

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 galled 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-
fectedly 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, Susquehanna 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 Emm, 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 Spanpling, 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 Ridges, 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
persecutions which the Mormons suffered in Missouri, they rode into a condition of prosperity and success before unknown. They are building a city on the bank of the Mississippi near the rapids, which they call Nauvoo.* Here they are erecting a splendid temple, and Joe has published a revelation that the saints must erect a great house to be called the Nauvoo House," where he, Smith, "and his heirs for ever," are to have "a suite of rooms for their accommodation." A wonderful display of arms and military power is made here by "the saints." And what is a little more than would have been expected, even of Joe Smith, he bears at once the titles of "prophet," "high priest," "president," "mayor of the city of Nauvoo," and "lieutenant general of the Nauvoo legion!"

The fanaticism of Mormonism is set in a true light, and accounted for and explained by the author of the work first placed at the head of this article, with Christian moderation and candor. This is indeed more truly an occasion of grief and sorrow than of ridicule and merriment. And the author never laughs when true religion weeps and bleeds.

The sham miracles of "the Latter-day Saints" are altogether blasphemous, and too shallow to require investigation. The amount of the whole of their miraculous power consists in curing some of the brotherhood of an attack of rheumatism or the tooth-ache, which comes on just at the time a miracle is wanted, and is instantaneously cured "in answer to prayer."

Their prophecies consist in foretelling something that "the prophet" means to bring about—not unfrequently of the sudden death of some one he intends to murder by the agency of his "destructives." And "the prophet" "discerns spirits" by the means of a regular system of espionage, carried on through the agency of his confidential and official informers. The system is made up of an admixture of several parts and parcels of heathenism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, and Christianity—the ultimate tendency of which is to the grossest licentiousness and infidelity.

Its licentious and disorganizing tendency renders it dangerous

*In the month of May, 1839, we passed up the Mississippi as far as Stephenson. Joe was then in distress in Missouri, and the Mormons were flying for life across the river. We saw a motley group on the bank of the river, who, as far as we could judge, had no covering for their heads but covered wagons and some small tents. Little did we then suppose that this was an embryo city, which would develop itself so rapidly as that in three years from that time it would become the glory of the "Latter-day Saints," and the terror of the great west.
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to the civil and political interests of the country, as well as utterly
twist or subversive of the public morals. Still we certainly agree with the
author now under review that "persecution" is not the proper instru-
ment with which to assail this hydra monster. Mormons should be
treated just like other men. When they conduct themselves as
orderly citizens, they should be suffered to enjoy their opinions and
to exercise the full liberty of conscience. When they become
 insane, they should be sent to the hospital or asylum provided for
such persons. And when they are guilty of crime, they should
be tried before the civil tribunals of the country and punished ac-
cording to the laws. And we can but express a hope that by due
process of law, and not by the agency of a mob, Joe Smith will
be brought to appropriate punishment for his numerous gross
violations of the laws of the land.

An abstract of the doctrines of Mormonism is given by our
author, as follows:—

"Stripping off its mantle of hypocrisy, Mormonism stands forth in
the following cardinal positions—a meager and ghastly skeleton.
1. Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord, and a priest after the
order of Melchisedek.
2. The Book of Mormon is true, that is, inspired.
3. Zion is on this land, (Nauvoo, Illinois.)
4. Matter is eternal.
5. God is a material being.
6. The saints are to be baptized for their dead relations, on peril
of their own salvation."—Mormonism and the Mormons, P. 294.

The following is the author's account of the Golden Bible:—

1. The Mormon Bible originated with men destitute of a good
moral character.
2. The primary design of its publication was pecuniary profit.
4. It basely perverts the language and doctrine of the Holy
Scriptures.
5. It blasphemously imputes to God language inconsistent with
his character and holiness.
6. Excepting perverted plagiarisms from the Scriptures of truth,
that book is nothing but a medley of incoherent absurdities.
7. The system of Mormon has arisen entirely from the Book
of Mormon, and the contrivance of its 'authors and propietors.'
8. That system has been and still is propagated by means of
deception.
9. Mormonism, at the same time it pretends to be 'the fulness of
the gospel,' is intrinsically infidel, and opposed to Christianity. It can
never be reconciled with the principles of a true religion.
10. Its legitimate effects are to degrade and heathenize society."—
A remarkable fact is, that several of the early disciples of Mormonism have abandoned the community, and exposed the errors and corruption of the pseudo-prophet; and yet anathemas, fulfilled against them in the name of the Lord, are all that seems necessary to retrieve his character with the great body of "the saints," and to sustain his influence among them. Besides a mass of ignorant deluded fanatics which Joe has gathered around him, he must have some base accomplices. His scribes, and orators, and bishops, and presidents, must be made up of men, if not so reckless and fool-hardy, yet quite as wicked and as infidel, as himself. "Emma, daughter of Zion, elect lady," and by special revelation constituted poet—to compose and select hymns for the saints—tardy as are her mental operations, knows better than to dream that Joe, her husband, acts under a divine commission. But such is the charm of influence, power, and wealth, that her convictions are stifled by the commotion raised through this agency in a mind but too feebly guarded by cultivation and an elevated moral code.

From this general view we shall proceed to a few particular deductions from the facts presented by our author.

Should we, in the present crisis of human affairs, undertake to plot a scheme of evil that would be worthy of the especial patronage of the prince of darkness, and promote, to the greatest practicable extent, the interests of his kingdom, we should feel constrained to copy the prominent features of the system called Mormonism. The leading objects of such a scheme would be,

1. To discredit the word of God; 2. To impugn the evidences of Christianity; 3. To destroy the authority of Jehovah, and to establish some species of idolatry or man-worship; 4. To unite fanatical Christians and sworn infidels in a common crusade against evangelical truth; 5. To sap the foundations of morality and virtue; and, finally, To promote all iniquity in the name and on the credit of religion.

Let us now pass to the parallel.

1. The starting point of Mormonism is its sham bible; a miserable mixture of fictitious narrative and sanctimonious rant; interspersed with passages plagiarized from the word of God. This

* We have before us one of her official productions, with the following title: "A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of Jesus Christ, of the Latter-day Saints. Selected by Emma Smith. Nauvoo, Illinois: printed by E. Robinson. 1841." This book is made up of hymns gathered from all quarters, a portion of which are miserable Mormon doggerel, whether composed by the "elect lady" or others we have no means of determining.
is palmed off upon the credulous as a supplementary revelation, designed to supply the defects of the Bible. Henceforward the Book of Mormon and the Bible must be so identified as to stand or fall together. Both are rejected as offensive, and the object is gained.

2. Mormonism has made an insidious attack upon the evidences of Christianity by maintaining a pretended parallel between the method of its own propagation and that of the religion of the gospel. Under the name of miracles, tongues, interpretations, and prophecies, it has resorted to a species of spiritual jugglery, marvelous indeed in the eyes of its victims. It has, on the whole, gained to itself the unenviable credit of conjuring up a counterfeit very serviceable to infidels, and very troublesome to weak-minded Christians.

3. Joe Smith's highest spiritual claim has been, to be considered "a prophet of the Most High," but under cover of this dignity he has ruled with a rod of iron. Success in imposture has imboldened this originally stupid villain, until he now grasps at the very prerogatives of the Godhead. He endeavors to make his own perverse will superior to all law, human and divine. Among his followers he has thus far been but too successful. Thousands have been taught to render him homage, and their devotion appears to be as pure as that of the heathen who court self-immolation to appease the wrath, or to promote the infernal joy, of their idols.

4. Mormonism originally made claims to the highest sanctity. On this ground it obtained many of its adherents and some of its chosen apostles. Its principles have long been fundamentally atheistic, and now it openly courts the favor of organised infidelity. Infidel and Mormon newspapers interchange extracts with the greatest appearance of mutual satisfaction, and the strongest evidence of intimate relationship. Henceforth we may regard these as identical in design, and fitly matched in the service of their common author.

5. The progress of Mormonism has the invariable tendency to unsettle the grounds of rational belief. It establishes a false criterion of right and wrong, and having substituted the will of man for the authority of God, it has broken down the barriers of conscience, and opened upon society the very floodgates of wickedness.

6. Such a tremendous ingenuity of Satan, countenanced on the one hand by a prevailing respect for religious pretensions, however absurd, and sustained by political intrigue and flattery on the other, could not be put in motion without destructive consequences. Such consequences are just now becoming fairly developed.
may be required to show the full result; but we may fairly presume that we have already a faithful index of what it will be. This may be seen in wholesale swindling, fraudulent bankruptcy, infamous deception, female prostitution, adultery, polygamy, treason, and murder. All these iniquities in their multifarious developments are disguised under the profession of piety, and sanctioned by solemn appeals to the God of heaven.

What portion of the earth has been cursed with a more reckless attempt at the subversion of all good, and where has ever religious imposture flourished more successfully than in this enlightened, Christian land, since Mormonism arose? We tremble when we contemplate the responsibility of those who might have interposed influences to save its victims; but who neglected to inform themselves of the proper methods of so doing. All have been wondering that so stupid an imposture could make any progress in the midst of so much light. Just as though it were depending on its claims to truth for success, or as though there were not in fallen men a natural tendency to confederacies of evil. Such ideas are entirely mistaken, and yet, they seem to have prevailed, until Mormonism is prepared to enforce its pretensions by the sword.

Its downfall has been repeatedly predicted, and is again, at the present moment, supposed by many to be inevitable. In the midst of all its former reverses it has only increased. Hitherto all attempts to subject its founder to the penalties of law have been in some way defeated, and, at the same time, converted into capital for the advancement of his object.

Up to this hour Mormonism continues to be zealously propagated on both sides of the Atlantic. Whatever may be the result of the present crisis, the manner in which this system of false religion sprung up, and the steps by which it has arrived at its present character and position, cannot fail to be subjects of interest to those who would become acquainted with the world as it is, with a view to its amelioration.

Let those, then, who wish to see a fair and impartial account of the miserable imposture which is now exciting so much public interest, read "Mormonism and the Mormons." The style of the work is plain, natural, and perspicuous, and the mechanical execution in keeping with the Book-Room works generally.

The above was prepared as a brief review of the work placed first at the head of this article before we saw the announcement of the work of General Bennett. As far as this work goes for
any thing, it confirms all the leading views of brother Kidder, and
all our general impressions upon the subject. We can only occupy
space to make a few brief notes upon the work of the general.
The author, "for eighteen months, was living with the Mormons
at their chief city, and possessed the confidence of the prophet
himself, and of his councilors;" but says it "is a very gross error"
to suppose that "I was for some time a convert to their pretended
religion." He says, "I never believed in them or their doctrines."
It seems that his object in joining Joe "at the seat of his dominion"
was to possess himself of his secrets, and then "expose his iniquity
to the world." So, according to his own story, the whole of
General Bennett's Mormonism was a mere farce—was deception
played off upon a diviner! What is this but meeting the devil on
his own ground!

That General Bennett has shed much light upon the internal
policy, and the abominable wickedness of Smith and his coadjutors,
cannot be rationally doubted. Whatever construction is put upon
his course, and the spirit he manifests, none can doubt but his
numerous affidavits are authentic, and most of his facts amply
sustained. There are, however, many exceptionable things in
this expose of Mormonism.

To say nothing of the revolting scenes which he describes,
which, for the honor of humanity, and the security of the public
morals, had already been made sufficiently public through the
newspapers, there are many things in the book which will leave a
bad impression. In his great zeal against Mormonism the general
loses self-respect and a sense of propriety. In a controversy with
Rockwell, in relation to the murder of Boggs, the Mormon saint
is represented as saying, "I have been informed that you said
Smith gave me fifty dollars and a wagon for shooting Boggs, and I
can and will whip any man that will tell such a cursed lie." And
the sum of the dignified general's reply is, "If you wish to fight, I
am ready for you!" The general is rather too laudatory of his
correspondents and coadjutors at Nauvoo. They are rather too
"good"—the female portion of them are almost too "good-looking."
"beautiful," "amiable," "lovely," and "accomplished"—have too
many "charms and attractions." One of these charming ladies,
he says, "is one of the most devoutly pious girls in the world:" and,
perhaps in proof of her extraordinary piety, he tells us, that in
a controversy with Joe upon some delicate matters she called him
"a cursed liar." Rather a singular flare up this for such a paragon
of piety.

The author professes a great regard for the laws, the morals,
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and religion of the country. All this may be very sincere. But it is rather singular that in saving the country from the overflowings of wickedness, infidelity, and heathenism, he should seem bent upon a crusade against the Mormons, which implies a little more than an appeal to reason and the laws. A war of extermination must be waged against the poor deluded Mormons, and all Christian people must come up to the help of the mighty deliverer, who will carry “the war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt!” The reader will gather a tolerable idea of the spirit of the work, and of the feelings and character of the author, from the following brief paragraphs, which are all we have space for in the present article:

“I shall be in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, as soon as possible, to put the ball in motion; (to which place my friends will hereafter direct their communications to me;) and if the war must be carried to the knife, and the knife to the hilt, the song of thunder will drive it through. The eyes of a Boggs will never slumber nor sleep, until the rod of Aaron divides the waters, and the supremacy of the constitution and the laws is acknowledged in the land, and violence and misery hide their hydra head; and I shall hold the rapier of justice in my right hand, and my left arm shall bear the shield of truth, until I bruise the serpent’s head.”—Mormonism Exposed, pp. 262, 265.

“Will not the people of the west open their eyes to their imminent peril? Will they suffer a community of murderers to congregate their forces, and immolate those nearest allied and most endeared to them by the ties of humanity and consanguinity, without a murmur? Citizens, be ready to put your armor on, and spread your banners on the air! for if the battle must be fought, I will lead you on to glorious victory in this great moral struggle, where the cause of morality and true religion is bleeding at every pore. Arise in the plenitude of your strength and assert your rights, and in the name of the Lord God of Israel, lay the rebels low! Vos populi, vos Dei.”—Pp. 280, 281.

“Should I be sacrificed or slain in the conflict, my blood would be avenged by God and my country. I never feared to die, but I did not intend to sell my life cheaply until the world had the truth of the Mormon organization before them in bold relief. The issue is now made up; their die is cast, their fate is fixed, their doom is sealed; their temple will be profaned, their altars desecrated, their city devastated, their possessions confiscated, and their idols immolated; and reason, sober reason, will once more resume its empire in the minds of the people, and folly, fraud, and imposture, hide their hydra head. All honest individuals, who have the requisite moral courage, will now cease to worship the Mormon Baal, in the modern Babylon, and will bow submissively before the Lord God of the universe, renounce heathenism, and espouse Christianity.”—P. 252.

“It is to vigorous and united effort that we must look for the final suppression of Mormonism; and the citizen and the Christian is highly
culpable who stands by in apathy, and, with folded arms, coolly looks upon the progress of a system that will eventually destroy, if not timely checked, our religion and our liberties, and involve us and our country in the most direful and irretrievable calamities.

"The Mormons, strong already in their numbers and their zeal, are increasing like the rolling snowball, and will eventually fall with the force of an avalanche upon the fabric of our institutions, unless the people, roused to resist their villany, quit the forum for the field, and, meeting the Mormons with their own arms, crush the reptile before it has grown powerful enough to sting them to the death."—P. 307.

This reminds us of what was said of one of old, "His driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." We most sincerely regret that measures so exciting as those which are in progress under the direction of General Bennett are thought to be necessary to bring black-hearted villany and blasphemous imposture to retribution. Why will the sober and reflecting portions of community sleep—give themselves no trouble to gain correct information of the character and progress of a dangerous faction, and a conspiracy against religion and our free institutions, until the warring elements are put into commotion, and then permit hair-brained adventurers to mount the whirlwind and direct the storm? Whatever provocation has been given by Joe Smith and his gang, there is no call for outbreaks of popular fury. The evil is already sufficiently alarming, and needs not to be aggravated and enhanced by bad management. We must be permitted to hope that the people of the west will honor the laws; that no violence will ensue. The way to render the evil incurable is to assail the Mormons in the spirit of fiery persecution. But as much in earnest as we are that Joe and his wretched accomplices should suffer for their licentious, bloody, and treacherous conduct the just penalty of the laws, and that they may find final escape from this utterly impracticable, we protest against all unlawful or indirect measures to accomplish this object. This opposing imposture to imposture, cursing to cursing, fanaticism to fanaticism, and violence to violence, is not the way to cure either heresy, fraud, or faction. But there are empirics in religion and politics as well as in the healing art, and their panaceas are often more to be dreaded than the diseases for which they are offered as the remedy.

We must conclude with a brief notice of an article on Mormonism in the British Critic. This article is principally occupied with a work which bears the following title: "The City of the Mormons; or, Three Days at Nauvoo in 1842. By the Rev. Henry
It seems, that upon seeing many of his "unfortunate countrymen" passing up the river "to join Joe Smith," Professor Caswall determined to visit Nauvoo. "And, if possible, obtain an interview with the prophet himself." He accordingly "embarked on Friday, April 15, in the steamer 'Republic,' having prudently laid aside his clerical dress; and, in order to test the scholarship of the prophet, provided himself with an ancient Greek MS. of the Psalter, apparently of the thirteenth century." The professor arrived on Sunday morning, was landed on the opposite shore, and crossed the river to Nauvoo, in a canoe, where he attended "meeting," and heard several discourses from "the officiating elders." The following is his description of the congregation:

"The temple being unfinished, about half-past ten o'clock a congregation of perhaps two thousand persons assembled in a grove, within a short distance from the sanctuary. Their appearance was quite respectable, and fully equal to that of dissenting meetings generally in the western country. Many gray-headed old men were there, and many well-dressed females. I perceived numerous groups of the peasantry of old England; their sturdy forms, their clear complexions, and their heavy movements, strongly contrasting with the slight figure, the sallow visage, and the elastic step of the American. There, too, were the bright and innocent looks of little children, who, born among the privileges of England's Church, baptized with her consecrated waters, and taught to lisp her prayers and repeat her Catechism, had now been led into this den of heresy, to listen to the ravings of a false prophet, and to imbibe the principles of a semi-pagan delusion."

We would merely inquire here, by the way, what the professor means by "dissenting meetings"? Have we here any privileged religious establishment? We are aware of no such thing—and, of course, can see no propriety or justice in denominating any body of Christians dissenters. Are all dissenters who are not attached to the English hierarchy? Then are the whole American people dissenters, and have been so ever since the declaration of American independence. Or are those Christian communions who did not ask the king and parliament of Great Britain for leave to organize themselves into a church in this country, after the American revolution, on that account dissenters? This would be a strange reason. But are we dissenters because we did not give up our organizations and merge ourselves in the Protestant Episcopal Church, which was the latest of all the leading Christian denominations in perfecting her organization, and is now the smallest
and least efficient of them? We judge not. We would just hint to Professor Caswall that should he see proper to return to America he had better leave a little of his dignity behind him.

The professor had an interview with the prophet, which he thus describes:—

"On landing at Nauvoo, I proceeded with the doctor along the street which I mentioned before as bordering on the strand. As I advanced with my book in my hand, numerous Mormons came forth from their dwellings, begging to be allowed to see its mysterious pages; and by the time I reached the prophet's house, they amounted to a perfect crowd. I met Joseph Smith at a short distance from his dwelling, and was regularly introduced to him. I had the honor of an interview with him who is the prophet, a seer, a merchant, a 'revelator,' a president, an elder, an editor, and the general of the 'Nauvoo legion.' He is a coarse, plebeian person in aspect, and his countenance exhibits a curious mixture of the knave and the clown. His hands are large and fat, and on one of his fingers he wears a massive gold ring, upon which I saw an inscription. His dress was of coarse country manufacture, and his white hat was enveloped by a piece of black crape as a sign of mourning for his deceased brother, Don Carlos Smith, the late editor of the 'Times and Seasons.' His age is about thirty-five. I had not an opportunity of observing his eyes, as he appears deficient in that open, straightforward look, which characterizes an honest man. He led the way to his house, accompanied by a host of elders, bishops, preachers, and common Mormons. On entering the house, chairs were provided for the prophet and myself, while the curious and gaping crowd remained standing. I handed the book to the prophet, and begged him to explain its contents. He asked me if I had any idea of its meaning. I replied, that I believed it to be a Greek Psalter; but that I should like to hear his opinion. 'No,' he said; 'it ain't Greek at all; except, perhaps, a few words. What ain't Greek, is Egyptian; and what ain't Egyptian, is Greek. This book is very valuable. It is a dictionary of Egyptian hieroglyphics.' Pointing to the capital letters at the commencement of each verse, he said: 'Them figures is Egyptian hieroglyphics; and them which follows is the interpretation of the hieroglyphics, written in the reformed Egyptian. Them characters is like the letters that was engraved on the golden plates.' Upon this the Mormons around began to congratulate me on the information I was receiving. 'There,' they said, 'we told you so—we told you that our prophet would give you satisfaction. None but our prophet can explain these mysteries.' The prophet now turned to me, and said, 'This book ain't of no use to you, you don't understand it.' 'O, yes,' I replied, 'it is of some use; for if I were in want of money, I could sell it, and obtain, perhaps, enough to live on for a whole year.' 'But what will you take for it?' said the prophet and his elders. 'My price,' I replied, 'is higher than you would be willing to give.' 'What price is that?' they eagerly demanded. I replied, 'I will not tell you what price I would take; but if you were to offer me this moment nine hundred dollars in gold for it, you should not have it.' They then
repeated their request that I should lend it to them until their prophet should have time to translate it, and promised me the most ample security; but I declined all their proposals. I placed the book in several envelopes, and as I deliberately tied knot after knot, the countenances of many among them gradually sunk into an expression of great despondency. Having exhibited the book to the prophet, I requested him in return to show me his papyrus; and to give me his own explanation, which I had hitherto received only at second hand. He proceeded with me to his office, accompanied by the multitude. He produced the glass frames which I had seen on the previous day; but he did not appear very forward to explain the figures. I pointed to a particular hieroglyphic, and requested him to expound its meaning. No answer being returned, I looked up, and behold! the prophet had disappeared. The Mormons told me that he had just stepped out, and would probably soon return. I waited some time, but in vain: and at length descended to the street in front of the store. Here I heard the noise of wheels, and presently I saw the prophet in his wagon, flourishing his whip, and driving away as fast as two fine horses could draw him. As he disappeared from view, enveloped in a cloud of dust, I felt that I had turned over another page in the great book of human nature."

After this extract the reviewer gives us a condensed view of the professor's confab "with the surrounding Mormons, in which his ingenuity was fully put to the test," and finally closes with a "plan of emigration" put forth in the professor's book, suggested, it would seem, by the success that had attended Joe Smith's efforts in that way.

By the way, some of the reviewer's statements savor not a little of ignorance of American affairs in general, and of the facts he undertakes to represent. Whether Professor Caswall has led the reviewer astray in the matters referred to, or whether he has proceeded to his statements and executed his review without having read the book he reviews, we cannot say, as we are not able to find a copy of the work. The following quotation embraces what we especially refer to:—

"Mr. Caswall had an interview with the prophet's mother, who gave him an account of her son's early years, which clearly indicated that she was herself no dupe, but a party to the imposture. He requested her to furnish him with a 'Book of Mormon.' She accordingly permitted him to take one of the first edition, belonging to her daughter Lavinia, for which he paid the young lady a dollar. We have seen this identical volume, which has all the look of having been well read. As for the contents, they are merely a hodge podge of Scripture, the purely inventive part bearing but a small proportion to the whole. In half a dozen places where we have opened, the matter is very much the sort of stuff which a vast proportion of our countrymen hear 'at
meeting" every Sunday. We should not have been the least startled to have heard it from one of our common field-preachers. It is well known now that it originated in the circumstance of a romance, composed by a Methodist preacher for his private amusement, falling into worse hands, and, after some years, appearing, a good deal enlarged, as a new revelation, pretended to be copied from certain golden plates, which Joseph Smith's mother assured Mr. Caswall she had seen and handled.

"It appears this is by no means the first delusion of the kind in these melancholy regions, which indeed are lands of darkness, and lying in the shadow of death. Mr. Caswall gives some account of another notorious deceiver, one Matthias."

Now as to the Mormon Bible, it seems the reviewer could give us, without difficulty, "the contents," and what it "mainly" consisted of, after he had "opened" only "half a dozen places." Such an examination would scarcely have enabled an ordinary mind to grasp and correctly report the "contents" of so large a work as "the Book of Mormon."

But in all these "half a dozen places—the matter is very much the sort of stuff which a vast proportion of his countrymen hear "at meeting" every Sunday." Now we fear that the reviewer knows just as little about what is said "at meeting" as he does about the contents of the Book of Mormon, and this is almost nothing at all. For it is not true that this book is "mainly a hodge podge of Scripture," for the largest portion of it is made up of fictitious narrative. As to the "meetings" he refers to, they must embrace those of the Methodists, and the various other bodies of dissenters, or he could not say, "a vast proportion of his countrymen" attend them "every Sunday." Now is this a true bill? Does this grave reviewer intend to say that "very much the sort of stuff" as the "hodge podge of Scripture" of the Book of Mormon, his "countrymen hear at" these meetings "every Sunday?" This is the courtesy and regard for truth which characterize the great organ of Puseyism.

Moreover, the "romance," which constituted the foundation of the Book of Mormon, was not "composed by a Methodist preacher." Spaulding, its author, had been a Congregational minister, but never a Methodist. But this is so slight an error with regard to what "is well known," that perhaps the "Critic" will think it quite immaterial.

The reviewer's lamentations over the "darkness" of "these melancholy regions," to an American, sound really ludicrous. Terrible to relate! "It appears this is by no means the first delusion of the kind in these melancholy regions, which, indeed,
are lands of darkness, and lying in the shadow of death. Mr. Caswall gives some account of another notorious deceiver, one Matthias!” Now we fear that Professor Caswall has not told the whole story, that this “one Matthias” lived and figured in and about the cities of New-York and Albany,” and perhaps the reviewer is yet to be informed that “these melancholy regions” are within the see of a bishop of the true succession, and one, too, of real high-toned catholic principles.

Another item of information would not have been amiss, and that is, that Matthias never succeeded in making many disciples, perhaps for the reason that he sent no apostles over to England. Now had he pursued Smith’s policy, there is no telling what his success might have been. In relation to Smith’s converts the reviewer says: “Incredible as it may seem, the greater part of the recent converts to this extravagant delusion are directly from England—sound, enlightened, Protestant England.” And Professor Caswall says, those who were “born among the privileges of England’s Church, baptized with her consecrated waters, and taught to lisp her prayers, and repeat her Catechism, had now been led into this den of heresy, to listen to the ravings of a false prophet, and imbibe the principles of a semi-pagan delusion.”

Alas! alas! for all this! Why is it, dear Mr. Critic, that when you have, with your “consecrated waters,” (holy water?) regenerate your children, and made them members of Christ’s mystical body, you do not nurse them, and prevent them from falling under this dreadful delusion, and emigrating to “these melancholy regions!” What are the shepherds doing while their poor sheep are so fatally devoured? Do, sir, try to keep them at home, where you have hospitals for the insane, and means of instruction for the ignorant, and not let them be led off into these “lands of darkness lying in the shadow of death.”

All Englishmen, and other foreigners, who come to America to better their condition, and to do the country no harm, we bid a hearty welcome to the privileges and blessings of our free institutions. But we wish English Mormons and paupers to stay where

* We would recommend to the “Critic” the history of Matthias and his imposture by our citizen, Colonel Stone. This book would add several important items to the second-hand and imperfect information he has gained from Professor Caswall. He would, at least, learn that dark and “melancholy” as are these “regions,” there are some here who are able so far to nerve up their souls to vigorous effort, as to look through the “darkness” which is so prevalent, and to take a philosophical and moral view of the general subject of religious imposture, from which even the “Critic” might derive instruction.
they are. We have here "darkness" enough without an additional cloud flung over us from the old world. Being "baptized with consecrated water," we find does not always make even good citizens, much less good Christians.

But if religious "delusion" is proof of the "darkness" of the land where it occurs, would it be presumed that any such thing had ever shown itself in glorious old England? But where has religious fanaticism and imposture been more rife than in "sound, enlightened, and Protestant England?" To say nothing of more ancient fanatics and impostures, where lived and flourished the fifth-monarchy men? Ann Lee? Joanna Southcott? and Edward Irving? It must be acknowledged that Joe Smith has far exceeded these English gentry in the magnitude and success of his enterprise. But so long as he imports the principal part of his materials, it is not so clear that this is owing to the "darkness" of the "regions" where the scene of the farce is laid.

But in conclusion we would say, that if Professor Caswall has, by his books or otherwise, contributed in any measure to confirm the prejudices of the British press against our country and our institutions; if he joins in with the blind and stupid slanders of such publications as the article under consideration, we would counsel him to remain in "sound, enlightened, and Protestant England." We would advise him, that with such narrow and prejudiced views of America—not excepting the great commercial emporium and the capital of the state of New-York—he will not long be allowed to teach the youth of the enlightened, enterprising, and chivalrous west. Even a "divinity" chair cannot long be occupied by such a "professor" in any portion of the republic.

The professor must become Americanized before he will answer our purpose. He must not publish in England that he has, as says the Critic, visited "an utmost corner of the habitable globe—or the haunts of a megalotherion;" or that the evils which are, in whole or in part, imported, are to be set down to the credit of the country, the form of our government, or our deficiency in intelligence, or a true regard for religion. "Melancholy regions!" "Lands of darkness!" No, Mr. Critic; you are misinformed. We have, to be sure, no established religion—no beneficed clergy—not do we want any: no bloated nobility—neither have we millions of poor perishing for bread! We have a free constitution—religion stands upon its own broad basis—we have plenty in all our borders—only the vicious and the idle need suffer want! Where are the "melancholy regions," where the "darkness?" Dear sir, look at home—look at Manchester!—and do not forget Oxford!
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