A SHORT

HISTORY OF THE MORMONITES;

OR,

LATTER DAY SAINTS.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF

THE REAL ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

BY

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"FALSE PROPHETS SHALL ArISE, AND SHALL DEceive MANY."

S. Matt. xxiv. 11.

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MDCCLX.
denied by Sidney Rigdon, in a letter bearing date, May 29, 1839, but he was then deeply interested in the success of the imposture, being a partner in the fraud; and, moreover, he has since confessed his error, by seceding from Joseph Smith, "the feelings of a father overcoming every other consideration on his making the discovery that the impostor had attempted to add his daughter to the number of his spiritual wives."

"Mrs. Davison's account, then, suffices to authenticate the quarter from which Joseph Smith derived the materials of a work which he was by no means qualified by his education to compose: nor can there be any doubt that it was by means of Sidney Rigdon, that Spaulding's manuscript found its way out of the printing-office at Pittsburgh, into the hands of Joseph Smith."

This man, Sidney Rigdon, was originally a preacher among the Campellite Baptists of Kirtland, and there can be little doubt, that having got possession of Solomon Spaulding's papers, he formed a design of palming them off upon the world as a divine revelation, and employed for this purpose Joseph Smith, a loose vagabond, whom his habits and reputation as a money-digger, gifted with supposed supernatural endowments, pointed out as a proper instrument for so audacious an attempt. The pretended translation from behind the curtain, of which Martin Harris was made the dupe, being nothing more than the dictation of Spaulding's romance, with such alterations and embellishments as would suit the particular purpose which the two confederates had in view.*

As to Solomon Spaulding, it is to be regretted that his talents were not better employed. To dress up a fiction in the language of Holy Writ, imitating as nearly as possible the style of the Old Testament, for the amusement of himself and his friends, merely because "the Old Testament is the most ancient book in the world," without the slightest regard for its sacred character, strikes us as very shocking and profane. And that a society of persons calling themselves Christians, should have endured to hear such a composition "repeatedly read," and should have listened to it with approbation, speaks but ill for the tone of religious feeling prevalent among them.


What too is to be thought of Mr. Patterson, the bookseller at Pittsburg, who was so very much pleased with this work, and wished to publish it, without seeming to be aware of the effect of such a desecration on the public mind? What too of the public in general, among whom such a profanation was thought likely to be "a source of profit!" Is it not plain that the same persons who could encourage, and even applaud, the irreverence of Solomon Spaulding, were at least in some measure prepared for the blasphemies of Joseph Smith?

Mr. John Spaulding, indeed, when he heard his brother's manuscript put forward as a new revelation, is represented as having been "amazed and afflicted," but it does not seem to have struck him that there was a radical profanity in the work itself, suggestive, as Mrs. Davison herself acknowledged, of the evil purposes to which it was afterwards applied; at least that it was a work well fitted for such purposes, and therefore must be esteemed, in no slight degree, answerable for the evils they have entailed on mankind.

The principal object of these pages is to exhibit, in as clear a light as is consistent with brevity, the fact that the Book of Mormon is a gross fraud and imposture, and so to undermine the credit of the whole superstructure of Mormonism, which is based upon that book. The author might have further demonstrated his point by internal proofs drawn from an examination of the book itself; but enough has been done for the purpose he had in view.

Perhaps, however, the present treatise, considered in the light of a warning against Mormonism, might be thought incomplete, if the doctrines of this delusion, and the practices of its votaries are passed over in entire silence; a few words must therefore be devoted to these matters.

First, then, to acquaint the reader with some of the more prominent doctrines of Mormonism, which, for his greater satisfaction, shall be stated, as nearly as possible, in the very words of the Mormonists themselves.

If he should embrace this delusion, he will have to believe that Joseph Smith, notwithstanding his low and villainous character, is a true prophet; and that all he says is to be received upon peril of damnation.

That the Book of Mormon is of equal authority with the
usher in a new revelation; on the contrary, we are told that it is "a kingdom which cannot be moved."

The above are some of the Mormonist doctrines, by which the reader will perceive how far they are from maintaining "the faith once delivered to the Saints."

As to their conduct and practices, Mr. Ruxton, in his "Life in the far West," informs us that the Missourians, among whom they first established themselves, considered them as "bad neighbours, on account of their pilfering propensities, and their utter disregard of the conventional decency of society, exhibiting the greatest immorality, and endeavouring to establish amongst their society an indiscriminate concubinage."

** But that they "tolerated their presence among them, until they openly proclaimed their intention of seizing upon the country, and of expelling by force the present occupants, giving, as their reason, that it had been revealed to their prophets that the land of Zion was to be possessed by themselves alone."**

The end of this was that the Missourians expelled them; and that they fled to "Clay country, where they established themselves, and would finally have formed a thriving settlement, but for their own acts of wilful dishonesty. At this time their blasphemous mummeries knew no bounds. Joe Smith, and other 'prophets,' who had lately arisen, were declared to be the chosen of God; and it was the general creed, that on the day of Judgment the former would take his stand on the right hand of the judgment seat, and that none would pass into the kingdom of heaven without his seal and touch. One of their tenets was the faith in spiritual matrimony. No woman, it appeared, would be admitted into heaven, unless passed by a Saint. To qualify them for this, it was necessary that the woman should first be received by the guaranteeing Mormons, as an earthly wife."

** "The consequence of this state of things," says Mr. Ruxton, "may be imagined. The most degrading immorality was the precept of the order, and an universal concubinage existed among the sect; which at this time numbered at least forty thousand. Their disregard to the laws of decency and morality was such, as could not be tolerated in any class of civilized society."**

They were again expelled, and emigrated to the State of Illinois, where they founded their City of Nauvoo, and built an enormous temple, which they called the Temple of Zion—"half church, half hotel, where Joe Smith and the other prophets resided;" and where they established a mockery of religion, consisting in burlesque* imitations of holy things, in preaching, praying, prophesying, and dancing.

Here they organized a regular militia, and openly defied the government; but their city was taken; the ringleaders confined, and Joseph Smith shot by the mob through the prison bars.

After his death the prestige of the fanaticism declined; still thousands joined them annually; and at last the state took measures to remove them bodily from the country.

In the year 1846, they migrated from the settlements of the United States; and, after extreme sufferings, during which many of their numbers perished miserably by hunger, exposure, and fatigue, they settled themselves, at last, in the Far West, at the Salt Lake, in a barren district; which, however, by toil and industry, they have converted, as late accounts inform us, into a flourishing settlement.

Whether they have left off their immoralities, and "pilfering propensities;" and, taught by bitter experience, have learned to live righteously as well as industriously, does not appear; but if there be truth in the saying, "a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit," it is impossible for charity herself to expect any good of a society which springs from such an origin as theirs, especially when the mischief of their fanatical superstition remains, like a canker, eating at the core.

Those who remain at home, as well as those who emigrate to the new settlement beyond the Rocky Mountains, must still embrace all the monstrosities of this wild delusion, and must consent that the innocent and unsuspecting minds of their little children shall know nothing of the pure faith in which they themselves have been educated, and which they have so wantonly trodden under foot; but from their earliest years, shall be accustomed, in its stead, to believe in Joseph Smith, and his wonderful spectacles, and his new Bible.

Upon the whole this history is highly instructive as illus-

* "An account of the Nauvoo Temple Mysteries and other abomina-
tions practised by the Mormons previous to their emigration for California, by Increase M'Gee Van Deusen."—Arthur Hall and Co.