

POINTS OF IDENTITY.

With reference to these sweeping statements made by Mr. Fairchild and the Mormons, I desire to say that through the kindness of the Librarian of Oberlin College I have been favored with the loan of a copy of the Spalding manuscript for comparison with the Book of Mormon. I have given as careful attention, and as much time as I could spare for several months, in reading and comparing the two works and the following are some of the items of similarity and identity which I have discovered:

1. THE GENERAL PLOT OF THE STORIES IS THE SAME.

2. Both pretend to be translations of records found buried in the earth.

3. Both records pretend to be abridgments of older and more elaborate records.

4. Both records trace the ancestry of the American Indians from the old world, and give tragic accounts of their providential passage over the sea to the American Continent.

5. Both stories pretend to give a history of the settlements; the rise and fall of nations; the terrible wars, bloodshed, death and carnage that followed.

6. Both stories are interspersed with occasional outbreaks of appeal and exhortations on questions of morality and religion.

7. Both stories cater to the use of the little transparent stone through which sights could be seen, hidden treasures discovered, and ancient writings translated.

8. Both stories contain the same account of one army contending in battle, which painted their foreheads red in order to distinguish themselves from their enemies in time of confusing excitement.

9. Both stories contain an account of a most disastrous war caused by the people of one nation stealing the daughters of another nation.

10. Both stories contain accounts of the discovery of other nations who had preceded them to America; that some of them were in a savage state; but were soon educated and restored to civilization.

11. Both stories contain a marvelous account of wonders wrought by one army while the other was lying asleep in camp after a night of revelry.

12. Both stories portray similar characters of prominent leaders and teachers who were believed to have held converse with celestial beings and whose teachings were said to be divinely revealed, or inspired.

13. Both stories contain an account of a battle in which, by stratagem, one army was divided up into four parts: East, west, north and south, and gained a glorious victory.

14. Both stories are characterized by the same tale of a "Sacred Roll," believed to have been of divine origin, and which formed the basis of religious belief and teaching.

15. Both stories contain individual plots of stratagem, which are identical in motive, methods and results.

16. Both stories give an outline for plans of government, also the invention and coinage of money in its various denominations, uses, etc.

17. Both stories attribute times of peace and prosperity to fidelity in religious matters, and the retrograde in these respects to a neglect of religion.

18. Both stories, in portraying the extermination of the two great factions, describe the gathering of armies and slaughters, which were a physical impossibility to a people without modern methods for the transportation of troops and army supplies.

19. The literary style of the "plates" described by the Smith-Rigdon Co., is identical with the literary style of a people discovered and described in the Spalding romance. The identity here is perfect in every respect.

20. The religious code in the Spalding romance teaches polygamy outright, while the Book of Mormon evasively leaves the matter open for some future time by saying: "I will command my people" (Book of Jacob 3: 30), and the reference points us to the "Revelation on marriage given in 1843. Doc. & Cov. 132," which provides that a man shall have as many wives as he wants.

21. Many of the places, and positions of nations and armies described are geographically identical in both stories.

22. Spalding's life was contemporaneous with anti-Masonic riots, and he harbored a sentiment against all secret societies. The Book of Mormon abounds with this same sentiment.

Now, when we remember that the Oberlin manuscript is probably Spalding's first attempt of his romance, the wonder is that so many points of identity have been retained throughout its numerous revisions. Any one addicted to the habit of writing

can easily see, by the many erasures and changes which occur at different turns in the story, and also by the frequent insertion of words and phrases, that they are only suggestive of what the author will supply in making his next copy.

The very abrupt stop off in the manuscript, right in the fiercest of a terrible war, when it seems that Spalding decided to change his dates and the place of the original departure from the old world, confirms the testimony of the witnesses that this is not the manuscript which Spalding had been in the habit of reading to them. And the fact that this manuscript does contain these and many other points of identity with the Book of Mormon—some of which are three-fold in detail—and the still further fact that the Mormons have hastened to assert that there is not one particle of similarity between the two,—all these facts together establish the still further irresistible fact that a later copy of the Spalding romance was the basis, and to a great extent, the literal body of the Book of Mormon.

In the light of all these undeniable facts it is easy to see that the sweeping assertion of the Mormons, or any one else, as to the absolute unlikeness of the two works in any particular, displays either a vast amount of ignorance, or what is worse, an attempt to play upon the ignorance of other people. There is positively no other view to take of it:

As already stated, I do not believe that the Mormon people in general are aware of their delusion, and possibly many of their leaders are in a similar state of ignorance at this late day. Having been raised up in that faith and practice, with little, if any opportunity to know better, the present generation might be as honest and sincere in their belief as any other denomination. On this account I would not be understood as censuring those who have had no opportunity of knowing better, but I cannot withhold censure from those whose long neglected duty it has been to give them the opportunity. Some of the Mormons may stand guiltless before God in their darkness while their Gentile neighbors are condemned for not giving them the light.

These thoughts give me no rest day nor night until I have done what I can with my meager time and money to lift the veil from their eyes. It is out of a heart-felt interest in my fellow, MAN, that I write these pages. How it is that some otherwise intelligent and good people can dispose of a question like this with such utter indifference is to me inexplicable.

Some of the Spalding family have denied that his writings con-

tained any allusion to a plurality of wives. In this, however, they are evidently mistaken. The following appears in the re-religious code of this manuscript: "*Let thy citizens be numbered once in two years—and if the young women, who are fit for marriage are more numerous than the young men—then wealthy men who are young and who have but one wife shall have the privilege, (with the permission of the King) to marry another until the numbers of the single young men and the single young women are made equal. But he who hath two wives shall have a house provided for each and he shall spend his time equally with each one.*" There is evidence that the above lines have been erased and altered, but they set forth very clearly the polygamous notions of the author.

MORE LIGHT ON THE BOOK OF MORMON.

Turning now to the Book of Mormon in particular, there are a few additional things which may be noted for the benefit of those who have not examined it carefully, and I may add that time is too precious to waste in that way unless you are sure that it is spent in an effort to save others from such unprofitable employment.

The Book of Mormon is an elaboration of the Spalding romance, possessing all the essentials of the general plot, as mentioned before, but going into an imaginary account of thousands of details and incidents attending the rises and falls, prosperities and adversities, wars and destructions of the aborigines of America. The language and style of the book is similar to that of the Bible, differing from it mainly in its ostentatious pretensions to divine authenticity. Its author is extremely anxious all along to try to show that it is of divine origin.

Probably the most remarkable feature is the pretended translation of thirteen consecutive chapters of Isaiah from Smith's "plates" pretended to have been brought by Lehi from Jerusalem, reproduced chapter for chapter, verse for verse, punctuation marks and all, just as it appears in our English Bible. Also chapters 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, and 54, are copied in the same literal way. Now, is it not remarkable that Joe Smith should turn out such a translation from what they call "reformed Egyptian," which was said to have been made from Hebrew, and yet these chapters and many other portions of the book are identical with our English Bible, which has come down through so many translations to the present time. Any one can see that such a thing would have been utterly impossible. The only way to