

## **The Book of Mormon and The Public Press**

Compiled by Glen W. Chapman- January 2002

(From the Book New Witness For Christ in America by Francis W. Kirkham, 2 vols, 1959, BYU Press)

### **Messenger and Advocate Article by Oliver Cowdery**

"At that instant he looked to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and again did the Lord manifest his condescension and mercy: the heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he thus stood gazing and admiring, the angel said, "Look!" and as he thus spake he beheld the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, "All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: It is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You now see why you could not obtain this record; that the commandment was strict, and that if ever these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world: they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land, and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who keep the commandments of the Lord on this land, desired this at his hand, and through the prayer of faith obtained the promises, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, that a record might be kept and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them, must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands the knowledge could not come to the world, because they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation; consequently, they would be considered of no worth, only as precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as naught, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall tremble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted. You have now beheld the power of God manifested and the power of satan: you see that there is nothing that is desirable in the works of darkness; that they cannot bring happiness; that those who are overcome therewith are miserable, while on the other hand the righteous are blessed with a place in the kingdom of God where joy unspeakable surrounds them. There they rest beyond the power of the enemy of truth, where no evil can disturb them. The glory of God crowns them, and they continually feast upon his goodness and enjoy his smiles. Behold, notwithstanding you have seen this great display of power, by which you may ever be able to detect the evil one, yet I give unto you another sign, and when it comes to pass then know that the Lord is God and that he will fulfil his purposes, and that the knowledge which this record contains will go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people under the whole heaven. This is the sign: When these things begin to be known, that is, when it is known that the Lord has shown you these things, the workers of iniquity will seek your overthrow: they will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will again give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the Rock will seek to overthrow this church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God will rest upon them; and when this takes place, and all things are prepared, the ten tribes of Israel will be revealed in the

north country, whither they have been for a long season; and when this is fulfilled will be brought to pass that saying of the prophet -- 'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord' -- But, notwithstanding the workers of iniquity shall seek your destruction the arm of the Lord will be extended, and you will be borne off conqueror, if you keep all his commandments. Your name shall be known among the nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage: with the one it shall be had in honor, and with the other in reproach; yet, with these it shall be a terror because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fullness of the gospel. Now, go thy way, remembering what the Lord has done for thee, and be diligent in keeping his commandments, and he will deliver thee from temptations and all the arts and devices of the wicked one. -- Forget not to pray, that thy mind may become strong, that when he shall manifest unto thee, thou mayest have power to escape the evil, and obtain these precious things."

Messenger and Advocate (Oct 1835) Oliver Cowdery "Record of Nephites," p.203

### THE GOLDEN BIBLE

*The Palmyra Freeman says—*The greatest piece of superstition that has come within our knowledge now occupies the attention of a few individuals of this quarter. It is generally known and spoken of as the "Golden Bible." Its proselytes give the following account of it:

In the fall of **1827**, a person by the name of Joseph Smith, of Manchester, Ontario county, reported that he had been visited in a dream by the spirit of the Almighty and informed that in a certain hill in that town was deposited this golden Bible, containing an ancient record of a divine nature and origin. After having been thrice thus visited, as he states, he proceeded to the spot, and after penetrating "mother earth" a short distance the bible was found, together with a huge pair of spectacles. He had been directed, however, not to let any mortal examine them, "under no less penalty than instant death." They were therefore, nicely wrapped up and excluded from the "vulgar gaze of poor wicked mortals." It was said that the leaves of the Bible were plates of gold, about eight inches long and six inches wide, and one eighth of an inch thick, on which were engraved characters of hieroglyphics. By placing the spectacles in a hat, and looking into it, Smith could (he said so at least) interpret these characters.

An account of this discovery was soon circulated. The subject was almost invariably treated as it should have been— with contempt. A few, however, believed the "golden" story, among them Martin Harris, an honest and industrious farmer of this town (Palmyra). So blindly enthusiastic was Harris, that he took some of the characters interpreted by Smith and went in search of some one, besides the interpreter, who was learned enough to English them; but all of whom he applied (among the number was Professor Mitchell of New York) happened not to be possessed of sufficient knowledge to give satisfaction! Harris returned and set Smith to work at interpreting the Bible. He has at length performed the task, and the work is soon to be put to press in Palmyra. Its language and doctrine are said to be far superior to those of the book of life.

*(Rochester Advertiser and Telegraph, August 31, 1829, original copy in the Reynolds Library, Rochester, New York.)*

The Palmyra paper, *The Waync Sentinel*, under date of June 26. **1829**.

"Just about in this particular region, for some time past, much speculation has existed, concerning a pretended discovery, through superhuman means, of an ancient record, of a religious and divine nature and origin, written in ancient characters, impossible to be interpreted by any to whom the special gift has not been imparted by inspiration. It is generally known and spoken of as the "Golden Bible." Most people entertain an idea that the whole matter is the result of a gross imposition, and a grosser superstition. It is pretended that **it** will soon be published as soon as the translation is completed.! Meanwhile we have been furnished with the following, which is represented to us as intended for the title page of the work—we give it as a curiosity:

*The Book of Mormon an account, written by the hand of Mormon upon plates, taken from the plates of Ncphi.— Wherefore it is an abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy, and of revelation; written and sealed and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed, to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—sealed up by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of the Gentile—the interpretation thereof by the gift of God: an abridgement taken from the book of Ether.*

*Also, which is a record of the people of Jared, which were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven; which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now, if there be fault, it be the mistake of men: wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ.*

By Joseph Smith, Junior,  
Author and Proprietor

The Rochester Daily Advertiser  
April 2, 1830,

### BLASPHEMY

#### Book of Mormon—Alias the “Golden Bible”

The Book of Mormon has been placed in our hands. A viler imposition was never practiced. It is an evidence of fraud, blasphemy, and credulity, shocking both to Christians and moralists. The author and proprietor is Joseph Smith, Jr., a fellow who by some hocus pocus acquired such influence over a wealthy farmer of Wayne County that the latter mortgaged his farm for \$3,000 which he paid for printing and binding five-thousand copies of the blasphemous work. The volume consists of about 600 pages and is divided into the books of Nephi, of Jacob, of Mosiah, of Alma, of Mormon, of Ether, of Helaman. Copyright secured.

The style of the work may be conjectured from the preface, and testimonials which we subjoin.

Rochester, New York, newspaper, *The Gem*, Saturday, May 15, 1830.

### IMPOSITION AND BLASPHEMY! !—MONEYDIGGERS, Etc.

Some months ago a noise was made among the credulous of the earth, respecting a wonderful production said to have been found as follows. An ignoramus near Palmyra, Wayne county, pretended he had found some “Gold Plates,” as he is pleased to call them, upon which is said to be engraved characters of marvelous and mis-understandable import, which he, nor no other mortal could divine. These characters he has translated into the English language, and lo! they appear to be no other than the mysticisms of an unrevealed Bible! A person more credulous or more cunning, than him who found the plates, ordered the translation thereof, mortgaged his farm, sold all he had, and appropriated it to the printing and binding of several thousand copies of this pearl, which is emphatically of GREAT PRICE! The book comes before the public under the general title of the “Book of Mormon,” arranged under different

heads, something as follows. The book of Mormon—containing the books of Nephi, Nimshi, Pukei, and Buckeye—and contains some four or five hundred pages. It comes out under the “testimony of three witnesses,” and of “six witnesses,” who say they “have seen and hefted the plates,” that “they have the appearance of gold,” and that divers and strange characters are “imprinted on them.” The author, who has the “copy-right secured according to law,” says, “that he was commanded of the Lord in a dream,” to go and find, and that he went and found. At one time it was said that he was commanded of the Lord not to show the plates, on pain of instant death—but it seems he has shown them to the said witnesses, and yet is alive! At another time it is said that none could see them but he who was commanded;—that though they should lie in the middle of the street beneath the broad glare of a meridian sun, in the presence of hundreds, yet no eye but his could see them! The translator if we take his word for it, has been directed by an angel in this business, for the salvation and the edification of the world! It partakes largely of Salem Witchcraft-ism, and Jemima Wilkinson-ism, and is in point of blasphemy and imposition, the very summit. But it is before the public, and can be had for money, at various places.

(*Palmyra Reflector*, June 30, 1830)

“The age of miracles has *again* arrived, and if the least reliance can be placed upon the assertions, daily made by the “Gold Bible” apostles, (which is somewhat doubtful,) no prophet, since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, has performed half so many wonders as have been attributed to that *spindle shanked* ignoramus JO SMITH. This fellow appears to possess the *qu\*ntessenc* of impudence, while his fellow laborers are not far behind him in this particular—they go from place to place disturbing in a greater or less degree, the peace of the community—denouncing dire damnation on such as may withhold their approbation from one of the most ridiculous impostures, ever promulgated.”

“*Jo’s* greatest as well as latest miracle, as narrated by St. Martin, is ‘his casting out of a devil,’ of an uncommon size from a miserable man in the neighborhood of the “great bend” of the Susquehanna. The whole family of *spirits*, who are said to have possessed the fair Magdalene, were mere children, when compared to the *imp* in question. Such was his malignant disposition that before *Jo* took him in hand, he had nigh demolished the frail tenement which had for a long time afforded him a comfortable shelter—the flesh was “about to cleave from the bones” — the muscles, tendons, &c. could no longer perform their different functions—the habitation of Satan, was about to be laid open to the light of day, when the prophet interfered—went to prayer—the *demoniac* had faith—the devil was *routed*, and nature resumed her accustomed order.”

#### A GOLDEN BIBLE

A man by the name of Martin Harris was in this village a few days since endeavoring to make a contract for printing a large quantity of a work called the Golden Bible. He gave something like the following account of it.

In the autumn of 1827, a man named Joseph Smith of Manchester, in Ontario County, said that he had been visited by the spirit of the Almighty in a dream, and informed that in a certain hill in that town was deposited a Golden Bible, containing an ancient record of divine origin. He states that after the third visit from the same spirit in a dream he proceeded to the spot, removed the earth, and there found the Bible, together with a large pair of spectacles. He had also been directed to let no mortal see them under the penalty of immediate death, which injunction he steadfastly adhered to. The treasure consisted of a number of gold plates, about eight inches long, six wide, and one-eighth of an inch thick, on which were engraved hieroglyphics. By placing the spectacles in a hat and looking into it, Smith interprets the characters into the English language.

Harris states that he went in search of some one to interpret the hieroglyphics, but found that no one was intended to perform that all-important task but Smith himself. Smith has interpreted the whole, and it is now in press in Palmyra, Wayne County. The subject attracted a good deal of notice among a certain class and as it will be ere long before the public, we shall endeavor to

meet it with the comment it may deserve.

(From the "*Gem*," a Rochester paper, September 5, ~ Original publication in the Reynolds Library, Rochester, New York.)

*PALMYRA REFLECTOR*

Farmington, Ont. Co., *Jan. 1, 1831*

Mr. Editor— I observe by the public prints, that this most clumsy of all impositions, known among us as Jo Smith's "Gold Bible," is beginning to excite curiosity abroad, from the novelty of its appearance, and the assurance of its advocates, who in imitation of too many of our religious sects, who have gone before them, very charitably (at least in this region) threaten all who have the hardihood to refuse to subscribe to their rhapsodies, with "dire damnation."

The two papers published in your village, for reasons easily explained, decline at present, throwing any light on this subject. To you, and you alone, do we look for an expose of the principal facts, and characters, as connected with this singular business; I say singular, because it was hardly to be expected, that a *MUMMERY* like the one in question, should have been gotten up at so late a period, and among a people, *PROFESSING* to be enlightened.

It is not from a persecuting spirit, that I solicit an exposure, for my maxim is, that "error is never dangerous, where truth is free to combat it," and that liberty of conscience in matters of religion, should be allowed to all. Among the bundle of papers herewith sent to you for inspection, you will find little else, than a dry statement of facts, without much reference to time or order; you will perceive that I have attempted to throw all the light I could upon the "money digging mania," which formerly pervaded this, and many other countries, which eventuated in the discovery of Jo Smith's "Golden Treasure."

From your knowledge of ancient and modern history, by which you will be enabled to relieve the dryness of the subject, by bringing before the public parallel cases, there can be no doubt that much useful information may result from your labors. I shall from time to time, send you such information as I may collect on this piece of legerdemain.

Yours, &c,

PLAIN TRUTH

Obediah Dogberry

THE REFLECTOR

Series I, No. 12

Volume II

February 1, 1831

GOLDEN BIBLE, No. 3

Jo Smith, Junior, according to the best information we can obtain on this subject, was born in the State of Vermont. His father emigrated to this country (Ontario county, N. Y.) about the year 1815, and located his family in the village of Palmyra. The age of this modern prophet is supposed to be about twenty-four years. In his person he is tall and slender— *THIN FAVORED*—having but little expression of countenance, other than that of dullness; his mental powers appear to be extremely limited, and from the small opportunity he had had in school, he made little or no proficiency, and it is asserted by one of his principle followers, (who also pretends to divine illuminations,) that Jo, even at this day is profoundly ignorant of the meaning of many of the words contained in the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith, senior, the father of the personage of whom we are now writing, had by misfortune or otherwise been reduced to extreme poverty before he migrated to Western New York. His family was large consisting of nine or ten children, among whom Jo junior was the third or fourth in succession.—We have never been able to

learn that any of the family were ever noted for much else than ignorance and stupidity, to which might be added, so far as **it** may respect the elder branch, a propensity to superstition and a fondness for everything *MARVELOUS*.

We have been credibly informed that the mother of the prophet, had connected herself with several religious societies before her present illumination; this also was the case with other branches of the family, but how far the father of the prophet, ever advanced in these particulars, we are not precisely informed, **it** however appears quite certain that the prophet himself never made any serious pretensions to religion until his late pretended revelation.,

We are not able to determine whether the elder Smith was ever concerned in money digging transactions previous to his emigration from Vermont, or not, but **it** is a well authenticated fact that soon after his arrival here he evinced a firm belief in the existence of hidden treasures, and that this section of country abounded in them.

*Horn of the Green Mountains, May 4, 1830.*

#### FANATICISM

A work of 600 pages has recently been published at Rochester, New York, by “Joseph Smith, Jr., author and proprietor,” entitled, “The Book of Mormon or the Golden Bible,” which the Rochester Daily Advertiser pronounces, “one of the vilest impositions ever practiced—an evidence of fraud, blasphemy and credulity, shocking to the Christian and the Moralist.” The “author and proprietor,” it is said, by some hocus pocus, acquired such an influence over a wealthy farmer of Wayne County, New York, that the latter mortgaged his farm for **\$3,000**, which he paid for printing and binding **5,000** copies of a blasphemous book. The volume is divided into the books of Nephi, of Jacob, of Mosiah, of Alma, of Mormon, of Ether, and of Helaman.

The paper above referred to, published the subjoined “Preface” and “Testimonial” from which the style of the work may be conjectured. Then follows the “Preface by Joseph Smith” and “Testimony of the Three Witnesses.”

Another certificate declared that the plates said to be found in Manchester, Ontario County, New York, had the appearance of gold and bore the marks of ancient and curious workmanship.

(Boston Bulletin)

*(Painesville Telegraph, Tuesday, November 16, 1830)*

The Golden Bible.—Some two or three years since, an account was given in the papers, of a book purporting to contain new revelations from Heaven, having been dug out of the ground, in Manchester, in Ontario Co. N. Y. The book, **it** seems, has made its appearance in this vicinity.—It contains about **500** octavo pages, *which is* said to be translated from Egyptian Hieroglyphics, on metal plates, by one Smith, who was enabled to read the characters by instruction from Angels. About two weeks since some persons came along here with the book, one of whom pretends to have seen Angels, and assisted in *translating* the plates—He proclaims destruction upon the world within a few years,—holds forth that the ordinances of the gospel, have not been regularly administered since the days of the Apostles, till the said Smith and himself commenced the work— and many other marvelous things too numerous to mention, In the neighboring township of Kirtland, we understand that twenty or thirty have been immersed into the new order of things; many of whom had been previously baptised.—The name of the person here, who pretends to have a divine mission, and to have seen and conversed with Angels, is *Cowdray*. We understand that he is bound for the regions beyond the Mississippi, where he contemplates founding a “City of Refuge” for his followers, and converting the *Indians*, *under* his prophetic authority.

The second article, November 30, 1830,

The Book of Mormon.—It being the business of an Editor to collect and lay before his readers, whatever seems to agitate the public mind, we took occasion two weeks ago to notice a pretended new revelation from God, which had recently visited this vicinity. To record the thousand tales which are in circulation respecting the book and its propogators, would be an endless task, and probably lead to the promulgation of a hundred times more than was founded in truth. In this way, we perceive that *The Gazette* last week, shot wide of the mark in many important particulars. There are rising of 100 in *this* and an adjoining county who have embraced the ideas and assertions of Joseph Smith, Jr. many of them respectable for intelligence and piety.

If the book of *Mormon*, as it is called, with the pretensions of its apostles, is a fabrication, it is one of the most infamous and blasphemous character; and we must confess, after having an opportunity to canvass some of its claims to a true revelation from God, we have not been able to discover testimony which ought to elicit faith in any prudent or intelligent mind. It may, perhaps, be useless to condemn the thing by positive and absolute assertions—time will discover in it either something of vast importance to man, or a deep laid plan to deceive many.

The four persons who were here, have proceeded on their mission to the Indians, (or Lamanites, as they term them) in the “far west,” where they say a Prophet is to be raised up, in whom the tribes will believe.

“The book closes with the certificate of eleven persons, who have seen the plates and many other marvelous things; among whom are the father and other relatives of the author.” (*Painesville Telegraph*, Tuesday, November 30, 1830.)

December 7, 1830,

## THE BOOK OF MORMON

For the *Telegraph*

Those who are the friends and advocates of this wonderful book, state that Mr. Oliver Cowdry has his commission directly from the God of Heaven, and that he has his credentials, written and signed by the hand of Jesus Christ, with whom he has personally conversed, and as such, said Cowdry claims that he and his associates are the only persons on earth who are qualified to administer in his name. By this authority, they proclaim to the world, that all who do not believe their testimony, and be baptized by them for the remission of sins, and come under the imposition of *their* hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and stand in readiness to *go* to some unknown region, where God will provide a place of refuge for his people, called the “New Jerusalem,” must be forever miserable, let their life have been what it may. If these things are true. God has certainly changed his order of commission.

*Painesville Telegraph*  
January 18, 1831

Mormonism.—A young gentleman by the name of *Whitmer*, arrived here last week from Manchester, N. Y. the seat of wonders, with a new batch of revelations from God, as he pretended, which have just been communicated to Joseph Smith. As far as we have been able to learn their contents, they are a more particular description of the creation of the world, and a history of Adam and his family, and other sketches of the anti-deluvian world, which Moses neglected to record. But the more important part of the mission, was to inform the brethern that the boundaries of the promised land, or the New Jerusalem, had just been made known to Smith from God—the township of Kirtland, a few miles west of this, is the eastern line and the Pacific Ocean the western line; if the north and south lines have been described, we have not learned them. Orders were also brought to the brethern to sell no more land, but rather buy more. Joseph Smith and all his forces are to be on here soon to take possession of the promised land.

Introductory to the articles that follow, February 15, 1831, the editor writes.

**Mormonism.**—*Our* readers will find in this paper several communications, touching a new sect which has recently sprung up in this vicinity.—In this, perhaps, we have departed from our general rule, relating to religious controversies.—But when any subject becomes a matter of general inquiry and conversation through the whole community, with but few exceptions, that community will call upon the Press to speak—and a free press will speak. We therefore declare our columns open, and free to the investigation of the divine pretensions of the “Book of Mormon,” and its “Author and Proprietor,” *Joseph Smith, Junior*, who has just planted himself in this community, as a Prophet of the Most High God, and one to whom, *he says*, the Lord reveals his will daily. The believers in his divine mission now number several hundred, and are still increasing.

Many people are running to see and hear from the distance of fifty and an hundred miles, so rapidly does anything spread which partakes so much of the marvelous. We say, therefore, let the thing be investigated; and, if found to be a base counterfeit, like freemasonry, let *it* be nailed to the counter, and ranked among the thousand impositions which have arisen in the world, under the authority of a dream or a vision, to deceive mankind.

Our columns shall be open to either party, for communications which may be thought to throw any light upon the subject, provided they shall not occupy more space than we can reasonably spare. We would also observe, that *it* is our earnest desire, that, whatever may be communicated, assuming to be *facts*.

*Painesville Telegraph*, February 15, 1831

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed and done among the Mormonites *it* seems good to me also (having had knowledge of many things from the beginning) to testify to my brethren of mankind that they may know something certainly concerning these wonderful people.

About the last of October, 1830, four men, daiming to be divinely inspired, came from Manchester and Palmyra, Ontario county, N. Y., bringing a pretended revelation, entitled the “Book of Mormon.” They came to the brethren of the reformation in Mentor, saluted them as brethren and professed to rejoice at finding a people walking according to the scriptures of truth, and acknowledging no other guide. They professed to have no *commands for them*, nevertheless, they called upon them to receive their mission and book as from Heaven, which they said chiefly concerned the western Indians, as being an account of their origin, and a prophecy of their final conversion to christianity, and make them a *white* and delightsome people, and be reinstated in the possession of their lands of which they have been despoiled by the whites.—When called upon for testimony, they appealed (like Mahomet) to the internal evidences of their book. The book was read and pronounced a silly fabrication. When farther pressed upon the subject, they required the brethren to humble themselves before God, and pray for a sign from heaven.

They took up their abode with the pastor of the congregation, (Sidney Rigdon,) who read their book and partly condemned it—but, two days afterwards, was heard to confess his conviction of its truth. Immediately the *subtlety* and *duplicity* of these men were manifest—as soon as they saw a number disposed to give heed to them, then it was they bethought themselves of making a party—then it was they declared that their book contained a new covenant, to come under which the disciple *must* be re-immersed. When called upon to answer concerning their pretended covenant, whether it was distinct from that mentioned in Heb. VIII, 10-13 they would equivocate, and would say, (to use their own words) “on the large scale, the covenant is the same, but in some things it is different.” Immediately they made a party—seventeen persons were immersed by them in one night. At this Mr. Rigdon seemed much displeased, and when they came next day to his house, he withstood them to the face—showed them that what they had done was entirely without precedent in the holy scriptures—for they had immersed those persons that they might work miracles as well as come under the said covenant—showed them that the apostles baptized for the remission of sins—but miraculous gifts were conferred by the imposition of hands. But when pressed upon the point, they justified themselves by saying, it was on *their part* merely a compliance with the solicitations of those persons. Mr. Rigdon again called upon them for proof of the truth of their book and mission: they then related the manner in which they obtained faith, which was by praying for a sign, and an angel was shown unto them. Here Mr. Rigdon showed them from the scriptures the possibility of their being deceived: “For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”—but said Cowdrey, “Do you think if I should go to my Heavenly Father with all sincerity, and pray to him in the name of Jesus Christ, that he would not show me an angel—that he would suffer Satan to deceive me?” Mr. Rigdon replied, “if the Heavenly Father

had ever promised to show you an angel,--to confirm anything, he would not suffer you to be deceived, for, says the apostle John, 'This is the confidence we have with him, if we ask things according to his will, he hearkens to us.' "But," he continued, "if you ask the Heavenly Father to show you an angel when he has never promised you such a thing, if the Devil never had an opportunity of deceiving you before, you give him one now.

However, about two days after, 'Mr. R. was persuaded to tempt God by asking this sign, which he knew to be contrary to his revealed will; he received a sign, and was convinced that Mormonism was true and divine. Wherefore, to make use of his own reasoning, we presume the Devil appeared to him in the form of an angel of light. The Monday following he was baptised. On the morning of the preceding day he had an appointment to preach in the Methodist chapel at Kirtland. He arose to address the congregation *apparently* much affected and deeply impressed. He seemed exceedingly humble, confessed the sins of his former life, his great pride, ambition, vainglory, &c. &c. After he was baptised, he professed to be exceedingly joyful, and said he would not be where he was three days ago for the universe. When reminded of the scriptural objection which he had made against praying for that which was not promised, he imputed his reasoning to pride, carnality, and the influence of the evil one. In short, the whole man seemed changed, so much so that Mrs. Rigdon said that Mr. Rigdon's appearance was enough to convince any one of the truth of their religion. Mr. R. and, indeed the whole of that sect, seemed rather disposed to boast of their humility and piety. Mr. R. was formerly very irascible, but now thinks he cannot be ruffled, he was formerly haughty, but now affects great humility. The males among them wear a peculiar kind of hat, by which they distinguish themselves, and exhibit their humility; but while they are calling upon people, as it were, to come and see their humility, we cannot but call to mind an ancient anecdote: when Diogenes the Cynic, saw Plato with a richly embroidered cloak, he caught it from his shoulders, and cast it under his feet, saying "I trample upon the pride of Plato."

—"Yes," said Plato, "but with a greater pride."

About three weeks after Mr. R. was baptised by Oliver Cowdery, he went to the state of New York, to see Joseph Smith, Jr. while Cowdery, with his three companions, proceeded on to the western Indians. Before they left us, however, they threw off their mask, and showed their cloven foot. They declared Joseph Smith to be that prophet predicted by Moses, Deut. xviii. **15**, and applied to O. Cowdery prophetic declarations which are directly and particularly applied to John the Baptist, harbinger of the Messiah. When the apostle Peter and deacon Stephen were brought to confront them upon their application of Deut. xviii. **15**, they would express wonder, saying, "Do you think Christ was like Moses?"

They say much about working miracles, and pretend to have that power.

Feb. 1.—Mr. Rigdon just returned from the state of New York. His irascible temper only left him for a little season. Two friends went from Mentor to see him—required of him a reason for his present hope, and for his belief in the Book of Mormon; he declined, saying he was weary, having just come off his journey; had lost much sleep.

I accompanied several friends to Mr. R.'s residence, we found him in conversation with a Methodist presiding elder—that being soon broken off, one of my friends modestly approached Mr. R. and solicited him to give some reason for his present faith. Mr. R. with great show of good nature, commenced a long detail of his researches after the character of Joseph Smith; he declared that even his enemies had nothing to say against his character; he had brought a transcript from the docket of *two magistrates*, where Smith had been tried as a disturber of the peace, which testified that he was honorably acquitted. But this was no evidence to us that the Book of Mormon was divine. He then spoke of the supernatural gifts with which he said Smith was endowed; He said he could translate the scriptures from any language in which they were now extant, and could lay his finger on every interpolation in the sacred writings, adding, that he had proved him in all these things. But my friends knowing that Mr. Rigdon had no knowledge of any language but his own vernacular tongue, asked him how he knew these things, to which Mr. R. made no direct reply.

Mr. Smith arrived at Kirtland the next day; and being examined concerning his supernatural gifts by a scholar, who was capable of testing his knowledge, he confessed he knew nothing of any language, save the king's English.

Mr. R. asserted that *our* revelation came to us upon human testimony—this we denied, and gave him reasons which he himself formerly urged against *deists*. He then said the *old* revelation was confirmed by miracles, but the Book of Mormon would never be; it was not designed to be thus confirmed. (And Mahomet said, nearly twelve centuries ago, "Moses and Jesus were empowered to work miracles, yet the people did not receive them; wherefore God had sent him without that attestation, to be the last and greatest prophet.") But in this Mr. R. contradicts his book, for that declares it is thus to be established.

We then asked Mr. R. what object we could have in receiving the Book of Mormon—whether it enjoined a single virtue that the Bible did not, or whether it mentioned and prohibited a single additional vice, or whether it exhibited a new attribute of Deity? He said it did not. “The Book of Mormon,” said he, “is just calculated to form and govern the millennial church; the *old* revelation was never calculated for that, nor could it accomplish that object; and without receiving the Book of Mormon, there is no salvation for anyone into whose hands it shall come.” He said faith in the Book of Mormon was only to be obtained by asking the Lord concerning it. To this scriptural objections were made. He then said that if we had not familiarity enough with our Creator to ask of him a sign, we were no Christians; and, that if God would not condescend to his creatures, in this way, *he was no better than Jaggernaut!*

*Painsville Telegraph*, March 15, 1831.

*Martin Harris*, another chief of the Mormon impostors, arrived here last Saturday from the bible *quarry* in New York. He immediately planted himself in the bar-room of the hotel, where he soon commenced reading and explaining the Mormon hoax, and all the dark passages from Genesis to Revelations. He told all about the gold plates, Angels, Spirits, and Jo Smith.—He had seen and handled them all, by the power of God! Curiosity soon drew around thirty or forty spectators, and all who presumed to question his blasphemous pretensions, were pronounced infidels. He was very flippant, talking fast and loud, in order that others could not interpose an opinion counter to his. Every idea that he advanced, he knew to be absolutely true, as he said, by the spirit and power of God. In fine, the bystanders had a fair specimen of the Mormon slang, in this display of one of their head men. The meeting was closed, by a request of the landlord that the prophet should remove his quarters, which he did, after declaring, that all who believed the new bible would *see Christ* within fifteen years, and all who did not would absolutely be destroyed and damned.