

## CHAPTER XIX.

WE proposed in the commencement of this work, to give to the world all the light, of which we were in possession, as to the real and original author or authors of the Book of Mormon. That there has been, from the beginning of the imposture, a more talented knave behind the curtain, is evident to our mind, at least; but whether he will ever be clearly, fully and positively *unveiled* and brought into open day-light, may of course be doubted. For no person of common prudence and understanding, it may well be presumed, would ever undertake such a speculation upon human credulity, without closing and well securing every door and avenue to a discovery, step by step, as he proceeded. Hence, our investigations upon the subject have necessarily been more limited than was desirable. At the same time, we think that facts and data have been elicited, sufficient at least to raise a strong presumption that the leading features of the "Gold Bible" were first conceived and concocted by one SOLOMON SPALDING, while a resident of Conneaut, Ashtabula county, Ohio. It is admitted by our soundest jurists, that a train of circumstances may often lead the mind to a more satisfactory and unerring conclusion, than positive testimony, unsupported by circumstantial evidence—for the plain reason, that the one species of testimony is more prone to falsehood than the other. But we proceed with our testimony.

The first witness is Mr. *John Spalding*, a brother of Solomon, now a resident of Crawford county, Pa. who says :

"Solomon Spalding was born in Ashford, Conn. in

1761, and in early life contracted a taste for literary pursuits. After he left school, he entered Plainfield Academy, where he made great proficiency in study, and excelled most of his class-mates. He next commenced the study of Law, in Windham county, in which he made little progress, having in the mean time turned his attention to religious subjects. He soon after entered Dartmouth College, with the intention of qualifying himself for the ministry, where he obtained the degree of A. M. and was afterwards regularly ordained. After preaching three or four years, he gave it up, removed to Cherry Valley, N. Y, and commenced the mercantile business in company with his brother Josiah.— In a few years he failed in business, and in the year 1809 removed to Conneaut, in Ohio. The year following, I removed to Ohio, and found him engaged in building a forge. I made him a visit in about three years after; and found that he had failed, and considerably involved in debt. He then told me had he been writing a book, which he intended to have printed, the avails of which he thought would enable him to pay all his debts. The book was entitled the “Manuscript Found,” of which he read to me many passages.— It was an historical romance of the first settlers of America, endeavoring to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Jews, or the lost tribes. It gave a detailed account of their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till they arrived in America, under the command of NEPHI and LEHI. They afterwards had quarrels and contentions, and separated into two distinct nations, one of which he denominated Nephites and the other Lamanites. Cruel and bloody wars ensued, in which great multitudes were slain. They buried their dead in large heaps, which caused the mounds so common in this country. Their arts, sciences and civilization were brought into view, in order to account for all the curious antiquities, found in various

parts of North and South America. I have recently read the Book of Mormon, and to my great surprize I find nearly the same historical matter, names, &c. as they were in my brother's writings. I well remember that he wrote in the old style, and commenced about every sentence with "and it came to pass," or "now it came to pass," the same as in the Book of Mormon, and according to the best of my recollection and belief, it is the same as my brother Solomon wrote, with the exception of the religious matter.—By what means it has fallen into the hands of Joseph Smith, Jr. I am unable to determine. JOHN SPALDING."

Martha Spalding, the wife of John Spalding, says:—

"I was personally acquainted with Solomon Spalding, about twenty years ago. I was at his house a short time before he left Conneaut; he was then writing a historical novel founded upon the first settlers of America. He represented them as an enlightened and warlike people. He had for many years contended that the aborigines of America were the descendants of some of the lost tribes of Israel, and this idea he carried out in the book in question.—The lapse of time which has intervened, prevents my recollecting but few of the leading incidents of his writings; but the names of Nephi and Lehi are yet fresh in my memory, as being the principal heroes of his tale. They were officers of the company which first came off from Jerusalem. He gave a particular account of their journey by land and sea, till they arrived in America, after which, disputes arose between the chiefs, which caused them to separate into different lands, one of which was called Lamanites and the other Nephites. Between these were recounted tremendous battles, which frequently covered the ground with the slain; and their being buried in large heaps was the cause of the numerous mounds in the country.—Some of these people he represented as being very large.

I have read the Book of Mormon, which has brought fresh to my recollection the writings of Solomon Spalding; and I have no manner of doubt that the historical part of it, is the same that I read and heard read, more than 20 years ago. The old, obsolete style, and the phrases of "and it came to pass," &c. are the same.

MARTHA SPALDING."

We would here remark by the way, that it would appear that Sol. Spalding, like many other authors, was somewhat vain of his writing, and was constantly showing and reading them to his neighbors. In this way most of his intimate acquaintances became conversant at that time with his writings and designs. We might therefore introduce a great number of witnesses all testifying to the same general facts; but we have not taken the trouble to procure the statements of but few, all of whom are the most respectable men, and highly esteemed for their moral worth, and their characters for truth and veracity, are unimpeachable. In fact, the word of any one of them, would have more weight in any respectable community, than the whole family of Smiths and Whitmers, who have told about hearing the voice of an angel.

*Conneaut, Ashtabula Co. O. September, 1833.*

I left the state of New York, late in the year 1810, and arrived at this place, about the 1st of Jan. following. Soon after my arrival, I formed a co-partnership with Solomon Spalding, for the purpose of re-building a forge which he had commenced a year or two before. He very frequently read to me from a manuscript which he was writing, which he entitled the "Manuscript Found," and which he represented as being found in this town. I spent many hours in hearing him read said writings, and became well acquainted with its contents. He wished me to assist him in getting

his production printed, alleging that a book of that kind would meet with a rapid sale. I designed doing so, but the forge not meeting our antieipations, we failed in business, when I declined having any thing to do with the publication of the book. This book represented the American Indians as the descendants of the lost tribes, gave an aaccount of their leaving Jerusalem, their contentions and wars, which were many and great. One time, when he was reading to me the tragic aaccount of Laban, I pointed out to him what I considered an inconsisteney, which he promised to correct; but by referring to the Book of Mormon, I find to my surprise that it stands there just as he read it to me then.—Some months ago I borrowed the Golden Bible, put it into my poeket, carried it home, and thought no more of it.—About a week after, my wife found the book in my coat poeket, as it hung up, and commeneed reading it aloud as I lay upon the bed. She had not read 20 minutes till I was astonished to find the same passages in it that Spalding had read to me more than twenty years before, from his “Manuscript Found.” Since that, I have more fully examined the said Golden Bible, and have no hesitation in saying that the historial part of it is principally, if not wholly taken from the “Manuscript Found.” I well recollect telling Mr. Spalding, that the so frequent use of the words “And it came to pass,” “Now it came to pass,” rendered it ridiculous. Spalding left here in 1812, and I furnished him the means to carry him to Pittsburgh, where he said he would get the book printed, and pay me. But I never heard any more from him or his writings, till I saw them in the Book of Mormon.

HENRY LAKE.

*Springfield, Pa. September, 1833.*

In the year 1811, I was in the employ of Henry Lake and Solomon Spalding, at Conneaut, engaged in rebuilding

a forge. While there, I boarded and lodged in the family of said Spalding, for several months. I was soon introduced to the manuscript of Spalding, and perused them as often as I had leisure. He had written two or three books or pamphlets on different subjects; but that which more particularly drew my attention, was one which he called the "Manuscript Found." From this he would frequently read some humorous passages to the company present. It purported to be the history of the first settlement of America, before discovered by Columbus. He brought them off from Jerusalem, under their leaders; detailing their travels by land and water, their manners, customs, laws, wars, &c. He said that he designed it as a historical novel, and that in after years it would be believed by many people as much as the history of England. He soon after failed in business, and told me he should retire from the din of his creditors, finish his book and have it published, which would enable him to pay his debts and support his family. He soon after removed to Pittsburgh, as I understood.

I have recently examined the Book of Mormon, and find in it the writings of Solomon Spalding, from beginning to end, but mixed up with scripture and other religious matter, which I did not meet with in the "Manuscript Found." Many of the passages in the Mormon Book are verbatim from Spalding, and others in part. The names of Nephi, Lehi, Moroni, and in fact all the principal names, are bro't fresh to my recollection, by the Gold Bible. When Spalding divested his history of its fabulous names, by a verbal explanation, he landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am very confident he called *Zarahemla*, they were marched about that country for a length of time, in which wars and great blood shed ensued, he brought them across North America in a north east direction.

JOHN N. MILLER.

*Conneaut, August, 1833.*

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding in 1808 or 9, when he commenced building a forge on Conneaut creek. When at his house, one day, he showed and read to me a history he was writing, of the lost tribes of Israel, purporting that they were the first settlers of America, and that the Indians were their decendants. Upon this subject we had frequent conversations. He traced their journey from Jerusalem to America, as it is given in the Book of Mormon, excepting the religious matter. The historical part of the Book of Mormon, I know to be the same as I read and heard read from the writings of Spalding, more than twenty years ago; the names more especially are the same without any alteration. He told me his object was to account for all the fortifications, &c. to be found in this country, and said that in time it would be fully believed by all, except learned men and historians. I once anticipated reading his writings in print, but little expected to see them in a new Bible. Spalding had many other manuscripts, which I expect to see when Smith translates his other plate. In conclusion, I will observe, that the names of, and most of the historical part of the Book of Mormon, were as familiar to me before I read it, as most modern history. If it is not Spalding's writing, it is the same as he wrote; and if Smith was inspired, I think it was by the same spirit that Spalding was, which he confessed to be the love of money.

AARON WRIGHT.

*Conneaut, August, 1833.*

When Solomon Spalding first came to this place, he purchased a tract of land, surveyed it out and commenced selling it. While engaged in this business, he boarded at my house, in all nearly six months. All his leisure hours were occupied in writing a historical novel, founded upon

the first settlers of this country. He said he intended to trace their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till their arrival in America, give an account of their arts, sciences, civilization, wars and contentions. In this way, he would give a satisfactory account of all of the old mounds, so common to this country. During the time he was at my house, I read and heard read one hundred pages or more. Nephi and Lchi were by him represented as leading characters, when they first started for America. Their main object was to escape the judgments which they supposed were coming upon the old world. But no religious matter was introduced, as I now recollect. Just before he left this place, Spalding sent for me to call on him, which I did.—He then said, that although he was in my debt, he intended to leave the country, and hoped I would not prevent him, for, says he, you know I have been writing the history of the first settlement of America, and I intend to go to Pittsburgh, and there live a retired life, till I have completed the work, and when it is printed, it will bring me a fine sum of money, which will enable me to return and pay off all my debts—the book, you know will sell, as every one is anxious to learn something upon that subject. This was the last I heard of Spalding or his book, until the Book of Mormon came into the neighborhood. When I heard the historical part of it related, I at once said it was the writings of old Solomon Spalding. Soon after, I obtained the book, and on reading it, found much of it the same as Spalding had written, more than twenty years before.

OLIVER SMITH.

*Conneaut, August, 1833.*

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding, in Dec. 1810. After that time I frequently saw him at his house, and also at my house. I once in conversation with



him expressed a surprise at not having any account of the inhabitants once in this country, who erected the old forts, mounds, &c. He then told me that he was writing a history of that race of people; and afterwards frequently showed me his writings, which I read. I have lately read the Book of Mormon, and believe it to be the same as Spalding wrote, except the religious part. He told me that he intended to get his writings published in Pittsburgh, and he thought that in one century from that time, it would be believed as much as any other history.

NAHUM HOWARD.

Artemas Cunningham, of Perry, Geauga county, states as follows:

“In the month of October, 1811, I went from the township of Madison to Conneaut, for the purpose of securing a debt due me from Solomon Spalding. I tarried with him nearly two days, for the purpose of accomplishing my object, which I was finally unable to do. I found him destitute of the means of paying his debts. His only hope of ever paying his debts, appeared to be upon the sale of a book, which he had been writing. He endeavored to convince me from the nature and character of the work, that it would meet with a ready sale. Before showing me his manuscripts, he went into a verbal relation of its outlines, saying that it was a fabulous or romantic history of the first settlement of this country, and as it purported to have been a record found buried in the earth, or in a cave, he had adopted the ancient or scripture style of writing. He then presented his manuscripts, when we sat down and spent a good share of the night, in reading them, and conversing upon them. I well remember the name of Nephi, which appeared to be the principal hero of the story. The frequent repetition of the phrase, “I Nephi,” I recollect as distinctly

as though it was but yesterday, although the general features of the story have passed from my memory, through the lapse of 22-years. He attempted to account for the numerous antiquities which are found upon this continent, and remarked that, after this generation had passed away, his account of the first inhabitants of America would be considered as authentic as any other history. The Mormon Bible I have partially examined, and am fully of the opinion that Solomon Spalding had written its outlines before he left Conneaut."

Statements of the same import, might be multiplied to an indefinite length; but we deem it unnecessary. We are here willing to rest the question, in the hands of any intelligent jury, with a certainty that their verdict would be, that Solomon Spalding first wrote the leading incidents of the Book of Mormon, instead of its being found by the Smith family, while digging for gold, and its contents afterwards made known by the Supreme Being.

But our enquiries did not terminate here. Our next object was to ascertain, if possible, the disposition Spalding made of his manuscripts. For this purpose, a messenger was despatched to look up the widow of Spalding, who was found residing in Massachusetts. From her we learned that Spalding resided in Pittsburgh, about two years, when he removed to the township of Amity, Washington Co. Pa. where he lived about two years, and died in 1816. His widow then removed to Onondaga county, N. Y., married again, and lived in Otsego county, and subsequently removed to Massachusetts. She states that Spalding had a great variety of manuscripts, and recollects that one was entitled the "Manuscript Found," but of its contents she has now no distinct knowledge. While they lived in Pittsburgh, she thinks it was once taken to the printing office of *Patterson & Lambdin*; but whether it was ever brought back to the

house again, she is quite uncertain : if it was, however, it was then with his other writings, in a trunk which she had left in Otsego county, N. Y. This is all the information that could be obtained from her, except that Mr. Spalding, while living, entertained a strong antipathy to the Masonic Institution, which may account for its being so frequently mentioned in the Book of Mormon. The fact also, that Spalding, in the latter part of his life, inclined to infidelity, is established by a letter in his hand-writing, now in our possession.

The trunk referred to by the widow, was subsequently examined, and found to contain only a single M. S. book, in Spalding's hand-writing, containing about one quire of paper. This is a romance, purporting to have been translated from the Latin, found on 24 rolls of parchment in a cave, on the banks of Conneaut Creek, but written in modern style, and giving a fabulous account of a ship's being driven upon the American coast, while proceeding from Rome to Britain, a short time previous to the Christian era, this country then being inhabited by the Indians. This old M. S. has been shown to several of the foregoing witnesses, who recognise it as Spalding's, he having told them that he had altered his first plan of writing, by going farther back with dates, and writing in the old scripture style, in order that it might appear more ancient. They say that it bears no resemblance to the "*Manuscript Found.*"

Here, then, our enquiries after facts partially cease, on this subject. We have fully shown that the Book of Mormon is the joint production of Solomon Spalding and some other designing knave, or if it is what it purports to be, the Lord God has graciously condescended, in revealing to Smith his will, through spectacles, to place before him and appropriate to his own use, the writings and names of men which had been invented by a person long before in the

grave. Having established the fact, therefore, that most of the names and leading incidents contained in the Mormon bible, originated with Solomon Spalding, it is not very material, as we conceive, to show the way and manner by which they fell into the hands of the Smith family. To do this, however, we have made some enquiries.

It was inferred at once that some light might be shed upon this subject, and the mystery revealed, by applying to Patterson & Lambdin, in Pittsburgh. But here again death had interposed a barrier. That establishment was dissolved and broken up many years since, and Lambdin died about eight years ago. Mr. Patterson says he has no recollection of any such manuscript being brought there for publication, neither would he have been likely to have seen it, as the business of printing was conducted wholly by Lambdin at that time. He says, however, that many M. S. books and pamphlets were brought to the office about that time, which remained upon their shelves for years, without being printed or even examined. Now, as Spalding's book can no where be found, or any thing heard of it after being carried to this establishment, there is the strongest presumption that it remained there in seclusion, till about the year 1823 or '24, at which time *Sidney Rigdon* located himself in that city. We have been credibly informed that he was on terms of intimacy with Lambdin, being seen frequently in his shop. Rigdon resided in Pittsburgh about three years, and during the whole of that time, as he has since frequently asserted, abandoned preaching and all other employment, for the purpose of *studying the bible*. He left there and came into the county where he now resides, about the time Lambdin died, and commenced preaching some new points of doctrine, which were afterwards found to be inculcated in the Mormon Bible. He resided in this vicinity about four years previous to the appearance of the book, during which time he made several long visits to Pittsburgh, and perhaps to the Susquehannah, where Smith was then digging for money, or pretending to be translating plates. It may be observed also, that about the time Rigdon left Pittsburgh, the Smith family began to tell about finding a book that would contain a history of the first in-

habitants of America, and that two years elapsed before they finally got possession of it.

We are, then, irresistibly led to this conclusion :—that Lambdin, after having failed in business, had recourse to the old manuscripts then in his possession, in order to *raise the wind*, by a book speculation, and placed the “Manuscript Found,” of Spalding, in the hands of Rigdon, to be embellished, altered, and added to, as he might think expedient ; and three years’ study of the bible we should deem little time enough to garble it, as it is transferred to the Mormon book. The former dying, left the latter the sole proprietor, who was obliged to resort to his wits, and in a miraculous way to bring it before the world ; for in no other manner could such a book be published without great sacrifice. And where could a more suitable character be found than Jo Smith, whose necromantic fame and arts of deception, had already extended to a considerable distance? That Lambdin was a person every way qualified and fitted for such an enterprise, we have the testimony of his partner in business, and others of his acquaintance. Add to all these circumstances, the facts, that Rigdon had prepared the minds in a great measure, of nearly a hundred of those who had attended his ministration to be in readiness to embrace the first mysterious *ism* that should be presented—the appearance of Cowdery at his residence as soon as the Book was printed—his sudden conversion, after many pretensions to disbelieve it—his immediately repairing to the residence of Smith, 300 miles distant, where he was forthwith appointed an elder, high priest, and a scribe to the prophet—the pretended vision that his residence in Ohio was the “promised land,”—the immediate removal of the whole Smith family thither, where they were soon raised from a state of poverty to comparative affluence. We therefore, must hold out Sidney Rigdon to the world as being the original “author and proprietor” of the whole Mormon conspiracy, until further light is elicited upon the lost writings of Solomon Spalding.

[F I N I S.]