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A N A N S W E R

TO SOME

FALSE STATEMENTS

AND MISREPRESENTATIONS

MADE BY

THE REV. ROBERT HEYS,

WESLEYAN MINISTER,

IN AN ADDRESS TO HIS SOCIETY IN DOUGLAS AND ITS

VICINITY, ON THE SUBJECT OF

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M O R M O N I S M .

By JOHN TAYLOR,

ELDER OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.

“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables.”—2 Tim. iv., 4.

“To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word; it is because there is no light in them.”—Isa. viii., 20.

DOUGLAS:

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AN ANSWER, &c.

I HAD put into my hands the other evening, when at the meeting, in the Wellington Rooms, a small circular, purporting to be an "*Address to the members of the Wesleyan Societies and Congregations in Douglas and its vicinity, on the subject of Mormonism,*" and wherein the doctrines that I believe in and teach are called "damnable heresies" and "awful blasphemies;" and, which, in the opinion of the author, Mr. Heys, come very little short of "the sin against the Holy Ghost;" and that I have been guilty of insulting the religious public of the town of Douglas, with the abundance of sheer nonsense, which appears in the Book of Mormon, and also in a periodical which is called the "*Millennial Star.*"

How far the religious public have been insulted and imposed upon by the principles that I have advanced since my arrival in the town of Douglas, those who have heard me will be the most correct judges, and not Mr. Heys.

He states, that the principles taught by me are "damnable heresies" and "awful blasphemies;" but, he has not stated wherein they are damnable, or heretical. I would just remark, that it is not the first time that I have been charged with this since my arrival in Douglas. How far my former accuser, Mr. HAMILTON, proved his assertion, the public, who heard us, are the best judges.

Mr. Heys has said something about modern revelations saying what is "directly contrary to the Holy Scriptures." Has he shewed us wherein? No. But we are left to guess it out, or to depend upon his word for it.

We are referred, then, by Mr. Heys to a story, which he considers is well authenticated, that has gone the round of the American newspapers; and which infidels and religious bigots have hailed with delight, and chewed as a sweet morsel; but which long ago has been exploded, and its propagators ashamed of it.

What a pity it is, that men standing in the "important relation," which Mr. H. says he does to the people, "as a Christian minister," should be necessitated to have recourse to such flimsy productions as these instead of the word of God. "Prove all things," says Paul. What by? Are we to prove them by newspaper stories? No! "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,"—Isaiah viii, 20. I want nothing more than the Word of God to prove the truth or falsehood of any system. I say again, what a pity it is that Mr. Heys cannot do that, and is necessitated to have recourse to so poor a subterfuge, thus fulfilling that scripture which says, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made LIES OUR REFUGE, and under FALSEHOOD have we hid ourselves." Isa. xxviii, 15.

But Mr. H. states that his story is well authenticated; that it is given by Mr. Smith's father-in-law, whose undoubted veracity is attested by two Associate Judges of the Court of Common Pleas. All this, indeed, appears very plausible—so it did that our Saviour was "stolen away by night," Matt. xxviii, 15, for there were most respectable witnesses to it. Who were they? The Pharisees, chief priests, doctors, &c., &c. *The holy and pious men* of that generation, that ought to have loved and supported truth, who gave the soldiers money to say that his

disciples stole him away, and said that "if it come to the governor's ears we will persuade him and secure you," Matt. xxviii., 12, 13, 14. We will support the lie that we have commenced, 15 v.,—and the thing was reported among all the Jews, and of course is believed until this day. Why? Because they were such honourable, holy, devout, and pious men that testified to it; and as Mr. H. has charged me with "*blasphemy*"—so the Pharisees charged our Saviour, and supported their accusations with lies.

But now for the story:—"The document" says Mr. H., "which I wish to lay before you, contains a deposition, which was made but a very few years ago before a Justice of the Peace in America, respecting the author and publisher of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, junr.—p. 2. 'Soon after this, I was informed they had brought a wonderful book of plates down with them. I was shown a box, in which it was said they were contained,' &c. About this time, Martin Harris made his appearance upon the stage, and Smith began to interpret the characters, or hieroglyphics, which he said were engraven upon the plates, while Harris wrote down the interpretation. The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, *with a stone in his hat, and his hat over his face*, while the book of plates was at the same time hid in the woods. After this, Martin Harris went away, and Oliver Cowdery came and wrote for Smith, while he interpreted as above described. Cowdery continued a scribe for Smith, until the Book of Mormon was completed, as I supposed, and understood."

This is the way, then, that Mr. Heys, in his story, accounts for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. But as I happen to have in my possession, a document, written by another Methodist preacher, (for Mr. Heys is not the first Methodist preacher who has been trying to "turn the people's ears away from the truth, and turn them to fables," 2 Tim. iv., 4. newspaper stories, &c.) The document referred to is called an exposure of Mor-

monism, being a statement of facts relating to the self-styled Latter-Day Saints, and the origin of the Book of Mormon, by Richard Livesey, of Winchendon, Massachusetts, America, minister of the Methodist Episcopal church in America—and its truth attested by Benjamin Frankland, John Bedford, Wesleyan ministers, Preston, 24th July, 1838.

What is Mr. Livesey's statement, then, concerning the origin, and coming forth of the Book of Mormon—for he has his story too—and his, he states, is a statement of "FACTS," as well as Mr. Heys' account; and he is also a good man as well as Mr. Heys, taking the testimony of their preachers for it, for two Methodist ministers testify that he is personally known to them, and that he is an accredited minister of the Methodist Episcopal church in America. But unfortunately for these good men, their testimony does not agree any more than the testimony of the false witnesses who were brought against our Saviour. But now for the story.

Page 5th of Mr. L.'s "Facts."—"In Mr. How's publication already quoted, it is proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Book of Mormon was originally written by one *Solomon Spaulding*, who was born in Ashford, Connecticut, in 1761. He graduated at Dartmouth college, and became a minister of the gospel. . . . He afterwards removed to Conneaut, Ohio, where it was well known that he was engaged in writing a *novel*, with the avails of which he expected to pay his debts; this work he called "The Manuscript Found." It purported to be an historical record of the first inhabitants of America, whom it represented as decendants from the ancient Jews." He then brings forth a number of witnesses to testify to the same thing, and further states:—

"The existence of the above-named "Manuscript Found" is further proved by the testimony of S. Spaulding's widow, who said it was carried to *Pittsburg*, Pennsylvania, by her husband, in 1812, when he died soon after. It was put into the hands of a printer

of the name of Lamdin, (who died in 1836), with whom Sidney Rigdon was very intimate during his residence in that city. Rigdon obtained the manuscript from Lamdin, and after a few years spent in re-writing and altering it, it was ushered forth to the world by Joseph Smith, junr. and others, as a revelation from God! such was the ORIGIN of the Book of Mormon."

This, then, is the account given us by Mr. Livesey of the *origin of the Book of Mormon*. He makes it out that the Rev. Solomon Spaulding wrote a novel called the "Manuscript Found," and that this REV. NOVEL WRITER'S production was the document from which the Book of Mormon was taken—that this was the *origin of it*. That this was put into the hands of a printer of the name of Lamdin; that S. Rigdon obtained the manuscript from Lamdin, and after a few years spent in re-writing and altering it, it was ushered forth to the world by Joseph Smith, junr., Rigdon, and others, as a revelation from God. "Such was the origin," says he, "of the Book of Mormon."

The following is Mr. Heys' story:—"I was shewn a box, in which it is said, they (the plates) were contained, which had to all appearance been used as a glass box, of a common-sized window glass..... About this time Martin Harris made his appearance on the stage, and Smith began to interpret the characters or hieroglyphics, which he said were engraven on the plates, while Harris wrote down the interpretation..... The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the book of plates was, at the same time, hid in the woods..... After this, Martin Harris went away, and Oliver Cowdery came and wrote for Smith, as above described, Cowdery continued a scribe for Smith until the Book of Mormon was completed, as I suppose."

Which, then, of these accounts, I would ask, is true? One says that Joseph Smith junr. is the author and publisher of the Book of Mormon the other says that

Solomon Spaulding is the author of it! One says that it was written by Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdry, from the mouth of Joseph Smith, junr., as he looked at a stone, with his face in a hat; the other, that it was written, and altered by Sidney Rigdon, from the "Manuscript Found"!! One makes it out that it was written in Harmony township, Susquehanah county, by Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdry; the other, that it was written in Conneaut, Ohio, first by Solomon Spaulding, and afterwards altered by Sidney Rigdon, in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania!!! So much, then, for the agreement of the testimony which is brought forth as **FACTS** concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and yet these gentlemen are both of them good men; both of them accredited ministers of the Methodist connexion; and both of them have got what they call **FACTS**, diametrically opposed to each other as light is from darkness. But Mr. Heys has got good testimony to his account, so has Mr. Livesey; and I suppose that because both of the testimonies are good, they must both of them be true—although the one contradicts the other—especially as they were supported and held forth by such pious, holy men.

I shall leave Messrs. Heys and Livesey, then, to settle this difficulty between themselves, and after the one has proved the other's statement false, I will prove his to be false. I would, however, give these gentlemen one piece of advice, and that is, if they value their standing in society, to be careful for the future to abide by the truth, and let the Word of God be their standard, and to leave the "fables of men," lest they should be found when the destinies of men shall be fixed, among those that love, and make lies; for, be it remembered, that the "lovers of lies," as well as the makers of them, "shall have their portion in that lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

Is it not a pity that men standing at the head of their flocks as "Christian ministers," should be necessitated to have recourse to such low subterfuges as those to defend their falling creeds with? Surely such things are

“ A blot that will remain a blot in spite
 Of all that grave apologists can write ;
 And though a Bishop try to purge the stain,
 He rubs and scours the crimson cup in vain.”

Mr. Heys seems to have forgot the time when Methodist ministers were belied and slandered, as we are now belied and slandered by him. He must recollect that it is not long ago since the finger of scorn was pointed at the Methodists, and the lip of reproach and tongue of scandal were employed against them. I would have him to remember “the rock from whence he was hewn; and the pit from whence he was dug.” Then they were despised, persecuted, and cast out; but it is different with them now, and why different? Our Saviour says—“If ye are of the world, the world will love its own,” John xv., 19. How is the gold become dim; and the fine gold, how is it changed? Surely Messrs. John Wesley, John Nelson, Fletcher, and Bramwell, who were ornaments to the Methodist society, would have been ashamed to have been found in the situation in which Messrs. Heys and Livesey have placed themselves in.

I would then apply to Mr. Heys the passage of scripture he has quoted in his circular, “renounce the hidden things of dishonesty,” and advise him to abide by the truth, for the Word of God will be true when every man will be found a liar.

I certainly was at the first a little surprised at the malignant attacks that were made upon me by ministers of the Methodist order; on pondering over the circumstance I was reminded of the story of the pheasant and the dunghill fowls, it was a little surprised that it should be so ill used, being a stranger among them; but when it saw that they fell out among themselves, it quietly submitted to its fate. So, when I recollected that these gentlemen were always bespattering one another, and that I had seen two periodicals called *The Watchman*, and *Watchman's Lantern*, the pages of which are yet stained with foul names, epithets, and testimonials concerning

conduct the most disgraceful, and proceedings as dark as ever blackened the history of any church, and that these were good men (writing against good men) that used this foul-mouthed slander, or truth, I don't know which, I was not surprised that they should call a stranger—"a blasphemer," &c., &c. I see in all these things the Word of God fulfilling. Paul says, in the last days there shall be "false accusers." I have had no less than two public men having a "form of godliness," engaged in this since my arrival in Douglas, both of whom have accused me of "blasphemy"—both of whom have accused me of teaching things "directly contrary to the Holy Scriptures;" one of them has said that the things that I teach are "damnable heresies:" but neither of them has attempted to substantiate any of the above charges. But men have not said "all manner of evil falsely;" yet, when they do, I will rejoice: and I say with one of the ancients who was persecuted for the sake of truth—"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus Christ, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," Acts xx., 24.

As the public in general are not acquainted with the Book of Mormon, and have not an opportunity of becoming immediately acquainted with it, as the last edition of the work is disposed of, and it will be six weeks before the new edition is printed, which is now in the press. Although I dislike controversy, yet, lest the public mind should receive a wrong bias, from the misrepresentations and insinuations of Mr. Heys, I am perfectly willing to meet Mr. Heys before the public, and discuss the subject of the Book of Mormon with him; the Word of God shall be the test of its truth or falsehood, and not newspaper stories. And lest Mr. Heys should say that I have any advantage over him, I will lend him the book two or three days before the discussion takes place if he desires it.

The discussion to take place the latter end of this, or the beginning of next week.

The terms for the discussion to be the same as I had with Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Heys being, as Mr. Hamilton was, the accuser, of course, will speak first.

JOHN TAYLOR.

Douglas, Oct. 7, 1840.