

did not read the manuscript, nor think any more of the matter until the Book of Mormon appeared. It was thought by members of Dr. Winter's family that he had committed his recollections of this interview to writing, but none could be found.

The authorities for Dr. Winter's statement are Rev. A. G. Kirk, to whom Dr. Winter communicated it in a conversation had at New Brighton, Pa., in 1870-1. The second authority is the Rev. A. J. Bonsall, a stepson of Dr. Winter, and for twenty-three years pastor of the Baptist church at Rochester, Pa. To him the same story was often repeated by Dr. Winter. The third authority is Mrs. W. Irvine, a daughter of Dr. Winter, in 1881 resident at Sharon, Pa. Her statement has one or two details not already given, so I quote:

I have frequently heard my father speak of Rigdon having Spaulding's manuscript, and that he had gotten it from the printers to read it as a curiosity; as such he showed it to father; and that at the time Rigdon had no intention of making the use of it that he afterwards did (76).

Thus authenticated, Dr. Winter's statement may be given as much weight as though reduced to writing by himself.

Rigdon Foreknows the Coming and Contents of the Book of Mormon.

The Rev. Adamson Bentley (whose wife was sister to Mrs. Sidney Rigdon) wrote the following to Walter Scott, under date of January 22, 1841:

I know that Sidney Rigdon told me that there was a book coming out, the manuscript of which had been found engraved on gold plates, as such as two years before the Mormon book made its appearance or had been heard of by me.

This statement was published in the Millennial Harbinger for 1844, with the following editorial note from Rev. Alexander Campbell:

"The conversation alluded to in Brother Bentley's letter of 1841 was in my presence as well as his, and my recollection of it led me, some two or three years ago, to interrogate Brother Bentley touching his recollection of it, which according with mine in every particular, except the year in which it occurred, he placing it in the summer of 1827, I in the summer of 1826, Rigdon at the same time observing that in the plates dug up in New York there was an account, not only of the aborigines of this country, but also it was stated that the Christian religion had been preached in this country during the first century, just as we were preaching it in the Western Reserve" (77).

It will be remembered that Rigdon lived for a time at his brother-in-law Bentley's house, and that it was Scott, Campbell and Rigdon who, in Pittsburgh, organized the Disciple church in 1824 or 1825. The above statements were published in the Millennial Harbinger in 1844 (p. 39), twenty-two years before Rigdon's death, yet he never published a denial to either. It seems that before that publication Adamson Bentley was orally making statements, probably to the same effect, which remained uncontradicted by Rigdon, though he published a card denouncing his brother-in-law (78).

Mrs. Amos Dunlap, a niece of Mrs. Rigdon, under date of Warren, O., December 7, 1879, writes this:

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Rigdon's family. He married my aunt. They at that time lived at Bainbridge, O. (1826-7). During my visit Mr. Rigdon went to his bedroom and took from a trunk which he kept locked, a certain manuscript. He came out into the other room and seated himself by the fireplace and commenced reading it. His wife at that moment came into the room and exclaimed: "What, you are studying that thing again?" or something to that effect. She then said: "I mean to burn that paper." He said, "No indeed, you will not, this will be a great thing some day." Whenever he was reading this he was so completely occupied that he seemed entirely unconscious of anything passing around him" (79).

Since Rigdon never, in person or by anyone else, has claimed to have written any such manuscript of his own, in the light of other evidence here adduced, we are warranted in believing that to have been Spaulding's "Manuscript Found."

The Rev. D. Atwater, under date Mantua Station, O., April 26, 1873, three years before Rigdon's death, writes this:

Soon after this the great Mormon defection came on us [Disciples]. Sidney Rigdon preached for us, and notwithstanding his extravagantly wild freaks, he was held in high repute by many. For a few months before his professed conversion to Mormonism, it was noticed that his wild, extravagant propensities had been more marked. That he knew before of the coming of the Book of Mormon is to me certain from what he said [during] the first of his visits at my father's some years before. He gave a wonderful description of the mounds and other antiquities found in some parts of America, and said that they must have been made by the aborigines. He said that there was a book to be published containing an account of those things. He spoke of these in his eloquent, enthusiastic style, as being a thing most extraordinary. Though a youth then, I took him to task for expending so much enthusiasm on such a subject, instead of things of the gospel. (80)

Of this statement Rigdon never made a denial.

Dr. S. Rosa, under date of Painsville, O., June 3, 1841, writes, among other things, this:

In the early part of the year 1830, when the Book of Mormon appeared (and in November of which year Rigdon was converted), either in May or June, I was in company with Sidney Rigdon, and rode with him on horseback a few miles. Our conversation was principally upon the subject of religion, as he was at that time a very popular preacher of the denomination calling themselves "Disciples" or Campbellites. He remarked to me that it was time for a new religion to spring up; that mankind were all rife and ready for it. I thought he alluded to the Campbellite doctrine. He said it would not be long before something would make its appearance; he also said that he thought of leaving Pennsylvania, and should be absent for some months. I asked him how long. He said it would depend upon circumstances. I began to think a little strange of his remarks, as he was a minister of the gospel. I left Ohio that fall and went to the State of New York to visit my friends who lived in Waterloo, not far from the mine of golden Bibles. In November I was informed that my old neighbor, E. Partridge, and the Rev. Sidney Rigdon, were in Waterloo, and that they both had become the dupes of Joe Smith's necromancies. It then occurred to me that Rigdon's new religion had made its appearance, and when I became informed of the Spaulding manuscript, I was confirmed in the opinion that Rigdon was at least accessory, if not the principal, in getting up this farce. (81)

This last article was first published in book form in 1842, thirty-four years before Rigdon's death, but never publicly denied or explained by him. Whether this particular letter was published in the Christian Observer and Episcopal Recorder I cannot say, but other portions of the same book evidently were, and received comment in a Mormon church organ (82). This but emphasizes Rigdon's silence upon Dr. Rosa's letter.

In Howe's "Mormonism Unveiled" (83), it is said that Rigdon, during the incubation period of Mormonism between 1827 and 1830, preached new matters of doctrine which were afterwards found to be inculcated in the Mormon Bible. The evident purpose of all this was to prepare his congregation for the acceptance of Mormonism, and the end was most successfully achieved. Evidently this and the other circumstances showing Rigdon's foreknowledge of the forthcoming Book of Mormon, all combined with a guilty conscience, irresistibly impelled the making of an explanation tending to allay the suspicion that there was a conscious purpose in all such conduct. This defense is found in a revelation to Sidney Rigdon, dated December 7, 1830, at the alleged first meeting between Rigdon and Smith, and within one month after the former's conversion. The revelation, in part, says:

Behold thou wast sent forth, even as John, To prepare the way before me, and before Elijah which should come, and thou knewest it not (84).

That Rigdon did prepare the way we knew before the revelation informed us of it. That it was done unconsciously we cannot even now believe.

Especially in the light of the foregoing evidence, this revelation must be construed as much more convincing proof of Rigdon's advance knowledge of the forthcoming Book of Mormon and its contents than even a tacit admission.

It is practically an admission of guilty knowledge, coupled with a transparent effort at warding off the inference of complicity in fraud by veiling the acts constituting the evidence in an assumed mysticism, which really deceives few aside from the

mystic degenerate and the willing victim who enters the fold for opportunities to "fleece the flock of Christ."

Notes.

- (45) Gregg's "Prophet of Palmyra," 442; (date, January 20, 1832.) See also "Times and Seasons."
- (46) "History of Washington County, Pa.," by Patterson. "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" p. 10.
- (47) "The Spaulding Story Examined and Exposed," by John E. Page, 7. Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 42. "Myth of the Manuscript Found," 24.
- (48) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 42.
- (49) 35 Saints' Herald, 130.
- (50) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 8. "Myth of the Manuscript Found," 24.
- (51) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 42 and 43.
- (52) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 9.
- (53) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 8, 9.
- (54) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 42 and 43.
- (55) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 43.
- (56) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 9. Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 43.
- (57) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 43.
- (58) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 12.
- (59) "The Spaulding Story Examined and Exposed," 4, by J. E. Page. "Mormonism Exposed," 2, exact date, January 28, 1832.
- (60) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 43.
- (61) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 8.
- (62) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 44.
- (63) "The Spaulding Story Examined and Exposed," p. 8.
- (64) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 7. "Myth of the Manuscript Found," 26.
- (65) Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 44. "Times and Seasons," 418.
- (66) The Spaulding Story, Examined and Exposed," 10.
- (67) Historical Record, 992. Bancroft's "History of Utah," 202.
- (68) "Mormonism Exposed," by Williams, copied in "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" page 13.
- (69) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 13. Baptist Witness (Pittsburg), January 1, 1875.
- (70) "Spaulding Story Examined and Exposed," 11 and 12. "History of the Mormons," 45 and 46. "The Mormons," 34. "Braden-Kelly Debate," 94. "Plain Facts Showing the Falsehood and Folly of the Rev. C. S. Bush," p. 14 to 16.
- (71) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 11.
- (72) "Myth of the Manuscript Found," 28. "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 9.
- (73) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 7 and 9. This covers all Patterson's migrations.
- (74) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 10-11.
- (75) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 11-12. "Braden-Kelly Debate," 42.
- (76) Besides Millennial Harbinger 1844, p. 39, see "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 12 and 13. "Braden-Kelly Debate," 45.
- (77) Evening and Morning Star, 301.
- (78) "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 12. "Braden-Kelly Debate," 45.
- (80) "Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve," 239-240, copied in "Who Wrote the Book of Mormon?" 13. "Braden-Kelly Debate," 45.
- (81) "Gleanings by the Way," 317. "Prophet of the Nineteenth Century," 58. "Early Days of Mormonism," 172-3.
- (82) Gospel Reflector, 19.
- (83) Page 289. "Braden-Kelly Debate," 45.
- (84) Section 35, "Doctrine and Covenants," Supplement 14, Millennial Star, 50. The exact date of this revelation is December 7th, 1830, according to Howe's "Mormonism Unveiled," 107.

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