

J16 [JONES, Dan.] *Dadl rhwng Bedyddiwr ac anffyddiwr*. (A debate between a Baptist and an atheist.) *Merthyr Tydfil: Printed and published by D. Jones, 14 Castle Street, Merthyr, [1854]*.

16 pp. 17.5 cm. *Welsh Mormon Writings* 76.

A debate is merely an expansion of a *Millennial Star* article published four years earlier by John Hyde (1 January 1850, pp. 4–9). No credit is given to Hyde in Jones’s pamphlet, however—since such practices of “borrowing without recognizing” were rather common and apparently accepted in the nineteenth century.

Throughout the dialogue the “atheist” is chiding the “Baptist” for blatant discrepancies between Christ’s teachings in the Bible and Baptist doctrine and practices. All the Bible concepts ignored or altered by the Baptists are shown to be central to the message of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, a representative of which enters the conversation toward the end and issues an invitation to the other participants to listen to the message of the Latter-day Saints.

DEBATE

BETWEEN

A BAPTIST AND AN ATHEIST.

“All the Newspapers I read testify that wars, diseases, and heresies are increasing in the world at an alarming rate, despite how many religious efforts are made to forestall them,” said a stranger to a fellow traveler in a railway carriage. “And this woeful fact should warn the God-fearing of our country to exert themselves more zealously against them, and to bring souls to Jesus: I trust you are a believer, sir, as is seemly for every sensible man to be.”

Friend.—Assuredly, I confess myself to be a complete unbeliever in the things believed by the Christian sects, as they call themselves; are you a believer with any of them, sir?

Traveler.—Oh, I surely am, and I have the best. I have been in the Baptist church for many years, and I am much troubled over the souls that die without religion; but I worry much more about those poor souls who are beguiled by heresies so disgraceful as the Mormonism that is described in this paper; the bottom of hell must surely be their place if half of this is true; and I do not know any way to doubt it either, for I am very well acquainted with the truthful and godly minister who wrote it; but since you are not one of them, there is hope for you; yet, dear sir, my heart is troubled over you. May I hear your objections to the splendid Christianity that fills the world with the light of the gospel, and saves millions for heaven? Perhaps I can remove the obstacles from your mind, and be an instrument in bringing you to believe in Jesus Christ. Oh! glorious idea, one soul of more worth than the world. Tell me quickly, what are they? it is a small task to remove them, I am sure.

Atheist.—At your request, I will tell you what came into my mind when you referred to the deadly diseases that are abroad;

although I do not desire to argue, yet I am not completely unversed in the Bible: you brought to my mind some foolish talk from some Apostle James. He was a Doctor of bodies and souls, said he, for he says somewhere for the sick to request their ministers to anoint them with oil! It is true that doctors do that now, and heal people, so they say; but it would be such foolishness to call a minister to do that now, would it not?

Baptist.—It is true that James, who was a faithful servant of God, said “If there is any sick among you, let him send for the elders of the church, and they will anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick.” The epistle of James is an excellent epistle too.

A.—Do your ministers teach the members to keep this commandment, or do some of you obey it?

B.—Oh, no sir. The ordinance of anointing with oil and healing the sick has been done away with since the days of the apostles, and everyone recognizes that they have not been needed since then.

A.—By what authority, or whose authority, was that taken from the church?

B.—Eh! what! who? indeed I must confess the truth; I do not know, but our minister can likely answer you; he studies the explanations of the godly quite a lot.

A.—I will answer you for him then. Believe me, your minister, together with the godly ministers of all the sects, is too wise and atheistic like me, to believe or practice a teaching so silly as that of foolish James; and if they did, no one would be healed after them, and everyone would see their deceit and hypocrisy, and they would lose their * * *. But it is the same reasoning that your minister has for denying a *portion* of the epistle, that I have for denying *all* of it; and thus, we are all atheists of the same *kind*, if not of the same *degree*. I do not obey because I do not believe; you allege that you do believe, yet you do not obey! Of us two, if there is a worse, you are the worse atheist.

B.—Well, I must confess, sir, that your reasons are irrefutable, although I greatly desire to be able to disprove them. Well, this is harsh also; proving a man an atheist before his face, and forcing him to be dumb! But go on, some enlightenment will come to me before long.

A.—I think you said a while ago that you are a Baptist.

B.—Yes indeed, I said that, and I am not ashamed to claim the name.

A.—There comes to mind a story I read somewhere in the Testament, about some illiterate fisherman, called the apostle Peter, telling the people they would have forgiveness of their sins, if they accepted baptism from him, or from his fellow deceivers; and the story says that thousands obeyed them in one day. What is too foolish for some people to do?

B.—Yes, indeed, so it was; three thousand were baptized, their story is found in Acts ii. And Oh! what a scene of hope that was. Oh, that its like could be seen often!

A.—Do your preachers teach you, the people, that forgiveness of sins comes through baptism?

B.—What! Peter said FOR FORGIVENESS, did he not? yes, indeed, again quite clear; I see your thrust; our preachers do not baptize for forgiveness; that is done away also; although I did not notice the word “FOR *forgiveness*,” before.

A.—Were you not baptized for forgiveness then?

B.—I said not, sir, because we are taught that baptism is not *for forgiveness*.

A.—So what I say is true. You are all, like myself, much too wise and selfish to listen to some old man as foolish as that weak-minded Peter. Here also I am forced to the same conclusion as before; again we are all atheists; and you are worst of all! Atheism succeeds more and more; and success to it. Do not be frightened, sir; all the priests, bishops, preachers and zealous religionists of the age are atheists like ourselves, rejecting Peter and James, two of the three highest presidents on the earth in their age; *well done*; who would have thought that atheism was so popular; we shall come closer, sir, before long, if not brothers before departing, what say you?

B.—What do I say indeed? what do you expect me to say, sir, but that I am astonished, and sweating with pain over my beloved religion, because I am unable to defend it. What shall I do! I fear you will make me an atheist also if I do not defend myself; despite that, I cannot deny that which you say; go on, for I may possibly remember something sometime.

A.—Does not the Jesus Christ you praise so highly say that his

servants should preach without requesting wages, that the servant should be like his master and that they should be satisfied with food and clothing. An atheist like myself admits that this is good; but do your ministers do as your Christ says in this?

B.—Oh, no, no sir, hardly any preach without a high salary besides young ones, while learning. They would leave us on the first “CALLING,” if the salary were higher, without doubt. But, that is how every other sect does also as far as I know.

A.—Yes, yes, surely, and thus I say also. Do not be so foolish as to think that preachers or priests of one sect or the other would be so childish as to follow your Jesus, or your Paul either at the cost of their respect or their salaries! there is no such thing. Do you not see who are the atheists? They denied James and Peter a while ago, and here they decidedly reject Jesus and Paul also!

B.—How blind to such clear reasons have I been all this time! Oh, how zealous was I with every collection, believing that my contributions were to God, but now I see clearly that they went to support atheism; how foolish I was to boast of the brilliant light of the gospel, while paying men to deny it! I am amazed! Yet, go on if you have more.

A.—More, yes. I have hardly begun to mention the sectarian atheism of this enlightened country; did I not read the promise of Jesus Christ in the old Book, that he would give some remarkable signs to those who followed and believed in him, such as casting out devils, prophesying, healing the sick, &c. You apparently know many who believe in him; have you seen or heard that “THESE SIGNS” follow some of them?

B.—No, sir, never. I have often heard someone asking why they do not, and they are answered mockingly by preachers who say “they are no longer needed.”

A.—But is his promise not clear in the book that it is to *believers* he gives them, not excluding any age or country? I am forced to make one of two decisions: either Jesus forfeited his truthfulness, or all of you are not *true* but *false* believers.

B.—Oh, sir, Jesus would be truthful if all those that professed belief in him were liars.

A.—Very well, we are again of the same mind, all are atheists like myself; the Christian world is in such a shameful state of hypoc-

risky despite all their prayers, their devotions, and their zeal without knowledge, together with all their collections to send missionaries over oceans and islands to convert the world to atheism, and all are already atheists! Ha! ha! There is a waste of time.

B.—Stranger, do you know something! your reasoning has removed my old perception of religion already like dirty rags from me; I feel ashamed that I have been so foolish as to be beguiled so long by such hypocritical atheists, and to give my money to support them. Indeed, it is not religion but deceit that I have. Oh, that I could find the old Gospel of Jesus Christ!

A.—Friend, any intention to hurt your feelings is far from me: for I understand your conscientiousness; and far be it from my heart to leave an honest man in the clutches of such atheism without his knowing: it is better by far to be without any creed, than to live in such deceit, and the present false Christian religion disgusted me a long time ago. Atheist that I am in the divided, contradictory, unloving, and faithless mixture, called “Christianity,” yet, I cannot help but praise the Church the Bible describes; its unity, its laws, its ordinances, its officers, and its promised blessings are worthy of note:—there is orderliness similar to the work of an intelligent Being perceptible in all of it; besides, it promises to *prove* itself to be that which it professes to be: while my soul abhors the hypocritical unbelief of one, yet, I rather long to have a grasp on the other. *True* religion is what I would like—but *hypocrisy*, may it never enchant my soul,—rather hell!

B.—Despite how grievous your reasonings were to me just now, I am beginning to see that it does me good to hear them; go on.

A.—Indeed, you are a wiser religionist than many I have met; generally they become furious, and hate me more for showing them the deceit, which has driven me to believe that they love falsehood more than truth: but, did not Jesus say that he would send some Spirit to lead his church to every truth, showing them things to come? Have you seen any who enjoy it, and understand future things through it?

B.—No indeed, nothing of the kind; rather denying that, he said that dividing into sects is beneficial, that the spirit of prophesy finished its work a long time ago—that sending people to colleges to

learn theology is a much better way and that the explanations of the old ministers, of every sect, are a much better guide toward being religious. The chief guides of religionists now are the explanations, the *catechisms*, the articles, that are woven by synods, colleges and assemblies, and the "Confession of Faith," and the like.

A.—And thus, the Spirit that Jesus sent has become an old thing, and out of fashion, so that its gifts are not needed in any effect now, as before, except in the secrets of the heart, say the *religious* atheists of this age. Then Jesus promised *this unnecessarily* also! Quite right, quite right; yes, that is what I say as well; but you profess that some Spirit follows Christianity still; I should rather say that it follows atheism; what spirit is that, I wonder?

B.—I must admit I do not know what spirit it is, but I know that it is a deaf and dumb one, and it shelters in the heart, so they say, invisibly; and it is very likely this spirit was deceiving me to believe that some heap of deceit such as that was the gospel of Christ. It is foolishness to try to assert any longer that it is the spirit of Christ; for that spirit leads to love and a "unity of the faith," but this one divides the world into almost innumerable splinters and fragments. We must admit, alas, that it is not the religion of Christ that any of us has.

A.—This is an inevitable conclusion for every honest man. Yet, see further the inconsistencies of the religions of the age in the light of the Bible; Paul and others whom we read in the New Testament inform us, that the principles of their religion were very different from those professed now:—they all preached faith, repentance, then baptism, and after that the laying on of hands of the elders—always consistent with one another. That system was not wise enough for the theologians of our age; it would be extremely inconvenient and ignoble to lead gentlemen and gentlewomen into the water, and to get them wet, and spoil their silks by immersing them—it is much easier to sprinkle a few drops on their faces; and as for laying on of hands, it is an extremely ugly thing for men to place hands on someone's head, especially upon the heads of *ladies* of the upper class. Thus, in these four basic principles, there is no one from the Christian world who believes enough of them, so as to receive the Holy Ghost, as before; all right, thus it is with me. You see me in the same place again, with almost all the Doctors of Christianity, but they are still the worst ones, by claiming to believe Paul, and here

denying two of his four basic tenets, namely baptism for forgiveness, and the laying on of hands. Is that not how it is?

B.—Somehow it is still as you say, but I cannot deny it, although I try my best; I had forgotten Paul's account of the laying on of hands on those twelve disciples, in the upper parts of Ephesus—of the laying on of hands on that Samaritan by Peter and John—of the laying on of hands of the elders; and I am amazed— — —

A.—Amazed at what? Do you expect the wise academicians in *this enlightened* age, to degrade themselves so much as to teach the same things as that hothead named Paul and those illiterate fishermen, namely Peter, James, and John? No, I would not believe anything of the kind! They are wiser men themselves by far: baptism for forgiveness, and receiving the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, is it! that is acceptable rubbish for that dark age, from the mouths of illiterates; but our noble and wise theologians will never teach such things! they would rather die!

B.—I too fear they will not; and indeed, what use is it to expect that, when they are destitute of the Spirit of Christ, and as a result destitute of his love? Yet, it may be that some of them are as conscientious as myself.

A.—That is possible, but not likely, that they are so foolish as to be conscientious with such unbelief, while the Bible before them is so clear in describing religion so differently; I fear that they have a false purpose, or they would be more apt to believe when it is shown to them. They are ashamed to own the name that God gives to his people! They were called "Saints" according to the Bible: do you think these proud ones will allow themselves to be called *Saints*? They will never permit it! They feel much more respected when they call themselves Calvinists, Wesleyans, Papists, Episcopalians, Baptists, Independents, Peterists, Paulists, and every other "ist," rather than the only "ist" accepted by God, namely, Saints. They know that Paul chastised those who named themselves after his name or after the name of Apollos or Cephas, for blasphemy; but Calvin, Wesley, &c., are such exalted beings, that it is a privilege to name ourselves after them! This is how we show our respect to the memory of the old establishers of our atheism. Ha! ha! we are more like each other all the time, are we not, except for the

nasty hypocrisy that is in them.

B.—I have never seen these things so clearly before; true is the maxim that says “education is obtained from the mouths of atheists;” so it is here; go on, sir.

A.—The Bible says it is the Holy Ghost who makes men suitable to minister in the apostolic church; but the Christian Doctors know of a much better way “in this enlightened age,” namely to heap to themselves teachers, who teach melodious tunes, to benumb the ears of their listeners with their own rubbish—fabricated tales, and everything except the basic principles of the gospel. They understand well enough that the best entertainer will receive the best money; and thus they make merchandise of souls, in addition to the possessions they receive from those they have charmed through their Chapels, &c. Lovely is this entertainment trade! it must be a lucrative one also, for it builds and supports so many Colleges for the manufacturing of first-rate entertainers. Ha! ha! do you know what, Paul? the atheistic academicians of our enlightened age have surely beaten you!

B.—It is obvious, that they are the blind leading the blind; how good it is to be enlightened, to understand things as they are: all my supposed religiosity is disappearing, like mist before the sunlight; forward, sir, if you have more.

A.—The Bible is replete with accounts of the people of God in those days receiving visions, new tongues, dreams, prophecy, healing the sick, &c; I understand that the “servants sent by God,” in this new Christianity, deny and mock all these; saying that they were only superstitious religious zealots who belonged to those dark ages; is this true? You must know.

B.—That is true enough; they shout from their pulpits that all is unnecessary,—atheists such as they are.

A.—You know something, friend, I believe that I have almost succeeded in converting you to atheism; for the theologians of this enlightened age consider visions, revelations, and the like, to be “atheism”; “grace in the heart” is all that is needed now, regardless of the name or of what is or is not believed and outwardly obeyed, because there is a belief in Christ, and that suffices. Ha! ha! do you not see that we are all still atheists!

B.—Yes, I see, I see clearly that I was an atheist previously, and that they are still; despite that, you have not converted me to athe-

ism. Rather, in effect you have persuaded me to believe in the Bible, instead of believing those who deny it; and there is power in truth, even from the mouth of an atheist.

A.—Paul said that all the gifts that they had “in part,” were to remain in the church “until that which is perfect is come.” Are they so foolish as to believe that that perfection has come? Well, I see only a perfect, disjointed *mixture*. In all seriousness, I would like to see one body made of all the “bodies,” of those who call themselves the “body of Christ.” Would it not be more of a wonder than the *Hopsun-jopsun* of the Hindus, that kicks with his ten feet, and hits with his ten fists in nearly every direction; but as for the “sectarian body,” he would soon hit himself to pieces. It is strange that its picture has not been drawn, as it would be the greatest wonder of the age with respect to imagination; and if it were taken around to the fairs in a *menageri*, it would soon draw sufficient funds to it to build many chapels, I should think!

B.—Despite how worrisome the truths you tell me may be, yet there is one consideration that heartens me greatly through it all; and that is, your objections do not militate at all against the Christianity of the Bible. How blessed it would be if the church of Christ were to be restored as it was before, together with its apostles, and inspired officers, its unity, its laws, and its blessings to body and soul.

A.—I almost said, Amen, unconsciously; I wonder also if such things will ever be seen any more in our world?

B.—I surely do not know. I can hardly dare to hope for such beneficial things.

A.—Your lack of hope does not cause me surprise either. May I tell you why?

B.—Yes, if you can. What is the reason that we cannot have that?

A.—Then, prepare your mind to hear a truth more frightening, perhaps, than any you have ever heard. To all the atheism that has been given, the theologians of this enlightened age add the *climax*; they do not even worship the same God the apostles worshiped, or any of the Prophets, if your Bible is true!

B.—Worse still! I shudder from such an assertion. I feel my passion like quicksilver running through my veins. But come to think of it, you have proved every other thing you have asserted; well, I shall

consider this; however, you cannot prove that, unless you make us all, not just the atheists, nothing more than idol worshippers also!

A.—Very well, I will not make you any worse than you are, by taking the cover off the hypocrisy that takes refuge in your beliefs; if reason and truth will prove you such, then it must be that you are so; there is nothing more that I will do with the proof. But, let us go on. Do not all the Christian sects of the age agree, that they worship “a God without body, without parts, and without passions?”

B.—Most certainly, what of that? Is that not what the first article of the credo of the Church of England says; and if my understanding is correct, all who are Christians believe the same thing completely.

A.—Your Bible tells me, in Genesis xviii, if I remember, that God appeared to Abraham, and that the old man had brought water to wash the feet of his God,—that was not your God, for you say he does not have feet. Also, it says that the old patriarch had made a feast, and that he and his wife had seen their God, and two angels eating the calf and cakes, and drinking the milk. Did they do that without a body? Where did the food go? If it was unconsumed, where did the truthfulness of old Abraham go? You or Abraham must be lying, you see.

B.—Oh sir, if you were to read the explanations of the scholars, you would understand that the appearance of Jehovah to Abraham was figurative.

A.—Oh, indeed, most certainly, you take that interpretation then; if God was figurative, then Abraham was figurative, the calf was figurative, and figurative blood ran from his neck, it gave a figurative bleat when it was killed, and the cakes were figurative; and what a beautiful figure was Sarah, hiding herself behind the great figurative tree that shaded the figurative heat of the figurative sun that shone in that age, and laughing heartily at the promise of her figurative God about her bearing a figurative son;—if these historical words of the Book of Genesis are understood figuratively, why is everything else it says not figurative?—a figurative Adam and Eve, a figurative fall, and all the consequences just as figurative. Ha, ha, this is what every atheist says, that it is all figurative like every *romance*.

B.—Oh! no, no, it must have been a real God, real feet, and real food; Abraham and Sarah as real as their offspring are now; a real Adam, and, alas, a real fall.

A.—Then my assertion is irrefutable; namely, that the Christian world does not worship the same God that Abraham and his children worshiped, they having real feet and all real parts and real bodies, and they being able to eat and drink real food. It was essentially superstition for those as foolish as Abraham, Moses, Jesus and his apostles to worship a real God like that one: but the more learned and godly academicians of this enlightened age understand much better, and they have grouped that old God with the mole and the bats; yet, for the life of me I cannot comprehend the hard face of those who praise the Bible so much while, seemingly on purpose, denying one way or another almost all that it says! They are much worse atheists than myself, for I believe I could humble myself to worship such a perfect God as the Bible describes, if I could but find him; he was a very kind one, visiting his creatures, eating and drinking with them, and being something like a gracious and wise God.

B.—What a marvel! such talk as this: I am tempted not to listen any more; but wait a minute—do the scriptures not say that God is a Spirit? Does a Spirit have a body? what do you say?

A.—Is there a Spirit in you?

B.—Yes, a spirit and body; Oh! now I have new light on the scripture where Moses says that man was created in the image and likeness of God—that is, he apparently means physically and spiritually.

A.—Moses also says that he saw God face to face, you say that your God has no face; consequently, it is not the same one unless he has died since then.

B.—Does the Bible not say that no one can see God and live; how is this possible?

A.—Oh! it is your Bible that says those two contradictory things, remember; yet I am able, despite my atheism, to reconcile Moses in that situation. Moses desired to see all the brilliance of God's countenance when he had some way of concealing some of it from him; as is done with a veil now, perhaps; it was he who told Moses to hide himself in the cleft of the rock, saying that he would pass by without a covering, and that he would prove by the reflection of his countenance on the rocks around him, that Moses' eyes could not look upon him, any more than we can look upon lightning; and perhaps

it was lightning that old Moses saw, for all I know. I understand that he is trying to say something similar to this; his purpose is to boast that his God is a very glorious person, as pagans boast of their Gods; but, of them all, your worthless sectarian god is the poorest subject of all the boasting. Great is the wisdom of men! they are too wise to worship the God that their own beloved Bible describes! Ha, ha, how can they expect anyone else that believes them to worship him?

B.—My senses are nearly stupefied by now, from dread and shame of such a God as I imagined; by all means, bring more light on the subject, if you can.

A.—Light, to be sure; what light do you expect from an atheist, I only tell you what is in your own Bible; or that which you say you have, but I almost profess that it is my Bible by now. It says that the Son is in the express image and likeness of the *person* of his Father: how can it be that you admit the Son is a person while denying the personage of his Father, when it says that they are both of the same image? my *wits* cannot comprehend it. If the Bible is true, the God that Jesus and Peter worshiped had a substantive body; but as for expecting the more godly wise men of our enlightened age to worship such a God as that, you will be disappointed, as they do nothing of the kind! They prefer to deny the existence of God completely, which they do, in fact, under a cover so that they, with their idol, are respected under the guise of worshipping a God without body, without parts, and without passions, which is a *nonentity*!

B.—I fear that your conclusions are remarkably scriptural and correct on this subject; let the result be what it will, I cannot escape them, although the expressions are considered figurative by many.

A.—Oh! I thought you had had enough of the figuratives a little while ago! how hard it is to leave old ways! According to all the atheists of the world, is not everything figurative, including those who feign religion as well? The Bible says God is love; yes, figuratively, say we all, since he has no *passions* he cannot love. Is anger a passion? Then the God of our forebears is constantly angry with the ungodly, but our new God in this age has no passion to love or to hate. Do I not reason fairly and scripturally?

B.—Entirely so, sir, and strange are the principles I hear from you. I have never heard any preacher who was a better scriptorian than you; you must have studied a great deal in the scriptures; and

it would be well for all preachers to search more into the scriptures, and less into the explanations that they expound with their “figurative language,” their own interpretations, and their erroneous and contradictory whims teaching atheism to the world wherever they walk.

A.—If there is strength in my reasoning, or light in my expressions it is not I who deserves the praise, rather the praise belongs entirely to him from whom I learned these things, namely, one of my knowledgeable friends who is so unfortunate as to have joined a short time ago those who are called “Latter-day Saints,” and whose beliefs for the most part are the foregoing.

B.—You mean the saints, the people who are called “Mormons?” It is not possible that those people believe principles like that! Look here! read in this paper a story that was written about them by the Reverend _____. If this is true, they do not believe our Bible, and this makes them a terribly evil people; read!

A.—Oh, never mind that, I can imagine what kind of rubbish it is, with the name “Reverend” under it, bearing in mind what I have already read about them by that respected class! The Revs. are the most persecuting enemies of the Saints now; as your Bible says, the same group constituted the nastiest persecutors of the same religion in the days of the deceivers in the land of Judea, with good reason too, for their deceit and their atheistic hypocrisy are exposed to the degree that the other group increases, and thus they foresee the danger of their craft, and they oppose it all they can. Oh no, writing *Rev.* at the end of a story does not create trust in their truthfulness any more; there is too much light for that to be the case any longer. Thus, do not condemn Mormonism, whatever it is, because the Revs. say it is false and evil: of the two choices I find it easier to believe the complete opposite of what the Revs. say; for, according to every account, that is what their kind does with the truth.

B.—Yet, sir, allowing that the Revs. are generally lying, when writing of their own religion, nevertheless, I would think that one can believe the history they write: like that story about some Joe Smith receiving golden plates on which the gospel was engraved from an angel. You and I both, I hope, are too wise to believe such deceit as that, as it smells too miraculous!

A.—Miraculous indeed! what is objectionable about the only

religion ever mentioned as being miraculous “from one end to the other” to people who profess to believe a Bible that is full of miracles? You are afraid of miracles, are you, while rejoicing in your religion of miracles, as you describe it; for either your entire Bible is a religion of miracles, or it does not have any. They cannot be divorced from one another; and here you all are mocking the one while professing the other, it seems, while they are equally inseparable! Our class of atheists would be ashamed to say that. The angel with the gold plates is what worries you; is that more miraculous than a God “without fingers,” who writes with his fingers on tablets and give them to Moses?

B.—Strange how good your memory is! I must admit that it is more miraculous.

A.—Can you tell me what became of those second tablets?

B.—I believe that God, after copies of the law became numerous, took them to heaven, or hid them in some safe place.

A.—This is exactly what the Mormons say was done with the gold plates; strange how similar to each other!

B.—Can you instruct me precisely concerning the religion of the Latter-day Saints, Sir?

A.—I am sorry I cannot, for I do not know much more about it; but doubtless my knowledgeable friend can.

B.—Be so good as to make me acquainted with your friend at the first opportunity. How accidental our meeting has been and how remarkable it is that an atheist has chased my supposed religiosity from me.

A.—With pleasure, sir; I will introduce you sooner than you expected perhaps, because he has been sitting by my side the whole time. Permit me Mr. Saint, to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Baptist, who is now ripe to hear the principles of the Latter-day Saints.

S.—I shall willingly inform you of the principles of the Latter-day Saint religion; it is a pleasure to reveal them to anyone who inquires about them; and it would be a blessing if more inquired about them, for I believe that any honest man who understands them would never oppose them. The motto of the Saints is “Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.” Sir [*said he, turning to the Baptist,*] you inquire about the establishment of our church; I am glad to be able to assure you that it was established in the same

manner as was every true church, namely, through revelation from God; its principles are those believed by patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, by age and eternity, and as unchanging as God himself; principles worthy of an omniscient and righteous author, beneficial to man and completely conformable to scripture and reason; briefly those are the principles we believe.

B.—I feel already some inclination to your side. The conversation I have had with your atheist friend has completely convinced me that the recent Christianity that fills our country and a large part of the world with its divisions, its numerous sects that believe different teachings, and their discord, is altogether unlike the primitive church described in the New Testament. And to tell all the truth plainly, I was forced to admit that the Christianity of our age is atheism disguised, and that it has been placed in a church that does not have the spiritual gifts: like a body without members, and it is good for nothing more than that! I must renounce such deceit in any event; but where shall I go? to what shall I turn? I believe the Bible is true; the imprint of its eternal Author is upon it. There is no hope of my enjoying true religion with any of the sects I know of, for I believed that I was with the best of them already; but now I see the deceit clearly. Oh, that I could understand how to worship truly the God of Abraham, that I could find the true Church of God as it was established by Jesus Christ and his inspired officers, such as the apostles of old, preaching the same gracious gospel by the “power of God,” and “in great assurance in the Holy Ghost.” I believe there is nothing I would not do to have such a religion as that, together with its gifts and witness!

S.—It is terribly strange also, that you cannot find the religion of the Bible anywhere, and you being in the “land of the Bibles!” that you cannot find the true Christianity in any corner of the country called the “garden of Christianity.” If it is thus, is it not high time that God send again a message to our world, and a restoration of the true religion?

B.—Yes indeed, it is high time; and that would be the greatest mercy that he could show to our world; and Oh! how all believers, especially preachers, would rejoice were they to have such a gospel as that to offer to their hearers. How blessed we would be were God to send a servant again with such a message as that.

S.—It is a great pleasure for me to testify solemnly to you, that such a man was the greatly despised Joseph Smith, that he has been called through revelation, ordained and sent exactly as you wished; that he preached the same gospel word for word, as Peter and Paul preached; that he established the same kind of church with exactly the same ordinances; and that he gave exactly the same kind of promises that God gave through Christ and his servants of old, to his church; and the obedient enjoy exactly the same blessings as they enjoyed at that time. And furthermore, I testify to you that you yourself can have them if you do that which Christ asked his listeners to do to receive them; and because of this the old persecuting passion of the false religionists of the world are stirred up to persecute; and they recite the exact same untruthful tales to try to blacken the character of the Latter-day Saints, precisely as they did to the early Saints, and purposely to keep honest men from listening to them. As a host of prophets did before him, so did Joseph Smith: he correctly taught the message given him; he walked in paths of truth and godliness; and I am a witness of that! He kept the faith, and ran the race bravely, and finished his work, and finished his course with God's respect, and that of every lover of true religion! The false teachers of his age shouted false prophet, deceiver, madman, and every other false accusation their brethren shouted earlier after his Lord and his brethren, because of the exact same testimony; and like hounds out of the underworld, they were not satisfied until they drank the blood of his heart! And I am certain that the earth has not drunk, and the claws of the devil have not been stained with blood more innocent, except one, since Abel, during the age of the world. And I exhort you to be baptized by one of the Saints, and I assure you in the name of the God of Abraham, Jesus Christ, Peter, Paul, and Joseph, that you shall receive, by the laying on of hands, the "gift of the Holy Ghost," exactly as the Saints of old received it;—may the Lord strengthen you to do that quickly. See, the carriage has arrived at the end of my journey; farewell, until we meet again.