

J34 [JONES, Dan.] *Llyfr Mormon, ei darddiad. Traethawd 1^{af}*. (The Book of Mormon, its origin. First treatise.) *Swansea: Printed and published by D. Jones, [1855?]*.

12 pp. 17.6 cm. *Welsh Mormon Writings* 95.

At the end of this treatise, Dan Jones boldly announces his intention to publish a series of pamphlets about the Book of Mormon: "It is intended to prove the truth of the Book of Mormon and defend it against the false accusations of the so-called 'Priests' and others, through various treatises as soon as it is convenient" (p. 12). It appears, however, that only one more was ever published (see **J35**).

In Wales, attacks on the Book of Mormon increased in proportion to the growth of the Church. An exasperated Jones exclaimed on page 2: "Never before has there been a book . . . which has had so much said against it by those who know so little about it, as the Book of Mormon."

The first half of the treatise consists of a general survey of the Book of Mormon's reception since its publication twenty-five years earlier. Some of the opposition to it in Wales is mentioned, but few details are given. On pages 4 and 5, there is a bit of borrowing from Orson Pratt's 1850 *Divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon*.

The second half is a translation of the early history of Joseph Smith, as written by Orson Pratt in his *Remarkable visions* (Edinburgh, 1840). Jones had used this material on two previous occasions—once in the July 1846 *Prophet of the Jubilee* (pp. 17–21) and again in his *History of the Latter-day Saints* (pp. 14–20, **J12**).

THE BOOK OF MORMON, ITS ORIGIN.



EVER since the Book of Mormon first appeared to the world, the pastors and reverends of the people have fought against it with all their might; the authors importuned with their own fabricated tales, until the people's ears were aching with their noise as they shouted, "Impostors, false teachers, false prophets, fools, clever tricksters, liars," &c., &c.; and this has echoed from the tongues of believers, drunks, and blasphemers, learned and unlearned. By now they have voiced and repeated these words to the point of nearly stunning the world, and they have been useful, unwittingly, to warn the people about it; and in the midst of all the tumult, those who are honest in their principles, who are searching for the truth, are asking them, what is the reason for all this strange commotion? Why is everyone, from every party and non-party, large and small, rich and poor, in every country, joining together to oppose this book? The only answer that could be obtained from them would be:—"O, we know very well what is the matter; some little deceitful and unlearned men have come into our midst, like the apostles of old, testifying that angels have appeared to some men in these days; they profess to receive revelations, miracles, &c., as if it were necessary to restore to our midst in this enlightened age the belief of the early ages, and that faith that was once given to the saints; and by doing so they endanger all the numerous religions and sects that our godly fathers have given us, which they have built upon the foundation of the wisdom of all the theologians and great men of the world, independent of the Spirit of God, and all its works; this is the reason" (they say); and then with one cry they lift up their voice, shouting, "Great is sectarian wisdom, great and excellent are the new forms of the theological creeds of this age; great is the capability of our uninspired pastors, those who wish to know nothing but their own imaginings and opinions, and it is remark-

[Price 1c.]

able how they drown us with alluring words of sectarian wisdom that do not explain the Spirit and power, for those are not necessary now; otherwise our faith would be established on the power of God instead of on the wisdom of the learned men." No wonder, then, that it is so difficult to get the common people, in the midst of such tumult and stupor, to listen or believe even the best, sweetest, and most remarkable news that has ever been offered them.

There has never been a book, I think, that has had so many things said about it by those who knew so little about it as the Book of Mormon. In every country where it goes, the ears of the common people are filled with stories and tales as numerous and diverse as their authors, and, as a result, contradictory; many of them have been published and preached by those who have never seen the book; others by those who have cast a glance here and there in it for the purpose of finding fault; and not infrequently, quotes from it are seen that have been greatly twisted and stretched. Some describe it as an imaginary tale; others say that it is a new Bible, to detract from the old. Some condemn it as the most worthless tissue of foolishness they have ever seen; others say that it is the most skillful deceit ever known to man. Some find fault with it for being too similar to the Bible, testifying together with it, and therefore unnecessary; but others assert that it is deceit because it is not sufficiently similar to the Bible. Some condemn the principles it contains as being immoral, completely evil and blasphemous; but others of their brethren proclaim in their faces that the principles teach morality, virtue, and holiness, as if it had been composed for the purpose of deceiving in that way. Among others, one minister went to all the trouble of publishing a 60-page treatise against the Book of Mormon, accusing it mercilessly of containing some strange mixture of a fool, "*of faith and works, of God's mercies, and of requesting obedience from his creatures.*" Some of the reverends of the age have proclaimed that its idiom, its language, and its contents prove its antiquity; and others of the same group, that it bears every characteristic of recent fabrication. Some fail to comprehend what use it can be, or the way to prove its truthfulness, for it lacks prophecies yet to be fulfilled, by which they could prove its divinity; others quote abundantly from the prophecies that are in it, and they condemn it for being too clear: that is not how the old prophets

did it, they say.

The Book of Mormon has been published in Welsh, with thousands of them in the hands of our compatriots for some years, and despite this there are men so presumptuous and shameless as to publish pamphlets, lectures, and accusations about it that are so clearly false that we are unable to believe that they did so in their ignorance. Pamphlets are put in our hands now and again that profess to describe this book, its contents, its origin, and the story of its translator, together with the authors' verdicts and curses on them. These are contradictory to the truths about these things known to this author, and to thousands of others throughout the country, that it appears they have purposefully weaved them and twisted them into a veil to hide the truth from the sight of the researcher. And among the number of those that are before us now, we read names of the following respected (?) authors:—"C. F. Harries, A. B., scholar of Jesus College in Oxford and a curate of Merthyr Tydfil," on which he professes to be the translator of the work of another Reverend by the name of "T. B. Ashley." Another general reverend in this army is the "Rev. Wm. Rowlands, Curate, Merthyr," who made the contents of the above into a catechism. Besides these we have bits of the same flavor from the "*Penny Magazine*," and English pamphlets published by the "Pamphlets Society of the Church of England," besides others too numerous to name: all the fruit of the brains of the "laymen"—all contradicting each other, and all claiming to tell the truth! Well, what is to be done with them? After reading all of them carefully, we think sometimes that they are too dull to review, yet there may possibly be some so dull as to believe them; sometimes we think that they contradict each other so clearly that no one could believe any of them; but perhaps the reader of the one does not see the other. We see the danger of the influence of the word "Reverends" that greases their lies so they slide down the throats of some men without their chewing them. This danger prompts us to refute their false accusations; yet, we have such a number of truths so important and beneficial to publish that it seems a blatant misuse of valuable time to go into much detail concerning the rubbish of these people. We are persuaded that the best way to proceed is to publish a short and clear summary of that which we know is truthful about the *Book of Mormon*, its

translator, its *translation*, its *contents*, and our *refutations* to the false accusations that are brought against it. And in this manner, lovers of the truth will be able to judge properly the two sides.

What excuse all these zealous “Reverends” will give when they stand before their Judge for their false accusations and their malicious lies against this book, or what reason anyone will give for believing professed enemies instead of believing the professors of any religion, I fail to understand, and it is worthy of serious consideration on their part. Preachers of every denomination give loud warnings not to believe the assertions of their enemies about their tenets, and at the same time they try to get everyone to believe all they say about “Mormonism.” What else but lies were ever obtained from men with such titles against divine religion? What else is to be obtained now, or ever to be expected? Reader! beware of them for the sake of your soul!

The Book of Mormon claims to have been written by inspired men from time to time on the American continent, the last of which hid it in the earth after receiving a promise from God that it would be revealed in the last days by the power of God. It claims also to have been translated to the English language by inspiration, and it contains a divine message, obedience to which will save, and disobedience to which will condemn everyone who has the chance to understand it.

Now, the Book of Mormon must of necessity either be *true* or *false*. If it is true, it contains a message of great importance to this age that bears a connection with our highest interest, both temporal and eternal, to the same degree that the fate of the antediluvian world was contained in the message of Noah. If false, it is one of the most cunning, deep-laid, ungodly, bold, and wicked impositions ever presented to men, calculated to deceive and ruin millions who believe in the word of God until they are destroyed for eternity. Which of the two is it? A rigid examination of it has proved to hundreds of thousands that it is true, and proper obedience to it will prove to every man that it is the word of God—notwithstanding all the claims of the false priests of the world to the contrary. Its enemies place great importance on the character of its translator, and claim they can refute the Book through lying tales against his character; but our logic does not allow the accusations of enemies

as a correct standard to judge the character of this man or any other of God's servants in the early ages; it is the right of God himself to choose his instruments, and it was the characteristic right and practice of his contemporaries to try to blacken their characters, because they could not refute their message with truths; but God chose the "weak things of the world" *in the sight of the priests* as missionaries in the early ages, "that the excellency of the power would be of God, and not of men;" and thus, instead of refuting the message of this person, by trying to debase his character, they proved his similarity to the early missionaries of God, and their own similarity to their brethren who maligned them.

If the truthfulness of a religion depended on the character of its establisher, the priests of the Church of England should be the last to utter a word about that. For if all they said were true the devil would be ashamed, and perhaps even the priests were they to see a portrayal of the character of Henry VIII, *the establisher of their church*, as compared with the character of the translator of the Book of Mormon; and they asserted that they have already blushed at the mention of the character of their grandmother, "the great Whore," and they are ashamed to claim the character of their own sectarian daughters, which they have excluded from their family. And is it those of that nature who talk about *character!* Let them cast the first stones! "Whore shouts whore first," says the old proverb, just as in this case. But more about that later to their shame.

Since we were acquainted for years with that person who had the sublime privilege of being an instrument in the hand of God to establish his kingdom on the earth in these latter days; we have heard the account from his own lips; we have seen his life and his behavior; we have associated with him in private and in public, and with his family at his peaceful hearth; we have been by his side in the midst of mobs of cruel enemies who attempted to take his life because of this testimony; we were with him in the jail on the forty-seventh time he was imprisoned for his religion; we have heard his witness in the depth of the jail, within the iron doors, where he was cast on the charges of treason against the government, for preaching from Dan. ii, 44. Since we know that he, without *judge* or *jury*, sealed his testimony with his blood—his testimony of the coming of an angel with this message to him: since we heard that from his

lips in his last hour, how can we doubt it? Hundreds of cruel men, most of them drunk, with blackened faces and roaring at him, killed him and his brother, without having a single inquiry into the matter according to the law of the land. Scores of bullets were shot at them in the room through the windows and the door. Four struck him, and the same number struck his brother; and we know that they died as martyrs completely innocent of all the charges we heard about them the length and breadth of the world. If it is the work of the devil and his instruments to persecute, kill, and spread lies in every age, against what kind of men do they fight? "A kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand." Thus say all reasonable men. Since we had all these advantages, and knew the importance of this matter to a great extent, would it not be a sin for us to refrain from declaring to our compatriots these new, remarkable, godly, and blessed truths? We shall give, then, a brief synopsis of this work, of the manner, the way, and the time that Joseph Smith received this great privilege. Do not be surprised, reader, for that is his name; or "old Joe Smith, the false prophet, the wicked, presumptuous, foolish, and clever deceiver," &c., &c., as the enemies of the truth, and the numerous family of prejudice call him. The less they know him, the greater their animosity toward him; and indeed, I was the same way to an extent, until I was forced to believe by careful research and by my association with him, that he was not the wicked man I had heard he was.

Joseph Smith was born in the town of Sharon, Windsor County, state of Vermont, in the United States of America, on the 23rd of December, 1805. When he was ten years old, his parents with their family moved to Palmyra, in the state of New York. They resided in this county about eleven years, the latter part of the time in the town of Manchester. They were farmers by occupation. Joseph's advantages, and consequently his knowledge of the different branches of learning, were exceedingly small, amounting only to being able to read, write, and do a little arithmetic. Between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, he began to seriously reflect upon the necessity of preparing for his future state of existence; but how to do so was a question as yet undetermined to his satisfaction in his own mind. It seemed to him to be a question of infinite importance, insofar as the salvation of his soul depended upon a correct understanding of

it. If he could not find the right way to it, then he saw that it would be impossible for him to walk in it, except by chance—venturing toward the just Judge, and resting all he had on chance. This was something that he was unwilling to do. If he inquired with the various religious denominations, each would refer him to their own particular tenets, saying, “This is the way, walk in it.” He discovered they had many things that were in direct opposition to one another. It seemed reasonable to him that God would organize only one way to be saved; and consequently, he could not believe that of all the different churches in the world any but *one* was the true church of God, and that one would have to be built on the same foundation, believe the same doctrine, practice the same ordinances, be bound in the same Spirit, and bring forth the same fruit as the early church, before God would approve it in this age. And since he could not rely on such changing and different foundations for eternal life, he determined to search the scriptures carefully and without bias. He continued in this manner for a period of time, believing what he read. In the midst of the various wonderful truths which studded its pages and delighted his heart, hardly one caught his attention more than the following:—“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” It is difficult to describe what joy this valuable promise caused him, when he saw that it was the privilege of all men to ask, yes, and with the certainty of receiving from God the knowledge that was so essential in order to walk uprightly in the way of truth, and put an end to the difficult argument which was in his thoughts. This was like a light shining forth in a dark place, to guide him to the path he wished to tread; and consequently, he decided to retire to a secret place in the woods, a little way from his father’s house, to pray to God to fulfill this valuable promise, and show him which of all the denominations was the church of Jesus Christ. After kneeling there, and beginning the important task of calling on the Lord with all his heart, he was tempted (apparently) by the powers of darkness, in many ways, to think that his prayer was not being heard, and that such a thing is not to be had now; but he continued more and more fervently to seek for deliverance, until the darkness began to disperse from his mind, and he was able to pray as if in the strength of the Spirit, and in unwavering faith. While continuing to

pour out his soul to God in this way for an answer to his prayer, he soon saw a light shining wondrously in the sky above him; he strove even more to pray, and the light was descending gradually towards him, and as it drew near, it increased in brilliance and magnitude so that, by the time it reached the tops of the trees, the wood seemed to be illuminated in a brilliant and glorious manner around him. At first he expected to see the boughs and the leaves being scorched around him. But since it did not have that effect on them, he was encouraged to be able to withstand the brilliance. It continued thus to descend slowly, until it reached the earth, and he was enveloped in the midst of it. When it first came upon him, it produced strange sensations throughout his whole system, and immediately his mind was caught away from the objects with which he was surrounded, as in a heavenly vision. He saw two glorious personages, who resembled each other in their features or likeness. They told him his sins were forgiven. He was informed upon the matters about which he was inquiring, and which had caused him such mental anguish—that all the religious denominations in the country believed imperfect doctrines, to a greater or a lesser degree, and that consequently God did not acknowledge any of them as his church; even though many of them were zealous, conscientious, God-fearing men, fleeing evil, and worshiping him according to the light which they had. He was commanded not to join any of them. He received a promise that the true doctrine—the fulness of the gospel, should, at some future time, be restored to him; and after these things, the vision disappeared, leaving his mind overflowing with indescribable peace and joy. Some time after having received these divine manifestations, his mind was overtaken somewhat by the desires of youth, of which he afterwards sincerely repented before God.

On the 21st of September, 1823, it pleased the merciful and gracious God not only to hear, but also to answer the prayers of Joseph Smith. Having retired to rest, as usual, his mind was set in fervent prayer, and the earnest desire of his soul was to have the fellowship of some divine messenger who would announce to him his acceptance with God, and unfold to him the principles of the religion of Christ, according to the promise he had received in the former vision. While he persisted thus before the throne of God, endeavoring to

exercise faith in the promises which were so sweet to his soul, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a purer and far more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room. The first sight was as if the house were filled with consuming fire! Such a sudden appearance of a light so bright occasioned a shock to his whole body; but it was soon followed by such joy and rapture that he desired with all his heart to associate with the cause of it. Thereupon, a glorious personage appeared before him. And notwithstanding the brightness of the light which filled the room, some divine rays of an even more intense and glorious light again surrounded this personage! Though his countenance was as lightning, yet love and innocence were so clearly marked on it that every fear was banished from the mind, and the soul was pervaded by its image. His stature was a little above the common size of men in this age: his garment was as white as snow, and had the appearance of being without any manner of seam. This luminous being spoke to him, saying he was an angel of God, sent forth by commandment to communicate to him that his sins were forgiven, that his prayers were heard, and also to bring him the good tidings of great joy, namely, that the time was at hand for the Lord to fulfill the covenant which he had made with ancient Israel, concerning their posterity—that the great, wondrous, and strange work God had promised to fulfill on the earth, as a preparation for the second coming of the Messiah, was about to commence; and also, that the time was at hand for the gospel to be preached in its fulness to all the nations, that a people might be prepared in holiness and faith to be worthy of enjoying his glorious resting place, in his victorious reign on the new and restored earth.

Joseph was also informed that he was chosen and called to be an instrument in God's hand to bring forth the wondrous work of this glorious dispensation. It was made manifest to him that the "American Indians" were a remnant of Israel; that when they first came to the continent they were a people of beautiful and pleasant aspect, possessing a knowledge of the only true God, enjoying his favor, and receiving peculiar blessings from his hand; that the prophets and inspired writers among them had written an account of the most remarkable of God's dispensations to them, from age to age, for many generations, until they were overcome by the judgments of God for their wickedness, and the greatest part of them were

destroyed; but that the records which contained their history (through the commandment of God to one of their last prophets) had been hidden, to protect them from the wicked men who sought to destroy them. He said these records contained many divine revelations, pertaining to the gospel of the kingdom, as well as prophecies about the remarkable, glorious and dreadful things which would be fulfilled in the last days. And it was so that God could fulfill his promises to his ancients who wrote the records, and accomplish his purpose in their restitution, &c., that these records were to be brought forth. If Joseph were faithful, he would have the privilege of being an instrument in bringing these holy mysteries to the light. The angel gave him a solemn warning to remember always to do everything for the glory of God. These records would not be entrusted to anyone who sought his own aggrandizement, glory and benefit through them. After advising him to live righteously, to be of upright principle in the service of God, and showing him many things past and to come, too numerous to mention here, the angel departed, and the light and glory of God withdrew with him, leaving Joseph's mind calm and joyous, to ponder the things he had heard and seen. But before morning, the vision was twice repeated, instructing him further and in greater detail concerning the great and wondrous work God was about to perform on earth.

In the morning, he went out to his work as usual; but soon the vision was repeated once again, and the angel appeared before him; and having been informed by the previous visions concerning the place where the records were hidden, he was commanded to go there forthwith to view them. Immediately, leaving his tasks, he went to the place where he was instructed.

We shall give a brief description of that place where the records lay, in the words of a gentleman by the name of Oliver Cowdery, who subsequently visited the spot. "On the east side of the common road which leads from the town of Palmyra, Wayne County, to Candandaigua, Ontario County, in the state of New York (U.S.A.), about four miles before reaching the little town of Manchester, there is a large hill—I say large, because it is as large as, if not larger than, any in those environs." After giving a detailed description of the hill, he adds—"It was near the top of it, on the east side, that the [afore-mentioned] records were found. When I visited the spot in 1830,

there were several trees growing there, enough to provide shade from the heat of summer, but not so numerous as to prevent grass from growing. How deep in the earth the records were hidden it is difficult to say; but from the fact that they had been some fourteen hundred years lying there, on the side of a hill so steep, it could be imagined that they were several feet below the surface when they were put there, since it is natural for the surface to wear away, more or less, in that length of time; although it would not wear as much near the summit as lower down, perhaps. In this place a hole had been dug. A stone with a smooth upper surface filled the bottom; around its edges was a sort of *cement* in which were placed erect four thin stones along the outer edges of the lower stone. All of them when placed like this formed a box, and the corners were filled carefully with *cement* so that the moisture from without was prevented from entering. The inner surfaces of the other stones were also smooth. This box was sufficiently large to admit a breastplate, such as was used by the ancients to protect the chest from the arrows of the enemies. From the bottom of the box, resting on the breastplate, arose three pillars composed of the same *cement* as was in the sides. Upon these three pillars lay the records. This box was covered with another stone, the bottom surface being flat and the upper crowning. When Mr. Smith visited the place on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1823, the upper surface of the stone was visible, but its sides were concealed by soil and grass; so it is evident that, although it is not known how deep they were hidden in the first place, the time had been sufficient for the earth to be worn away from them and bring them into view. When once directed, it was easy for him to find them, although they were not so remarkable as to draw the attention of anyone passing by. After reaching the spot with some effort, he lifted the uppermost stone and, to his great surprise, his eyes beheld the wondrous contents of the box."

Many more instructions and pieces of information were given by the mouth of the angel to Mr. Smith, which are too lengthy to publish here. During the period of the four following years, he frequently received revelations from the mouths of heavenly messengers; and on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into his hands. And now, reader, what really makes these truths seem more unreasonable or incredible in our

times, than it was for those heavenly messengers to do similar things to others in former times? I venture to say that no one who believes the one can produce an answer, nor offer an objection to the other, only the unfounded tales of tradition and prejudice. Yet, we do not ask anyone to depend *entirely* on the *testimony* of Joseph Smith for the truth of this, any more than we do; but hundreds of thousands are alive now in every corner of the earth, and hundreds now in Wales, who have received sufficient *testimonies from* God according to his promise, that it is true; and not only that, but every man of honest heart who obeys this eternal gospel, will also receive witnesses from God for themselves that it is true, which is a more certain way to understand what was the character of Joseph Smith than by believing the tales of his enemies. Is this not a valuable promise? Then prove it, and you will see that it is true that God has restored the gospel through the Book of Mormon.

✍ *It is intended to prove the truthfulness of the BOOK OF MORMON and to defend it against the false accusations of the "Priests," and others that were mentioned, by publishing several pamphlets as soon as it is convenient.*

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