

THE  
**MORMONS,**

OR,

**KNAVERY EXPOSED.**

GIVEN AS EVIDENCE BY THE SENATORS

**OF THE GOLDEN PLATES!**

The translation, and nature to be ascribed to—the proceedings at Kirtland—holding a Transcript—containing a list of a Book, a correct specimen of an Oath, of which one hundred thousand copies were then printed, of copies for Great Britain—the manner in which the specimens of Franklin, Pa. and elsewhere of the Book—have been printed by order of the

**SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.**

THE WHOLE BEING PRINTED BY A FACTOR TO THE SENATE  
AND PROTECTING AGAINST ONE OF THE MOST

**BARBARIAN AND BLASPHEMOUS DECEPTIONS**

WHICH HAS EVER BEEN WITNESSED.

ATTENDING A LAMENTABLE EVIDENCE OF THE IGNORANCE  
AND DEGRADATION OF HUMAN NATURE, IN SO READILY  
ALLOWING THEMSELVES TO BE DECEIVED BY THE  
USE OF ARTFUL AND BARBARIAN DEVICES.

**PUBLISHED**

By E. G. LEE, FRANKFORD, Pa.;  
GEORGE WILSON, BRIDGE-STREET, and Wm. FERRELL, 108 N. 2d,  
PHILADELPHIA.

1841.

Kirtland, Ohio,

9 Mar. 1837.

No. 1298.

A.

Vignette of a  
Shepherd and Dog.



Vignette of  
Reaper and Sheaf Wheat.



Vignette of a  
Shepherd and Dog.

**SAFETY BANK AND SOCIETY**

Bank will pay **TEN** dollars on demand to G. Pratt or Bearer.

S. RIGDON, President.

J. SMITH, Jr. Cashier.

Underwood, Bald, Spencer, & Hally, — N. York and Philadelphia.

On this page will be found as exact a copy of the note as can be made with type. In the original notes the copperplate is so filled with engraving as to have no space for putting in the words, "Anti Banking Company," which Mr. Winchester, in the Ledger, says was on the genuine notes. If such words were on any notes, they must evidently have been placed there for no other purpose than that of fraud and deception.

## TO THE READER.

The following pages contain an account of the discovery of the Mormon plates by means of which Mr. Smith and his "Latter Day Saints," are gaining some notoriety.

It was intended to furnish also, some specimens of the pretended translations. On reflection, however, it is thought unnecessary, because those pretended translations being a mere attempt at imitating the scriptures, have already sunk so low in the estimation of even the Mormons themselves, that they do not use or refer to them at their public meetings. They rely now altogether upon the Christian's Bible, whose style they have attempted to counterfeit, and from whence these "false prophets" now labour to draw doctrines to cloak their iniquity, and mislead and deceive.

Another reason why they appear to have become ashamed of their counterfeit imitation of the scriptures is, that a quarrel among themselves has exposed the infamous character of the three witnesses to the pretended translations from their gold or brass plates.

Oliver Cowdrey and David Whitmer were two of the witnesses who saw the plates, and who have placed their signatures to the impious blasphemy, that they "heard God's voice declare that the plates were translated by his power," &c. The testimony of these witnesses to so awful a falsehood, was necessary in the outset, in order to gain some belief in Jo Smith's plot. The testimony did help to pass off the imposition. But now, those very witnesses themselves have been denounced by Jo Smith himself and eighty-four other Mormons, who in their certificate say, Cowdrey and Whitmer, "have violated their promise, have been guilty of stealing" and had "united with a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars and blacklegs, of the deepest dye, to deceive, cheat and defraud." This is Jo Smith's own language. He had a quarrel about dividing the spoils out of which the leaders have fleeced their poor dupes, and this is now the way in which he speaks of a part of his own gang. This is the language in which he denounces Cowdrey and Whitmer, two of the witnesses by whose testimony he, in the first place, attempted to establish the divine character of his awful imposture. Well may the Mormons be ashamed of their COUNTERFEIT BIBLE, which by their own testimony is shown to be as gross a trick as are their COUNTERFEIT BANK NOTES.

For a further account and confirmation of these startling disclosures, see the testimony taken from the documents printed for the use of the Senate of the United States—page 22.

The exposure of the swindling transactions of the Mormons had the effect of banishing them from the borough of Frankford, where they had previously met with encouragement and favour. Were the same efforts made in every community where they attempt to practice their fraudulent and swindling hypocrisy, the same results must necessarily follow. It is impossible that such wicked practices can succeed, however plausible or pious a garb they may put on, where the people are shown the real character of the imposition, and put upon their guard. This is the object of the present work, and the writer hopes its circulation may be made so extensive as to operate at once in checking and putting down this scheme of fraud, which is indeed, already actually falling to pieces from the mere weight of its own criminal rottenness.

The wrangling which has already taken place among themselves has led to such disclosures as places the imposition in its true light. More quarrelling and then more exposures will follow, until Jo Smith's Mormon Monster will be stripped of its last pretensions, and be made to stand forth in all its naked and revolting deformity.

But in the meantime so many emissaries are sent over the land, prowling about,

seeking whom they may deceive and devour, that many dupes will be made victims of the deception. Their number can effectually and only be lessened by disseminating a knowledge of the real character and designs of Mormonism.

There are in the course of this pamphlet, many harsh terms and offensive epithets applied, which it must be confessed appear in bad taste and which the writer would have been glad to omit altogether. But he has in vain attempted to correct what seems improper, since the harsh terms necessarily grow out of the occasion itself. The language really suits and belongs to the subject. Such phrases as "swindling," "counterfeiting," "impostor," &c., are unpleasant, but they correctly describe the transactions to which they relate, and could not be avoided. It is the fault of the subject itself, which could be described or treated in no other way, and on the heads of those who by their wicked acts have rendered this exposure necessary, must rest the blame.

One word in conclusion. It happens that no attempt can be made to charge this exposure to the envy or jealousy of other religious sects, because the author neither is now nor ever has been a member or professor of any religious sect, creed, or denomination. Any advantage which the Mormons or their friends may attempt to gather by ascribing this work to the religious opposition or influence will therefore be futile.

This avowal of disinterestedness is made simply for the purpose of securing for the author of this exposure any additional advantage which may be supposed to belong to the testimony of an unbiassed or impartial witness. It is at the same time to be understood, as by no means implying any, the slightest want of respect or reverence for the holy scriptures, or of a cordial and hearty concurrence in all legitimate efforts for the spread and diffusion of the blessed truths which they contain, and which are spreading so benign and holy an influence throughout the world.

Should any thing appear in the course of this pamphlet which may be construed into any thing like a disposition to abridge in the slightest degree, the liberty of conscience or the freedom of speech, the writer takes this occasion to disclaim any such desire or intention. He maintains the doctrine of free toleration of all sects, creeds and professions, and would not throw a straw in the way of Jo Smith himself, or his proselyting emissaries, in their attempt to spread doctrines, however monstrous. It is only when under the cloak of these doctrines they undertake to issue false tokens, purchase produce on a large scale, of the farmer, labour of the mechanic, and goods of the merchants, without the ability or intention of paying; when they quietly permit a portion of their number to put many thousands of counterfeit dollars into circulation, under pretence of their being stolen, when all their acts show the existence of a deep laid scheme to defraud and swindle, it is then and upon these grounds, that the writer claims the privilege of stating such facts as may put his fellow citizens upon their guard. With their religious professions or doctrines, the writer has nothing to do. He believes some very honest, well meaning persons have been induced to believe them. He would have every man in the quiet enjoyment of his own opinions. But this immunity should not and cannot be extended to the attempts to deceive in matters of ordinary business. It is the duty of every citizen to aid in exposing vice and arresting crime. The writer has attempted in the following pages to discharge such portion of his duty in this matter as happened to fall more particularly to his share from being himself an actual sufferer by the frauds he exposes.

## MORMONISM.

In the town of Manchester, near the village of Palmyra, might still be seen an excavation in the side of a hill, from whence, according to the assertion of the Mormon prophet, the metallic plates, sometimes called *THE GOLDEN BIBLE*, were disinterred. A writer in the *NEW YORK EVENING EXPRESS*, who has been recently travelling in the West, remarks that "the Mormons have assumed a moral and political importance which is but very imperfectly understood." He then proceeds to add in relation to them, that "associated on the religious principle, under a prophet and leader, whose mysterious and awful claims to divine inspiration make his voice to believers like the voice of God; trained to sacrifice their individuality; to utter one cry; to think and act in crowds; with minds that seems to have been struck from the sphere of reason on one subject; and left to wander like lost stars, amid the dark mazes and winding ways of religious error; these remarkable sectaries must necessarily hold in their hands a fearful balance of political power. In the midst of contending parties, a single hand might turn their influence, with tremendous effect, to which-ever side presented the most potent attraction, and should they ever become disposed to exert their influence for evil, which may Heaven prevent, they would surround our institutions with an element of danger, more to be dreaded than an armed and hundred-eyed police." It is not, however, in reference to their political, but to their *religious* influence, that we entertain a degree of apprehension. This sect has been organized only about ten years, and yet they profess to number, in their society, *one hundred thousand souls*. This undoubtedly is an exaggeration, but it has been stated from a source upon which reliance can be placed, that there are probably not less than *sixty thousand* persons now professing the Mormon faith. It is said also that they are putting forth the most indefatigable efforts by itinerant missionaries, both in this country and in Europe, to make proselytes to their creed. These facts show the importance of spreading upon the columns of our religious journals from time to time statements that tend to unveil the trickery and artifice by which this system of imposture was got up and continues to be perpetuated.

There are two or three reasons why the Mormon delusion has spread so rapidly, and which will probably continue to give it more or less currency.

One cause is, that it fully and cordially admits the truth of the sacred Scriptures. Did it discard all previous revelation,—pour contempt upon the Saviour of the world, and set up an independent claim for a revelation wholly new, it would have gained comparatively few adherents. But recognising the truth and credibility of the sacred Scriptures, and retaining as it does, many doctrines which are held in common by different denominations of Christians,



and covering its own absurdities with imposing forms and lofty pretensions, it opens a winning asylum for all the disaffected and dissatisfied of other persuasions, and contains much that is congenial to almost every shade of radicalism, or erratic religious character.

Another cause which has contributed to the rapid spread of this imposture, is, that it appeals strongly to the love of the marvellous,—to that thirst and anxiety, so rife with a certain class of mind, to know more than God would have us know,—to find some discovery that will carry us farther than revelation,—to get some one to come back from the grave, and tell us what is in eternity,—to see with our own eyes a miracle, and obtain some new glimpses of the invisible world. There is certainly existing in a certain order of men, in every part of the world, and in every period of time, a strong propensity of this sort. What but this propensity would have given such potent and almost irresistible influence to *Joan d' Arc*, who, from an ostler maid in an obscure country inn in France, by claiming heavenly inspirations, and pretending to see visions, and to hear divine voices calling her to re-establish the throne of France, and to expel the foreign invaders, rose to such surprising eminence and power, as to be the very pivot upon which the destinies of the whole nation turned!—as to be invested with the military conduct of the French army,—directing and raising sieges,—inspiring the troops with invincible courage, and spreading disaster and defeat through all the ranks of the British army, so that the Duke of Bedford, after all the previous success and triumph of the English arms at Verneuil and Orleans, and with all his tact and ability, could scarcely keep any footing in France? What but this deep-rooted propensity could have prepared men to have received the dreams, and reveries, and pretended revelation of \* \* \* \* \* or of Anne Lee; or to have yielded up their reason to a belief in the clarivoyance of animal magnetism? And not to multiply instances abroad, what but such a propensity as the one to which we have now referred, attracted the \* \* \* \* \* around *Jemima Wilkinson*, and gave her so much power over a large community of men and Women? What but this, opened the way for the monstrous claims set up by the execrable *Mathias*, who drew after him, as by the power of enchantment, and subjected to his dictum, whole families,—persons of education and refinement, and among the number, several men of intelligence, respectability and fortune? It is to this same principle, this anxious desire to look deeper into the hidden mysteries of the invisible world, than any mortal has hitherto been privileged to do, that the originators of this “cunningly devised fable” of Mormonism have appealed. While they admit the truth and credibility of the sacred Scriptures, they profess to have obtained an additional revelation, by which new illumination is shed over every page of the sacred word,—all controversies settled, and the obscurity that hitherto hung over many religious subjects dispelled. They profess to bring to light a historical and religious record, written in ancient times, by a branch of the house of Israel that peopled America, from whom the Indians are descended. This

record, which, engraven upon metallic plates, lay deposited in the earth for many centuries, not only corroborates and confirms the truth of holy writ, but also opens the events of ancient America, as far back at least as the flood. They pretend that this record "pours the light of noon-day upon the history of a nation whose mounds and cities, and fortifications, still repose in grand but melancholy ruins, upon the bosom of the western prairies." The Mormons not only claim this new revelation, but profess to have still among them the gift of prophecy and miracles. They contend that miracles and revelations from heaven, are as necessary now, and as important to the salvation of the present generation, as they were in any former period, and that they alone possess this privilege of immediate and constant intercourse with heaven.

But that which has given vastly the greatest strength to Mormonism is the violent persecution which its disciples have suffered in the west, and especially in Missouri. Nothing can be more impolitic, or unjust, or farther removed from the spirit of the gospel, than to oppress and persecute any set of men on account of their religious tenets; and certainly nothing can give them more strength or rapid growth than such a procedure.

The Mormons first located themselves, as a body, in Kirtland, Grange Co. Ohio. Some difference arose among their leaders on account of certain banking operations which they attempted, and they separated, and a portion of them went to Independence, Jackson Co. Mo. The people in the neighborhood of that location became unfriendly to them, and drove them away by force, subjecting them to great sufferings and loss of property. They were at last entirely and forcibly expelled from the state of Missouri. They afterward purchased the town of Commerce, said to be a situation of surpassing beauty, at the head of the lower rapids on the Illinois shore of the Mississippi River. The writer to whom I have already referred, and who has revisited these western Mormons this present summer, remarks:—"The name of the place where they now reside, they have recently changed to Nauvoo, the Hebrew term for fair or beautiful. Around this place, as their centre, they are daily gathering from almost every quarter; and several hundred new houses, erected within the last few months, attest to the passing traveller the energy, industry, and self-denial with which the community is imbued. They have also obtained possession of extensive lands on the opposite side of the river, in that charming portion of Iowa Territory, known as the "Half Breed Reservation;" and there upon the rolling and fertile prairies they are rapidly selecting their homes and opening their farms. As the traveller now passes through those natural parks and fields of flowers which the hand of the Creator seems to have originally planted there for the inspection of his own eye, he beholds their cabins, dotted down in most enchanting perspective, either on the borders of the timbers, or beside the springs and streams of living water, which are interspersed on every hand."

The other portion that remain in Ohio, have erected a stone temple in Kirtland, of splendid appearance and singular construe-

tion. The first floor is a place of worship, with four pulpits at each end; each pulpit calculated to hold three persons. These pulpits rise behind and above one another, and are designed for different grades of ministers according to their rank in office. These are the two principal settlements of these people, although there are small societies of them found in almost every part of the United States. In some instances not only members but ministers of orthodox churches have been led to leave their own churches and identify themselves with the Mormons.

It is time that I should acquaint you with some facts that came to my personal knowledge full thirteen years ago, connected with the rise of this imposture.

It was early in the autumn of 1827 that Martin Harris called at my house in Palmyra, one morning about sun-rise. His whole appearance indicated more than usual excitement, and he had scarcely passed the threshold of my dwelling, before he inquired whether he could see me alone, remarking that he had a matter to communicate that he wished to be strictly confidential. Previous to this, I had but very slight acquaintance with Mr. Harris. He had occasionally attended divine service in our church. I had heard him spoken of as a farmer in comfortable circumstances, residing in the country a short distance from the village, and distinguished by certain peculiarities of character. He had been, if I mistake not, at one period a member of the Methodist Church, and subsequently had identified himself with the Universalists. At this time, however, in his religious views he seemed to be floating upon the sea of uncertainty. He had evidently quite an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, and possessed a manifest disputatious turn of mind. As I subsequently learned, Mr. Harris had always been a firm believer in dreams, and visions, and supernatural appearances, such as apparitions and ghosts, and therefore was a fit subject for such men as Smith and his colleagues to operate upon. On the occasion just referred to, I invited him to accompany me to my study, where, after having closed the door, he began to draw a package out of his pocket with great and manifest caution. Suddenly, however, he stopped, and wished to know if there was any possibility of our being interrupted or overheard? When answered in the negative, he proceeded to remark, that he reposed great confidence in me as a minister of Jesus Christ, and that what he had now to communicate he wished me to regard as strictly confidential. He said he verily believed that an important epoch had arrived—that a great flood of light was about to burst upon the world, and that the scene of divine manifestation was to be immediately around us. In explanation of what he meant, he then proceeded to remark that a GOLDEN BIBLE had recently been dug from the earth, where it had been deposited for thousands of years, and that this would be found to contain such disclosures as would settle all religious controversies and speedily bring on the glorious millennium. That this mysterious book, which no human eye of the present generation had yet seen, was in the possession of Joseph Smith, Jr., ordinarily known in the neighbourhood under



the more familiar designation of *Jo Smith*: that there had been a revelation made to him by which he had discovered this sacred deposit, and two transparent stones, through which, as a sort of spectacles, he could read the Bible, although the box or ark that contained it, had not yet been opened; and that by looking through those mysterious stones, he had transcribed from one of the leaves of this book, the characters which Harris had so carefully wrapped in the package which he was drawing from his pocket. The whole thing appeared to me so ludicrous and puerile, that I could not refrain from telling Mr. Harris, that I believed it a mere hoax got up to practice upon his credulity, or an artifice to extort from him money; for I had already, in the course of the conversation, learned that he had advanced some twenty-five dollars to Jo Smith as a sort of premium for sharing with him in the glories and profits of this new revelation. For at this time, his mind seemed to be quite as intent upon the pecuniary advantage that would arise from the possession of the plates of solid gold of which this book was composed, as upon the spiritual light it would diffuse over the world. My intimations to him, in reference to the possible imposition that was being practiced upon him, however, were indignantly repelled. He then went on to relate the particulars in regard to the discovery and possession of this marvellous book. As far as I can now recollect, the following was an outline of the narrative which he then communicated to me, and subsequently to scores of people in the village, from some of whom in my late visit to Palmyra, I have been able to recall several particulars that had quite glided from my memory.

Before I proceed to Martin's narrative, however, I would remark in passing, that Jo Smith, who has since been the chief prophet of the Mormons, and was one of the most prominent ostensible actors in the first scenes of this drama, belonged to a very shiftless family near Palmyra. They lived a sort of vagrant life, and were principally known as *money-diggers*. Jo from a boy appeared dull and utterly destitute of genius; but his father claimed for him a sort of second sight, a power to look into the depths of the earth, and discover where its precious treasures were hid. Consequently long before the idea of a GOLDEN BIBLE entered their minds, in their excursions for money-digging, which I believe usually occurred in the night, that they might conceal from others the knowledge of the place where they struck upon treasures, Jo used to be usually their guide, putting into a hat a peculiar stone he had through which he looked to decide where they should begin to dig.

According to Martin Harris, it was after one of these night excursions, that Jo, while he lay upon his bed, had a remarkable dream. An angel of God seemed to approach him, clad in celestial splendor. This divine messenger assured him, that he, Joseph Smith, was chosen of the Lord to be a prophet of the Most-High God, and to bring to light hidden things, that would prove of unspeakable benefit to the world. He then disclosed to him the existence of this golden Bible, and the place where it was deposited—but at the same time told him that he must follow implicitly the

divine direction, or he would draw down upon him the wrath of heaven. This book, which was contained in a chest, or ark, and which consisted of metallic plates covered with characters embossed in gold, he must not presume to look into, under three years. He must first go on a journey into Pennsylvania—and there among the mountains, he would meet with a very lovely woman, belonging to a highly respectable and pious family, whom he was to take for his wife. As a proof that he was sent on this mission by Jehovah, as soon as he saw this designated person, he would be smitten with her beauty, and though he was a stranger to her, as she was far above him in the walks of life, she would at once be willing to marry him and go with him to the ends of the earth. After their marriage he was to return to his former home, and remain quietly there until the birth of his first child. When this child had completed his second year, he might then proceed to the hill beneath which the mysterious chest was deposited, and draw it thence, and publish the truths it contained to the world. Smith awoke from his dream, and according to Harris, started off towards Pennsylvania, not knowing to what point he should go. But the Lord directed him, and gained him favour in the eyes of just such a person as was described to him. He was married and had returned. His first child had been born and was now about six months old. But Jo had not been altogether obedient to the heavenly vision. After his marriage and return from Pennsylvania, he became so awfully impressed with the high destiny that awaited him, that he communicated the secret to his father and family. The money-digging propensity of the old man operated so powerfully, that he insisted upon it that they should go and dig and see if the chest was there—not with any view to remove it till the appointed time, but merely to satisfy themselves. Accordingly they went forth in the stillness of the night with their spades and mattocks to the spot where slumbered this sacred deposit. They had proceeded but a little while in the work of excavation, before the mysterious chest appeared; but lo! instantly it moved and glided along out of their sight. Directed, however, by the *clairvoyance* of Jo, they again penetrated to the spot where it stood and succeeded in gaining a partial view of its dimensions. Another divine communication was made to him, authorizing him to go alone by himself and bring the chest and deposit it secretly under the hearth of his dwelling, but by no means to attempt to look into it. The reason assigned by the angel for this removal, was that some report in relation to the place where this sacred book was deposited had gone forth, and there was danger of its being disturbed. According to Harris, Smith now scrupulously followed the divine directions. He was already in possession of the two transparent stones laid up with the GOLDEN BIBLE, by looking through which he was enabled to read the golden letters on the plates in the box. How he obtained these spectacles without opening the chest, Harris could not tell. But still he had them; and by means of them he could read all the book contained. The book itself was not to be disclosed until Smith's child had attained a certain age. Then it might be pub-

lished to the world. In the interim, Smith was to prepare the way for the conversion of the world to a new system of faith, by transcribing the characters from the plates and giving translations of the same. This was the substance of Martin Harris' communication to me upon our first interview. He then carefully unfolded a slip of paper, which contained three or four lines of characters, as unlike letters or hieroglyphics of any sort, as well could be produced were one to shut up his eyes and play off the most antic movements with his pen upon paper. The only thing that bore the slightest resemblance to the letter of any language that I had ever seen, was two upright marks joined by a horizontal line, that might have been taken for the Hebrew character [ ]. My ignorance of the characters in which this pretended ancient record was written, was to Martin Harris new proof that Smith's whole account of the divine revelation made to him was entirely to be relied on.

One thing is here to be noticed, that the statements of the originators of this imposture varied, and were modified from time to time according as their plans became more matured. At first it was a gold Bible—then golden plates engraved—then metallic plates stereotyped or embossed with golden letters. At one time Harris was to be enriched by the solid gold of these plates, at another they were to be religiously kept to convince the world of the truth of the revelation—and, then these plates could not be seen by any but three witnesses whom the Lord should choose. How easy it would be, were there any such plates in existence, to produce them, and to show that Mormonism is not a "cunningly devised fable." How far Harris was duped by this imposture, or how far he entered into it as a matter of speculation, I am unable to say. Several gentlemen in Palmyra, who saw and conversed with him frequently, think he was labouring under a sort of monomania, and that he thoroughly believed all that J. Smith chose to tell him on this subject. He was so much in earnest on the subject, that he immediately started off with some of the manuscripts that Smith furnished him on a journey to New York and Washington to consult some learned men to ascertain the nature of the language in which this record was engraved. Martin had now become a perfect believer. He said he had no more doubt of Smith's divine commission, than of the divine commission of the apostles. The very fact that Smith was an obscure and illiterate man, showed that he must be acting under divine impulses. That he was willing to "take of the spoiling of his goods" to sustain Smith in carrying on this work of the Lord: and that he was determined that the book should be published, though it consumed all his worldly substance. It was in vain I endeavoured to expostulate. I was an unbeliever, and could not see afar off. As for him, he must follow the light which God had given him. Whether at this time Smith had those colleagues that certainly afterwards moved unseen the wheels of this machinery, I am unable to say. Even after Cowdery and Rigdon were bending the whole force of their minds to the carrying out of this imposture, J. Smith continued to be the ostensible prominent actor in the drama. The way that Smith made his



transcripts and translations for Harris was the following: Although in the same room, a thick curtain or blanket was suspended between them, and Smith concealed behind the blanket, pretended to look through his spectacles, or transparent stones, and would then write down or repeat what he saw, which, when repeated aloud, was written down by Harris, who sat on the other side of the suspended blanket. Harris was told that it would arouse the most terrible divine displeasure, if he should attempt to draw near the sacred chest, or look at Smith while engaged in the work of decyphering the mysterious characters. This was Harris's own account of the matter to me. What other measures they afterwards took to transcribe or translate from these metallic plates, I cannot say, as I very soon after this removed to another field of labour where I heard no more of this matter till I learned the **BOOK OF MORMON** was about being published. It was not till after the discovery of the manuscript of Spaulding, that the actors in this imposture thought of calling this pretended revelation the **BOOK OF MORMON**. This book, which professed to be a translation of the golden Bible brought to light by Joseph Smith, was published in 1830—to accomplish which Martin Harris actually mortgaged his farm.

In addition to the facts with which I myself was conversant in 1827 and 1828, connected with the rise of Mormonism, I have been able to lay hold of one or two valuable documents, and obtain several items of intelligence, by which I shall be enabled to continue this sketch of the rise and origin of this singular imposture. To my mind there never was a grosser piece of deception undertaken to be practised than this.

The preceding account was written by the Rev. John A. Clark, now of this city, a gentleman of unquestionable veracity, in whose statements every confidence may justly be placed. It bears on its face the evidence of sincerity and truth. From it the reader will learn all that is essential to know of the origin of the singular imposture by which Smith and his Mormon aides and abettors have succeeded in making so many weak and miserable dupes.

The statement which follows, traces their career up from the period at which the preceding narrative leaves them. It is written by Mr. Cyrus Smalling, a citizen of Kirtland, Ohio, the place where Smith and his followers made an attempt to establish themselves, but from whence their dishonest swindling, and disgraceful conduct has driven them. It furnishes a plain detail of transactions that makes us grieve over the weakness and depravity of human nature.

KIRTLAND, Ohio, March 10th, A. D., 1841.

*Dear Sir*—By request, and the duty I owe to my fellow-man, I consent to answer your letter, and your request as to Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Safety Society Bank of the Latter Day Saints, as they call themselves at the present, or Mormons. As to the character of Joseph Smith, Jr., I do not feel disposed to attack, and therefore, shall only state facts as they are, and leave the people to judge of character. In his youth, he and the whole family were money-



diggers, and the first knowledge I have of him, is at Harmony, Susquehannah county, Pa. where he was translating the Book of Mormon. Soon after he was taken up and tried as an impostor; but was cleared on account of the testimony that was given of the chests of money moving so that they could not get them. I then lived in that county, they soon began to build up the Church of Christ, as they called it, and they said by a revelation from the God of heaven; and many in that region joined themselves to them and also in the western part of New York, especially at Palmyra and Fayette. The followers of Smith believe him to be a prophet, and he had a revelation that the church must move to the Ohio, which they did, selling their possessions and helping each other as a band of brothers, and they settled in this place. The Smith family were then all poor and the most of the church. I visited there in 1833, they were then building a temple to the Most High God, who Smith said would appear and make his will known to his servants, and endow them with power in their last days that they might go and preach his gospel to all nations, kindred tongues and people, and for this purpose they wrought almost night and day, and scoured the branches in the east for money for to enable them to build, and the people consecrated freely, as they supposed for that purpose, for they supposed they were to be one in the church of Christ, for so Smith had told them by his revelations, and that they must consecrate all for the poor in Zion, and thus many did until they finished the temple, and in the meantime the building committee built each of them a house, Sidney Rigdon and Joseph Smith, Jr. By this time the leaders of the church, Smith, Rigdon, Carter and Caboon, &c. I may say all the heads of the church, got lifted up in pride, and they imagined that God was about to make them rich, and that they were to suck the milk of the Gentiles, as they call those that do not belong to the church, or do not go hand and hand with them, and then they would make the whole church rich; this pattern you will see in the book of Covenants, page 240, a revelation given to Enoch, concerning the order of the church for the benefit of the poor. Gazelom is the fictitious name of Joseph Smith, Jr. and the lot which was dedicated to him is about 160 acres in the village of Kirtland. Pilagoram is the name used for Sidney Rigdon; the Tahamus is a tannery that was revolated to him, the land in the whole revolution was bought with the money consecrated for the poor in Zion, as revolated for the brethren, as I suppose you can have access to the book, and this little sheet will be too small to ever begin to tell the whole story that I should like to tell, if I was there with you, then it could not be told in one day, but from this you can see they have a great desire for riches, and for to obtain them without earning them; and about this time they said that God had told them, Sidney and Joseph, that they had suffered enough and that they should be rich; and they informed me, that God told them to buy goods and so they did, as they said, to some thirty thousand dollars, on a credit of six months, at Cleveland and Buffalo. In the spring of 1836 this firm was, I believe, Smith, Rigdon & Co., (it included

the heads of the church.) In the fall, they formed other companies of their brethren, and sent to New York as agents for them, Hiram Smith and O. Cowdery, (they being of their company) and they purchased some sixty or seventy thousand dollars worth, all for the church, and the most of them not worth a penny, and no financiers. At this time the first debt become due and not anything to pay it with, for they had sold to their poor brethren, who were strutting about the streets in the finest broadcloth, and imagining themselves rich, but could pay nothing, and poverty is the mother of invention. They then fixed upon a plan to pay the debt, that was, to have a bank of their own, as none of the then existing banks would loan to them what they wanted and the most refused them entirely, so they sent to Philadelphia and got the plates made for their Safety Society Bank, and got a large quantity of bills ready for filling and signing; and in the meantime, Smith and others, collected what specie they could, which amounted to some six thousand dollars, and the paper came about the first of January, 1837, and they immediately began to issue their paper and to no small amount: but their creditors refused to take it,—then Smith invented another plan, that was to exchange their notes for other notes that would pay their debts, and for that purpose he sent the Elders out with it to exchange, and not only the elders, but gave large quantities of it to others, and give them one half to exchange it, as I am informed by those that peddled for him,—and thus Smith was instrumental in sending the worthless stuff abroad, and it soon come in again, and as I may say, there was nothing to redeem it with, as Smith had used the greater part of their precious metals, and the inhabitants holding their bills came to inquire into the Safety Society precious metals, and the way that Smith contrived to deceive them was this: he had some one or two hundred boxes made, and gathered all the lead and shot that the village had or that part of it that he controlled, and filled the boxes with lead, shot, &c., and marked them, one thousand dollars each—then, when they went to examine the vault, he had one box on a table partly filled for them to see, and when they proceeded to the vault, Smith told them that the church had two hundred thousand dollars in specie and he opened one box and they saw that it was silver, and they helped a number and Smith told them that they contained specie, and they were seemingly satisfied and went away for a few days, until the elders was packed off in every direction to pass their paper off; among the elders were Brigham Young, that went last, with forty thousand dollars; John F. Boynton, with some twenty thousand dollars; Luke Johnson, south and east, with an unknown quantity. I suppose if the money you have was taken of those, it was to Smith's and their profit; and thus they continued to pass and sell the worthless stuff until they sold it at twelve and a half cents on the dollar, and so eager to put it off at that, that they could not attend meeting on the Sabbath,—but they signed enough at that price to buy one section of land in the Illinois. There was some signed with S. Rigdon, cashier, and J. Smith, Jr. president, for the purpose, as it was then said, that if they should be called upon when they could not well redeem, that they would call them coun-

terfeit, but they had no occasion to call any counterfeit, for they never redeemed but a very few thousand dollars, and there must be now a great many thousands of their bills out. There was some which others signed pro. tem. that were genuine too, the name of F. G. Williams, N. K. Whitney, and one Kingsburg, all of those are genuine.

The church have not now nor never had any common stock,\* all that has been consecrated, Smith and the heads of the church have got, and what they can get now they keep, for to show this I send you a revelation which is as follows:—Revelation given July 9th, 1837, in far west, Calwell county, Missouri,—O Lord, show unto us, thy servants, how much thou requirest of the properties of thy people for a tything? Answer: Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus properties to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church of Zion, for the building of mine house, and for the laying the foundation of Zion, and for the priesthood, and for the debts of the presidency of my church, and this shall be the beginning of the tything of my people, and after that, those who have been tythed, shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually, and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy priesthood saith the Lord: Verily, I say unto you, it shall come to pass, that all those who gather unto the land of Zion, shall be tythed of their surplus properties, and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you; and behold, I say unto you, if my people observe not this law to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, that it may be most holy; behold: Verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you and this shall be one example unto all the states of Zion, even so. Amen. They left here in a great hurry, as there was many debts against them, for the principal part that Smith had was borrowed, as also all the heads of the church in general, and they had to keep the poor brethren lugging their boxes of silks and fine cloths from place to place, so that they should not be taken to pay their just debts, and mostly borrowed money, until they succeeded in getting them off in the night. They were pursued, but to no effect, they had a train too numerous, so the people could not get their pay, and thus they have brought distraction and misery on a great many respectable families, that are reduced to distress, while they live in splendor and all kinds of extravagance. Thus I send you a few, and this is, in comparison, as one drop of water would be in comparison to the Skuykill or in other words to Lake Erie. Those statements are well known here, and I presume will not be contradicted there, unless by some fanatic that has no knowledge of things as they do exist, or those deeply interested in the frauds of the saints themselves. I am yours, &c.

CYRUS SMALLING, of Kirtland, Ohio.

\* Instead of the stock being common, it appears the intention of the ringleaders is to monopolize it, and leave their poor dupes at last to shift for themselves.