

- ART. VIII.—1. *Mormonism and the Mormons: an Historical View of the Rise and Progress of the Sect self-styled Latter-Day Saints.* By DANIEL P. KIDDER. 18mo., pp. 342. New-York: G. Lane & P. P. Sandford. 1842.
2. *The History of the Saints; or, an Expose of Joe Smith and Mormonism.* By JOHN C. BENNETT. 12mo., pp. 344. Boston: Leland & Whiting. New-York: Bradbury, Soden, & Co. Cincinnati: E. S. Norris & Co. 1842.
3. *The British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review.* Number for October, 1842. Article VI.

THE history of religious imposture is replete with facts as instructive and admonitory as humiliating and alarming. How it comes to pass that base and stupid imposition wins its way upon the credulity of multitudes of men, and finally comes to be regarded as the voice of God, is an inquiry which has in different ages of the world called forth the talents of the wise and good—of both philosophers and theologians. It is still however a fact, which to many is involved in inexplicable mystery. How rational minds can be gulled into a belief that the God of infinite holiness and wisdom would employ *knaves* to teach *religion*, and to perfect his own revelations, is a problem that many are not able to solve.

A thorough understanding of the intellectual and moral character of man, as developed in the Holy Scriptures, and confirmed by experience and observation, will conduct us to the only safe and satisfactory conclusions upon this subject. Man is so constituted that *religion* is one of the wants of his nature, and religion of some sort he will have. But he is so perverted in his moral nature that he is averse to the pure and true religion which God has given him; and hence any new religion, or any modification of the old and true religion which offers him the unrestrained indulgence of his animal appetites, or some mitigation of the rigor of the divine precepts, finds in him a ready reception. There is also in many minds a fondness for novelty and the marvelous, which blinds both reason and conscience, and preponderates in their decisions in relation to matters of religion more generally than in any thing else. Such minds, when brought fairly under the power of some novelty, or some wonderful, and, to a cool judgment, incredible relation or theory, are almost wholly incapable of a regular process of reasoning, or of arriving at just conclusions in relation to the subject of their fanatical admiration. Hence we find men of every false religion perfectly honest in their adherence to it, and per-

fectly incompetent to see in it any defects, or to view in a just light the evidences of the selfish designs of those they make their spiritual guides, though all this is as obvious to all the world besides as the sun at noon-day. Men in this condition are really more entitled to our sympathy and forbearance than our contempt or censure. The poison has acted upon their minds until their regular functions are subverted, and all their moral judgments are actually the hallucinations of insanity.

But we must come to the consideration of the particular subject of this article, viz., "Mormonism and the Mormons." Our object is not to argue the matter with our "Latter-day Saints," nor to give many specimens from the works at the head of this article; but to give the reader a sketch of the facts which our authors have authenticated, and of the results at which they have arrived.

The principal actor in the Mormon imposture is Joe Smith, an ignorant, fanatical, and licentious renegade, who, in connection with his father, was impelled by a money-digging mania to visit the mountains of northern Pennsylvania to prosecute his calling—that of discovering secret treasures in the earth by *peeping at a stone in a hat!* Here he married Emma Hale, of Harmony, Susquehannah county, without the consent, and contrary to the wishes, of her parents and friends. Smith's character is proved to have been grossly immoral by the affidavits of his father-in-law, brother-in-law, his wife's uncle, and a cousin; besides a long list of respectable names in the state of New-York where he was raised.

The deponents in Pennsylvania we knew well in 1816-17, the first year of our itinerant life. We have a distinct recollection of their several traits of character, and as clearly have in our mind's eye the present wife of "the prophet." Father Hale, as he was called, was a pious, an honest, and a shrewd man, who settled in that rough region of country in an early period in order to gratify his propensity for hunting. Father Lewis is still alive, and it will be a sufficient endorsement of his character to say that he has for many years been an acceptable and a useful local elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Father Hale's house was the preachers' home, and Em, as she was called in family parlance, acted a subordinate part in the work about house. Elevated, as she now is, we in those old times often partook of a good repast of venison, eels, and buckwheat cakes, prepared by her hands. Our general impression is, that she was of decidedly moderate intellectual caliber—quite below the average grade of the family. But subsequent associations may have wrought in her marked and salutary changes.

When Joe first broached the grand hoax of "the golden Bible," it was talked of solely as a *money-making project*. In a conversation with Rev. N. Lewis, about three years since, he informed us, that the first that he heard of the matter was a sort of vague representation from Joe and Em, that they knew of something that when carried out *would make them and all their friends rich*. And when the story came out about the "gold plates," and the "great spectacles," he (Lewis) asked Joe if any one but himself could translate other languages into English by the aid of his miraculous spectacles? On being answered in the affirmative, he proposed to Joe to let him make the experiment upon some of the strange languages he found in Clarke's Commentary, and stated to him if it was even so, and the experiment proved successful, he would then believe the story about the gold plates. But at this proposition Joe was much offended, and never undertook to convert "uncle Lewis" afterward.

As to "the Book of Mormon," which, indeed, constitutes the foundation of the system of Mormonism, it is proved, most conclusively, that the whole, excepting the religious matter, is identical with a book written, but not published, by one Spaulding, in the state of Ohio, as a novel, and entitled, "The Manuscript Found." It is made quite probable that Smith came into possession of the MS. through the agency of Rigdon, his coadjutor and orator, whom he very easily converted to the faith, after, by the aid of one of his dupes who had the means, he had published this wonderful book.

The first converts to the new religion were from among Smith's family and friends in western New-York. None of his wife's friends in Pennsylvania, with all the prospects of *becoming rich* presented before them, have to this day, as far as we know, become Mormons. This is honorable both to their heads and hearts.

In the history of the Mormons we mark several important periods. The first is, when they took possession of what was revealed by "the prophet" to be their "eternal inheritance," in Kirkland, Ohio. The next, when, by erecting a magnificent temple, and getting up a bank, and going into various other speculations, they exploded, and went to the "far west," where they found another "eternal inheritance" in Missouri. And, finally, when, by coming into collision with the Missourians, they were forced by fire and sword to leave the state, and finally found another "eternal inheritance" in Illinois, where they have their present head quarters, and where "the saints are to come up to the gathering." Upon the wake of public sympathy, raised by the