

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 to 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 "conningly 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 Jo 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. After his return, he came to see me again, and told me that among others he had consulted Professor Anthon, of Columbia College, who thought the characters in which the book was written very remarkable, but he could not decide exactly what language they belonged to. 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. "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things to confound the mighty; and base things, and things which are despised—yea, and things that are not to bring to nought things that are—that no flesh should glory in his presence." 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 what 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, Jo 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' 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, of which I shall subsequently give some account, 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. But I find I shall be obliged to postpone till another number the full development which I wish to make before finishing this sketch. You will probably hear from me in relation to this matter next week.

Yours, &c. J. A. C.