to the Semitic languages, and may not be perfectly indicated in English by any combination of printed letters. As nearly as I have been able to identify and describe it. It would seem fairly accurate to say that the rough sound is a harsh guttural utterance, or breathing, somewhat resembling the sound made in attempt-

ing to imitate a "growl." It involves a distinct vibration of the soft palate, but avoids being a "gurgle." The soft sound is more like a "sigh." If the harsh sound is continued at the end of the word, it resembles those mentioned above: if it is suddenly discontinued in utterance, it has an effect close to hard "g" or "ng".

But, Doctor Mercer, seems inclined to award Smith the "extreme sentence," for the crime of trespassing on the sacred "preserves" of learning. Accordingly, he speaks the "slow, irrevocable words" of condemnation. as follows: "No modern scholar would transliterate yod, he, vav, he, as Smith does, nor can my critic find in any scientific grammar of the period of Joseph Smith any transliteration like Smith's. . . . Moreover, yod, he, vav, he, is not an Egyptian word as Smith asserts and believed."

As to whether this word is Egyptian, or as to whether Smith states that it was, we will discuss later. The word in question, the Hebrew tetragrammaton, JHVH (more correctly, YHWH,) is the Old Testament name for God, usually rendered "Jehovah," but, presumably, varied by Smith into "Jah-oh-eh." There is, or has been, considerable uncertainty as regards the proper pronunciation of this word, and this, from the peculiar method followed by the Ancient Hebrews in writing their language. In the most ancient period there were no vowel indications in written Hebrew; hence, there was a wide margin of uncertainty in many cases as to the true pronunciation, hence, also the true meaning, of very many words. One could understand this by writing even a brief paragraph composed entirely of consonants (except possibly, where initial vowels occur), and then attempting to read it a few weeks afterward. One might find numerous uncertainties; for example, we could not be sure whether "Jns" is Jones or Janus; whether he is a Minister or a Monster; whether he is the owner of a Shop or a Ship, etc. This difficulty in written Hebrew was removed to a great extent by the introduction of the "Masoretic points," arbitrary arrangements of dots and dashes indicating the several vowel sounds, to be placed under the consonant letters. Of course, in very many cases, the scribes used their own judgment about the proper points to be used in combinations of consonants: hence we have variations of reading, also, probably, incorrect renderings, in many important passages of Scripture. This is one matter which largely engages the attention of textual critics of the Bible.

The proper vowel-pointing of a

Hebrew word becomes a very important matter, when we consider that, probably a large percentage of disputed readings, also of passages, evidently mistranslated, because out of harmony with their contexts, are to be accounted for on the theory of incorrect pointing. The fact may be recognized when we have several manuscripts showing variations in this particular. In default of such variations, something of the kind may be suspected in the case of an obscure or in-harmonious reading. A good example is to be found in the striking passage, Job. xix. 25-27. Here Job is represented as saying: "And (though) after my skin (they) destroy this (body)," etc., but the margin contains an alternate reading: "And after I shall awake (though) this (body) be destroyed," etc. There is quite a difference between "skin" and "awake" to be sure, but the whole confusion in the Hebrew text consists in a question as to the proper placing of a single dot. The word in question is represented by the consonants Ain Waw Resh, and, according to pointing, it may read either, gOR or gUR (the lower-case "g" representing the sound of Ain),

The first meaning "skin" (noun) the second, "to awake, arise, excite, lift up, etc." There is found, therefore, a considerable difference of meaning, according to the word used; and both have manuscript authority. It is probable, however, that much more radical changes could be made in this passage, to bring it into harmony with its context. It is one of the numerous cases of evident mistranslation in the Book of Job, which is conspicuous for this sort of thing.

While on this subject, it is in point to remark that, to the trained Hebraist, the defective translation of the Bible is a matter only too obvious to need discussion. He knows perfectly well, also, that some of the most striking passages depend upon the doubtful authority of Masoretic reading, others, upon the unmistakable misapprehension of the original translators. In other words—and this is not "destructive criticism"—the translation of the Bible is in no sense either scientific or "scholarly."

There are several conspicuous cases of the same thing even in the New Testament, where the excuse of Masoretic variations does not exist. Some of these are on nice points of Greek grammar, others on manuscript variations. We may mention here one case, which is neither the one nor the other. In the xxist Chapter of John's Gospel occurs the striking colloquy between Christ and St. Peter, in which the Savior three times asks the question,

"Lovest thou me," and three times receives the answer, "Thou knowest that I love thee." The entire point of the dialogue is lost, however, in the English translation. In the original Greek there is a sharp contrast between two verbs having the general meaning, "to love." Thus, Christ uses the word AGAPAO, meaning "I love, I am devoted to"—this is the word giving the noun translated "charity" in the xliith of I Corinthians—whereas Peter persists in using the word PHILEO, meaning "I love, I am friendly to," which is, in New Testament usage a much weaker word. On the first two occasions, Christ uses the first of these words, the second time, evidently in way of insistence, after an unanswered question; but, on the third occasion he uses the second, thus implying a doubt as to Peter's "friendship," which might have been reasonable, in view of his three denials before the crucifixion. It is said therefore that "Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time Lovest thou (are you a friend to) me." and this because of the word used and not because of the three repetitions of the question. Thus, we lose a fine and striking passage, because of the carelessness and defective imagination of the original translators. The passage is not correctly rendered by the Revisers.

These examples, together with hundreds of others, justify the article, "We believe that the Bible is the word of God, so far as it is correctly translated." In this point, Smith and scholarship are in accord.

Returning now to the criticisms on Hebrew transliterations, we find that in the matter of the Hebrew name for God an interesting special situation exists, which has caused a grave suspicion in learned minds that the traditional pronunciation "Jehovah" is not the one used in primitive times. This suspicion is founded on the tradition that the Jews, on the basis of a rigid interpretation of the third commandment, held that this name should never be uttered by human lips. Consequently, wherever it occurred in the text, it was always read "Adonai," which means "Lord." According to this tradition, also, it has been held that the vowel points of the word for "Lord" were substituted for those proper to the word for "God." Hence, there has been some uncertainty as to what were the proper vowel sounds, hence what is the true pronunciation for the name of God. Hebraists at the present day prefer the spelling "Yahweh," on the general grounds that such form best accords with the assumed authoritative derivation from the verb meaning "to be," etc., (this is hayah or hawah),

also that the several abbreviated derivatives of the name of God (Jah, Je, etc.) are most readily derived from this form of the word. However, the name is not a perfectly clear derivative from either of the verbs meaning "to be," etc. Some have held that this proposed derivation rests on appearances, merely, like the English words, "God" and "good," whose affinity is not perfectly established.

Some authorities have proposed the spellings, YA-He-Oh or YA-He-Uh, as nearly as the Hebrew letters may be represented in English—the lower case "e" in both these words, representing a Hebrew "semi-vowel," which should be uttered somewhat after the manner of the note called by musicians "appoggiatura," or "grace-note," that is uttered quickly, suddenly, almost imperceptibly. Thus, in pronunciation, these words would be very nearly YAh-Oh or YAh-OOh. Except for the fact that Yodh is rendered by "j" instead of by "y," such pronunciation accords perfectly with that indicated by Smith, although he evidently intends to account for the final "h" by an extra syllable, "eh," in which the "e" possibly should have the sound as in "got," "wet," etc. It is possible, also, to hold that the forms, "Je-ho-wah," and "Jaho-weh"—if, indeed, the latter form is authoritative—may be changed to read "Jeh-o-ah" and "Jah-o-eh," respectively, in accordance with the rule that the feeble "vowel letters," Yod ("y") and waw ("w") may be absorbed into the corresponding vowel sounds, "e" or "i," in the first, and "u" or "o," in the second, when such "vowel letter" is both preceded and followed by a full vowel sound. Thus, "Jah-oh-eh," was an indicator of a possible sound of the word YHWH is not such a "bad break," after all. That "no modern scholar would transliterate" it in this manner is not fatal. "Modern scholars," like their ancient and mediæval prototypes, have reached no finalities, particularly in the study of some of the ancient languages.

One valuable assistant in the study of ancient languages is the "testimony of antiquity." One form of such testimony, as found in Greek manuscripts, at least, has afforded a fairly good clue to the pronunciation of the ancient Greek. Thus, knowing that the ancient scribes commonly worked in either one or two ways—copying from an original before the eyes, or taking down the dictation of a reader—we know that two familiar sources of error lie in (1) words that "look alike" and (2) words that "sound alike." In the first case, we know that a word mak-

ing bad sense in a given context has been substituted as the result of either one of the two orders of error noted above. Those errors, otherwise incomprehensible, are, therefore explainable on the theory of their similarity in sound to the evidently appropriate words found in other manuscripts.

Another, although different, "testimony of antiquity" relates to this very Hebrew word YHWH, and furnishes the investigator with a method of pronunciation that claims a certain measure of authority. It is thus explained by Gesenius (*Lexicon*, Robinson's 8th Ed., in loc. JHVH):

"Many interpreters regard it as (YAH.OH), . . . justly appealing to the authority of several ancient writers, who relate that the God of the Hebrews was called IAO, [note, the Greek letters are here used in the text] e.g. Diodorus Siculus 1. 54; Macrobius, Sat. 1. 18; Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, p. 666, Oxon. . . . To this may be added, that the same form is conspicuous as the name of God on the gems of the Egyptian Gnostics; Irenæus, *Adversus Haeres.*, 1. 34; Belerman, *ueber die Gemmen der Alten mit dem Abraxasbilde*, I. II."

Two things are notable here: (1) that, on the authority of antiquity, there is respectable evidence for pronouncing this name, partially at least, as IAO, or better, YA-O; (2) that the name was actually so pronounced, in part, at least, by certain Egyptians about the time of the Christian Era, and shortly thereafter. The Gnostics, whose gems, etc., are mentioned by Gesenius, represented, so far as we have definite and reliable testimony concerning them, an eclectic theosophic sect, which, like the Manicheans, and several other heretical cults of the times, combined with certain terms, introduced with Christianity, considerable of the lore and philosophy of the heathen orient. Undoubtedly, many of their teachings, also of their words and terms, were derived from antiquity. Since they flourished in Egypt, it is not inadmissible to assume that their pronunciation of the divine name YHWH was taken from that of Egyptians of remoter periods. Nor is there distinct evidence to limit this remoteness in time. I see no insistent reason, therefore, for rejecting the statement, "called by the Egyptians Yah-oh-eh" (after we have, for sake of better correctness, substituted "y" for "j"), and ignoring the criticism that this "is not an Egyptian word," which no one has asserted.

It may be very justly objected, however, that the rendering mentioned by Gesenius, as above noted, gives YA-O, and not YA-O-EH, and that, therefore,

the justification of the latter is not complete. This may be answered in two distinct ways: (1) that, after the waw ("w") has been assimilated to "O," there may be a difference of opinion as to whether it should be combined direct with the final "h," or whether that final should be accounted for by an extra short syllable, as already indicated—as to whether, in short, this name YHWH is properly to be pronounced in two syllables or in three: (2) that, on the supposition that this final should be accounted for by a distinct syllable, and not combined with the "o," it would not be appreciable in Greek writing. The Greek transliteration mentioned by Gesenius, IAO (Iota Alpha Omega), is the only combination in which either of the two forms just discussed could readily be represented. The Greek letter Chi ("ch") could not properly represent the Hebrew final quiescent He ("h"), being properly the correspondent of the Hebrew Cheth ("ch"). In the above quotation from Gesenius the Greek form is evidently transferred to Hebrew letters.

Such approximations of probabilities, as we may have reached, will become perfectly evident in the following. Solely with the desire of being fair, we must call attention to the fact, that, although Smith's transliterations of the two words in discussion are defensible on certain grounds, he was, evidently, concerned more immediately in representing the sounds, as he understood them, of these words, than in giving any real or assured equivalents of the Hebrew letters. This is shown in his rendering of the word Kokabim by Kokaubeam. As any Hebraist knows, the final syllable, "beam," in no sense indicates the Hebrew spelling, although giving a good representation of the sound. In precisely similar fashion, we may assert that his "Jah-oh-eh" also represents his idea of the proper pronunciation of the word, rather than its transliteration—the presence of the extra "h" in "oh" would indicate this; it is evidently present only to lengthen the sound of the "o," as in our English interjection. Then substituting "y" for "j"—not from partiality to Mr. Smith, but because it is more correct—and pronouncing this word, as a word, not as a series of three sounds (e. g., a, b, c, or 1, 2, 3), we have a very close approximation of "Yaoway," which is so nearly the pronunciation for the accredited "Yahweh," as given, viva voce, by Hebraists, (the "e" being given as in European languages, like the English long "a" in "fate," "gate," etc.) that it is needless to

quibble over the difference. In spite of the fact, therefore, that Smith's rendering has been condemned as "far from accurate," he is, evidently, in very good accord with both Abuquity and modern learning. The principal difference between them is whether the Waw remains consonant, or is assimilated to "o."

A large part of the further assumed attacks and discrediting of Smith's interpretations partake of the nature of guerilla warfare. Thus Doctor von Bissing throws out a remark in his letter for the pamphlet, which rather suggests that he is something of a humorist. He says: "Jos. Smith certainly . . . never deciphered hieroglyphic texts at all. He probably used Athanasius Kirscher the Jesuit's work, and there found a method of reading the old Egyptian signs very much like his own."

The humor of the Doctor's remark seems to appeal strongly, for we find the Reverend Dr. Peters taking it up, and enlarging it greatly. Relating, in his genial letter included in the Bishop's Reply to Doctor Widtsoe, how that at a meeting of the Oriental Club he had shown the Spalding pamphlet to those present—and they were "very much interested"—he proceeds, as follows: "Von Bissing's suggestion, contained on the last page of the pamphlet, that Smith probably 'used Athanasius Kirscher the Jesuit's work' on Egyptian, approved itself to those present. Indeed it was suggested by them before I had come to that passage. Kirscher's work was not a whit more foolish or improbable than Smith's work. It was precisely because it was of such a character that, for a good while, the interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics was discredited. His book had a wide circulation. It appealed immensely to half educated and uneducated people and repelled the better educated." The Doctor evidently goes to so great length in describing Kirschner's work (or "book") as a fitting introduction to his grand climax: "The suggestion from that is that Smith, just as honestly as Kirscher, believed that he had found a clue and was a real decipherer; that, in other words, he was not a pure fraud, but an ignorant, vain, self-deluded man, who imagined he knew what he did not know."

Under the Doctor's characterization, Mr. Smith was certainly in a large and representative company, including many of the people, whose names shine in history, also, quite a few "scholars." Apparently, the Doctor has "traced error to its foul nest." If, as Mercer remarks, "the unanimous testimony of eight scholars is the

same as that of eighty and eight," we may conclude that the "testimony" of two scholars, backed also, by the membership of the Oriental Club, is of nearly equal force. One encounters grave difficulties. In one point, however, I should like to be enlightened. Although, as I remember, one of the critics of Spalding's pamphlet, finding the remark of Doctor Sayce—"Maat leading the Pharaoh before Osiris"—asks, innocently, "what Pharaoh?" and is censured for "cavilling," I will risk the same rebuke by asking "which book." Doctor Peters would confer an immense favor by giving the title and the date of publication of that work of Athanasius Kirscher, which had a "wide circulation," "appealed immensely to the half educated and uneducated," discredited the interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphics "for a good while," and "repelled the better educated." It might seem, on his terms, that the "crediting" of hieroglyphic interpretation was the result of popular vote in some sense.

As a matter of fact, Kirscher's theories embarrassed the final work of deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics to just about the same extent that the itinerary of Ulysses, as set forth in Homer's "Odyssey," would confuse the compiler of a "Guide Book to the Mediterranean," at the present day. On the other hand, if, as the Doctor asserts, any book of his "repelled the better educated," the "repulsion" came by some sort of "long-distance transmission" in the Doctor's case. In making the statements above quoted, Doctor Peters shows conclusively that he has the vaguest possible idea of the identity, period, significance, and work of Kirscher, also that, if he ever saw or read any book of his, it has made no deep impression on his mind. I am very sorry that Doctors Von Bissing and Peters, and the members of the Oriental Club, have made such a suggestion as this about "Kirscher's work." It sounds very like an off-hand and ill-considered remark, and rather shakes one's faith in the sufficiency and accuracy of their other findings.

Athanasius Kirscher, a Jesuit priest, who lived in the seventeenth century, and was one of the most learned men of his day, wrote over thirty books treating of a wide range of subjects, including mathematics and physics, linguistics and travel. Judging from the quotations in several of his works, he was "at home" in a dozen languages, including Arabic, Syriac, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. He wrote a book on China, with notes by the way on India, Tibet and Japan, that reveals an active and acquisitive

mind and, within the inevitable limitations of his day, also a faithful observer. In this latter book he includes an analysis of the Sanscrit writing (Nagari), which shows but few defects, and discusses the mythology of India, and of the other countries reached by him in a manner, both intelligent and exhaustive. He propounds, also, a theory of the origin and use of the Chinese written signs, which is brilliant, even if unscientific, according to the findings of the present day. Furthermore, in no one of his books does he make any distinct effort to appeal to the "half educated and uneducated." Such people would be very much annoyed at running upon some of his plenteously distributed quotations in Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and other "outrageous" languages at about every other page. His books come just about as near to "popular science" as does the Book of Mormon to a novel.

In addition to his other works, all discouragingly learned and brilliant, he wrote and published, not one, merely, but no less than six distinct books dealing with the language and hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians. All these books were written in the crabbed, mediaeval Latin of his contemporary scholars, and none of them, so far as I have been able to discover, has ever been translated into English. In order, however, that Doctor Peters may indicate the one that appealed especially to the "uneducated," I will include their titles and dates, as follows: "Prodromus Coptus" (Rome, 1636); "Lingua Aegyptiaca restituta" (Rome, 1643); "Obeliscus Pamphilius in foro Agonalis Erectus" (Rome, 1650); "Oedipus Aegyptiacus" (Rome, 1652-54); "Obelisci Aegyptiaci. . . Interpretatio hieroglyphica; novo methodo tradita" (Rome, 1666); "Sphinx Mystagoga" (Amsterdam 1674). He is also credited with another bearing the title, "Ars Veterum Aegyptiorum hieroglyphica" (hieroglyphic art of the old Egyptians), which I have been unable to find on published lists, or in library collections: consequently, no date.

Kirscher believed that the Egyptian hieroglyphics represented "picture writing" merely, and not combinations of sound-equivalents, ideograms, etc. Like several other theorists of pre-scientific times, he made a bold comparison with the Chinese method of writing, to a great extent, apparently, identifying the two. As a Churchman, also, he imported numerous ideas concerning the "mysteries of religion" into his attempted interpretations. That he evidently guessed wrong in

most cases is no reflection on his intelligence; he was, in his day, before the Rosetta Stone had been discovered and deciphered, in precisely the same position, as regards Egyptian inscriptions, as are the learned of the present in discussing the Maya inscriptions of Yucatan and Central America. In spite of the inevitable shortcomings of his work and methods, Kirscher recognized the relevancy of the study of Coptic to the understanding of Ancient Egyptian, and, accordingly, includes in his "Prodromus Coptus" an elaborate lexicon of the former language.

I have included this rather lengthy discussion of Father Kirscher and his work merely to demonstrate the complete idleness and futility of the aforementioned criticisms involving his name and "book." If, as von Bissing and Peters suppose, Smith "used . . . the Jesuit's work," they credit him with a very good and exhaustive knowledge of Latin, also with a really scholarly discrimination, which prevented him from following "his master" in the latter's more unscientific and indefensible hypotheses. So Smith knew "some Hebrew" and a great deal of Latin, yet these facts, vigorously asserted or suggested, militate against the notion that he could possibly have read any Egyptian texts. Whatever Smith may have known, or may not have known, about languages, or other matters, it is quite clear that there are very many people who know little or nothing about Smith.

Although, as an interested investigator of matters religious, sociological and linguistic, I first entered this discussion with the sole intention of discovering and stating the real facts, to the best of my humble ability, I must confess surprise at the large number of occasions in which the balance of evidence is on the side of Joseph Smith, also, at the futility of a large number of the arguments made against his claims and character. Since the opening of this Spalding pamphlet investigation, my respect for him and his teachings has greatly augmented. There can be no doubt but what he is destined to occupy a respected position among historic religious teachers and moral and sociological innovators. It would seem that he has already become a riddle, which is not readily to be solved, even by the learned. Whatever else may be said about him, I am determined, to the best of my ability, to see that he gets fair and candid treatment. Treatments of other varieties have already been overdone in his case. The present controversy is no conspicuous exception.

The learned participants in the pres-

ent controversy follow very much the same lines of procedure as has always been followed by unlearned anti-"Mormons," in general. They assume very much that has not been said or claimed, and, then proceed to argue against it. Thus, in the numerous arguments based on the apparent late period of the figures on the three plates of the Book of Abraham, altogether too much has been said on the assumption of a claim that Abraham originated these plates, or even that they may be considered the original drawings included in the first copies of this assumed ancient work. We might as reasonably say of a recent edition of Dickens' novels: "These books cannot be by Dickens, because they are illustrated with half-tone plates made from drawings by a modern artist, and there were no half-tone plates in Dickens' time." We would be mistaken, of course, in such a criticism; the whole point of the matter being whether the illustrations in question belong in and illustrate Dickens' novels, or whether they belong with stories by Scott, Zola or Beaconsfield. In the same way, the sole question before us in the present case is as to whether Smith's descriptions and interpretations may be justified by any respectable line of argument. The question of the date is quite secondary, as suggested above.

Thus, if any of the critics can clearly indicate an Egyptian drawing like Plate 1, which shows the same agitated pose of the reclining figure, and the "priest" without the Anubis head, that would be of real value. I know of no such drawing, and believe that such cannot be produced. In regard to the second plate, the hypocephalus, I have seen positively no statement of a claim that Abraham originated it; but, as I believe, I made fairly good approximations to demonstrating that Smith's interpretations hovered somewhere in the neighborhood of truth, and that, on the testimony of no smaller scholars than Petrie, Budge and Lythgoe. What may have been its real origin I did not attempt to determine, partly because I could find no perfectly conclusive data on the subject; partly because I considered that the discussion should deal solely with Smith's interpretations.

In another point, also, our scholarly critics are somewhat afflicted with a misapprehension, and this is in the statement made by both Doctor Mercer and Doctor Barton, to the effect that, as the latter puts it: "Had this been a genuine Book of Abraham, it would not have been written in Egyptian characters at all, but in Babylonian cuneiform. That was the language and script of Abraham's native land, and was the method of writing

used in Palestine even by Egyptian governors." This, also, is a matter which we need not pause to discuss at length, since no one, so far as I have heard, has seen the original of the book in question, in order to inform us as to whether it was written in Egyptian hieroglyphic, Babylonian cuneiform, or some other script, or to judge as to whether it was an original or a translation, or to show us how far the scribes of a "degenerate and debased age in Egyptian civilization" had altered the drawings and botched the inscriptions. The fact remains that Smith made no attempt to interpret the inscriptions on these plates. We might even hold that the text of the book really was in cuneiform, and that these drawings, with hieroglyphic inscriptions, had been supplied by a hand other than the one that wrote it. Even on the supposition that Smith really found the key to the translation of an ancient document, we have no guarantee that he knew definitely the origin of its letters or of its language. Many fairly intelligent people of the present day cannot tell Hebrew from Sanscrit, nor Cuneiform from Chinese. The illegible inscriptions, which he did not pretend to translate furnish no clue to the character of the text which he did profess to translate. Hence we are, at the end of the discussion, precisely where we were before we began talking.

There seems little necessity of adding more to demonstrate the fact that all the "experts" consulted by Bishop Spalding have actually established in a scholarly and scientific form little or nothing against Smith's proposed explanations of these plates. That they have established the fact that, in the words of one of their number, "Smith has misinterpreted the signification of every one figure," is an absurdity. Not only have I shown that he made some good approximations to the meanings of several of the figures, at least, especially on the "hypocephalus" and that on the authority of recognized writers on matters Egyptian, but I have shown also that the adverse criticisms were made in a spirit far from that in which one could reasonably expect to discover the truth of anything on earth. I can not understand, therefore, how that Bishop Spalding can continue to assume that he has disproved all of Smith's findings in connection with these plates, nor do I understand how such an assumption comports with his assumed character of an "honest searcher after truth." Whatever he may think, or say, on the matter is of small consequence, however, besides the fact that he allows editors of his own and other bodies to assume

the truth of such statements as are made in the editorial enclosed herewith.

In his reply to Doctor Widtsoe the Bishop reveals his attitude, as follows: "I must say that to my admittedly unscientific mind the judgment of eight witnesses seems sufficient to establish the meaning of the Egyptian text. . . . If I found a plant which I could not classify, or a mineral I could not name, and eight scientists in eight universities independently agreed as to the plant and mineral, I should feel that I need inquire no further."

Anyone having the remotest idea of the conditions and qualifications of an adequate scientific judgment knows perfectly well that the Bishop's assumption is very ill taken. In the case of a mineral, at least, there are very many cases in which an exhaustive analysis might reverse an opinion based on superficial resemblances. There are some instances in which the exact nature and identity of a given specimen of mineral may not be fixed, without photometric tests to determine its "axis of refraction," and other physical and chemical qualities, which are nature's hieroglyphic equivalents for its precise description. The whole basis of an adequate judgment, in any field of scientific inquiry, is the exhaustiveness of the analysis. We have seen nothing of the kind in the opinion of the Spalding experts, nor any attempt to justify their sweeping statements by a single reference to a recognized text-book or document bearing on the matter in hand. In default of these data, it may be asserted that their judgments are not perfectly scientific, hence, not perfectly reliable.

I suppose, Mr. Editor, that there are still people in this world who would not believe, "though one rose from the dead," but I am truly astonished at the high "horse-power" it requires to dislodge from the minds of the Bishop and his witnesses the notion that they have been concerned, to the minutest extent, with establishing "the meaning of the Egyptian text." I have seen no "text" under discussion and in this "controversy," except a few hieroglyphic lines, which no one has attempted to translate. Furthermore, if he is concerned with the analysis of such a text, why does he persist in consulting persons who are not qualified Egyptologists? Doctors Peters and Barton are self-confessed Semitists, whose Egyptological knowledge consists largely in historical information. The theory of summoning these Semitists is probably that, as they "know one foreign language already," they are competent in foreign languages in general.

But, the climax of the Bishop's argument is characterized by the same charming and "unquestioning faith" in

the deliverances of people, who are reputedly competent "scholars." His attitude seems to be that of the late Cardinal Newman, who, when his unbelieving brother Francis proposed that they assume some self-evident basis of fact for a discussion of their differences, said: "What is the matter with the infallibility of the Pope?"

If this is the Bishop's attitude there is nothing to be said in criticism. An "admittedly unscientific mind" must needs "lean." Would he, however, follow the deliverances of "scholarship" and learning into all bypaths blazed by special investigation? In other words are specialists in other departments as dependable as are those in Egyptology? If he has eleven voices against the Book of Abraham, and hence concludes that he "breaks neck-and-neck," as against the eleven witnesses for the Book of Mormon— and he will do better next time—does he consider that the number and unanimity of the witnesses establishes every point in every dispute? Would he repeat the same profession of faith if, instead of "hitting a body blow to "Mormonism," as he assumes, the deliverances of "scholarship" discredited some of the fundamental beliefs of his own body? If this is his attitude toward learning, what effect should follow from the fact that the Roman church authorities, after an investigation, which seems to have been honestly made, announce unqualifiedly that the Church of England has no right or claim to the "Apostolic Succession?" What effect should follow from the same denial of the reality or significance of this valued Episcopal belief, made by the entire body of Protestant scholarship? If the deliverances of scholars are to be ignored sometimes, why are they so very infallible at others? This is a fair question for an "honest searcher after truth."

There are only two consistent courses left open to the Bishop. The first is to acknowledge frankly and honestly that he has not made his case. The second is to pursue his investigations "to the bitter end." If he takes the latter course, I shall be justly delighted to meet him on every Semitic and Egyptian point he may try to make. If he chooses the former, everyone will acknowledge that he has made good, at least, on his profession as an "honest searcher after truth." I have seen the query propounded in several periodicals, "What will be the effect on the 'Mormons,' now that the world's greatest scholars have spoken?" I can only answer: If they speak no better than some of them have so far spoken, they "could not possibly expect," as one of our friends would say, "to get more than zero."

ROBERT C. WEBB.