

regard to the coming forth of what we now call the Book of Mormon, and that he had seen the plates from which it would be translated. Manchester is from 80 to 100 miles from Hardwicks in a direct line, and in the last-named place the "Manuscript" still remained hidden in an old trunk in a garret, no one knowing or expecting that recourse would be had to it for such a base purpose.

Joseph continued to live with his father's family. It is not until 1825, that we have any account of his leaving home for any length of time; until then, when not employed on the farm, he hired out by the day to his neighbors in Manchester and vicinity.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGINATOR OF THE SPAULDING STORY.

DOCTOR PHILASTUS HURLBURT was the originator or inventor of the "Spaulding Story."

He was not a doctor by profession, but his mother gave him that name because he was the seventh son, a very common custom in some parts at the time he was born.

Those who adopt his fabrication with regard to the authorship of the Book of Mormon would have people believe that he really was a doctor. It gives an air of respectability to their tale, and tends to make the public think that he must have been a man of good education, though he really was not.

We will now give some statements with regard to his life, and the causes that led to the invention of the desperate lie, regarding the Book of Mormon, which has tended to deceive so many people. These statements are, for the most part, abridged from the writings of one who was intimately acquainted with him.

Hurlburt embraced the gospel in 1832. Previous to this he had been a local preacher in the Methodist church, but had been expelled therefrom for unchaste conduct. Soon after his baptism he went to Kirtland, where he was ordained an Elder. In the Spring of 1833, he labored and preached in Pennsylvania. Here his self-importance, pride and other undesirable traits of conduct soon shook the confidence of the members of the Church in him as a man of God; and before long his unvirtuous habits were so plainly manifested that he was cast off from the Church, and his license taken from him by the conference.

Some may here ask, "How is it that men who leave the Church of Christ and come out in opposition to its truths are so often proven to have previously been men of immoral lives?" The answer is plain and simple: pure, honest, virtuous men do not apostatize and turn against the principles of the gospel. They remain faithful. But men who have been wicked, and who do not sincerely repent when they enter the Church, though they may profess to do so, are very apt to turn aside and fight against God's cause. It is for this reason that so many men of Hurlburt's stamp have, unfortunately for them, been proven to have led very wicked lives before their baptism. Had their repentance been sincere, their after lives would have been different.

Hurlburt went to Kirtland, the seat of the government of the Church, and appealed to the general conference. His case was there reconsidered, and because of his confession and apparent repentance his license was restored to him.

On his way back to Pennsylvania he stopped in Ohio. There he attempted to seduce a young lady, but his design was frustrated. For this crime he was expelled from the Church. Finding he would be tolerated by the Saints no longer, he determined to be revenged by injuring them to the utmost extent of his power. He went to Springfield, Pennsylvania, and commenced to preach against "Mormonism." Here he was received with open arms by those who were vainly endeavoring to stay the progress of God's work in that region, and churches, chapels and meeting houses were crowded to hear him.

He was now dubbed the Rev. Mr. Hurlburt, and was petted and patronized by priest and people; but for all that he did very little in staying the progress of the truth. As an anti-"Mormon" lecturer he was a failure.

During his stay in Pennsylvania, Hurlburt formed many acquaintances, and mingled with all sorts of people. While in a small settlement called Jackson, he became familiar with a family of the same name, (possibly the persons who had given the name to the settlement). Some of this family had been acquainted with the now widely-known Mr. Solomon Spaulding, and from them Hurlburt learned that that gentleman had once written a romance called the "Manuscript Found," which professed to recount the history of the ancient inhabitants of this continent.

Hurlburt had now given himself up to the work of opposing "Mormonism." He quickly perceived that this romance could be used as a weapon to carry on the warfare. If he could obtain possession of it and find any points in common between it and the Book of Mormon he could exaggerate those seeming resemblances and falsify other statements. If he found no agreement between the two he could contrive to have the "Manuscript Found" accidentally (?) destroyed and then claim that its contents were almost identical with the record of Mormon. He found it necessary to pursue the latter course.

In carrying out his design he repaired to Kirtland, and there made an appointment to deliver a lecture, calling upon all who were opposed to "Mormonism" to attend. They did so in force. At this lecture Hurlburt told his audience that in his travels in the State of Pennsylvania, lecturing against "Mormonism," he had learned that one Mr. Spaulding had written a romance, and the probability was that it had by some means fallen into the hands of Sidney Rigdon, and that he had transformed it into the Book of Mormon. Hurlburt further stated that he intended to write a book, and call it "Mormonism Unveiled," in which he would reveal the whole secret.

His anti-"Mormon" hearers were delighted. One mobocrat, a Campbellite, advanced the sum of \$300 towards

the prosecution of the work. Others contributed for the same purpose, and Hurlburt, being thus provided with funds, at once proceeded to hunt up the manuscript.

With this view he journeyed to New Salem or Conneaut Ohio, the place where Mr. Spaulding formerly resided. There he called a meeting and made known his intentions. His harangues created quite a stir. He told the same story about the manuscript and Sidney Rigdon that he had told in Kirtland. The idea was new to his hearers, but as it was something which was to destroy "Mormonism," they did not object to it, and some helped him with more money. He was here advised to visit Mrs. Davison, formerly the wife of Mr. Spaulding, who now resided at Monson, Massachusetts. This he determined to do.

It should here be mentioned that the gospel had already been preached with considerable success in the neighborhood of New Salem; and though it was the place where the "Manuscript Found" was written, the Spaulding story was never dreamed of there until Hurlburt mentioned it. But it was too good a thing for those who had rejected the truth to let pass. It afforded them some slight excuse for not receiving the doctrines of "Mormonism." Such persons clutched at it eagerly, as drowning men are said to grasp at straws. Nevertheless the work of the Lord did not stand still in those parts. Numbers were afterwards baptized in that very section, so little effect had Hurlburt's fabrication upon the minds of the people.

Hurlburt at once carried out the advice given to him by his New Salem acquaintances. He proceeded to Monson, called on Mrs. Davison, and by representing his wishes in his own unscrupulous and untruthful manner obtained from her the writings of her former husband. Further she told him that there was a trunk somewhere in the state of New York that also contained papers which he might have, if they were found to suit his purpose, and according to the latest version of the story it was from that trunk that Hurlburt obtained the "Manuscript Found."

Mrs. Davison positively asserts that she gave Hurlburt the original of the "Manuscript Found," either directly, or

through her order to Mr. Clark, and that he promised to publish it, which however he never did. He claimed that *it did not read as he expected*, or he found nothing that *would suit his purpose*. In this he for once undoubtedly told the truth. Quite lately, however, he has made the following affidavit.

“GIBSONBURG, OHIO,

January 10th, 1881.

“*To all whom it may concern:*

“In the year eighteen hundred and thirty-four (1834), I went from Geauga county, Ohio, to Monson, Hampden county, Mass., where I found Mrs. Davison, late widow of the Rev. Solomon Spaulding, late of Conneaut, Ashtabula county, Ohio. Of her I obtained a manuscript, supposing it to be the manuscript of the romance written by the said Solomon Spaulding, called the ‘Manuscript Found,’ which was reported to be the foundation of the ‘Book of Mormon.’ I did not examine the manuscript till I got home, when upon examination I found it to contain nothing of the kind, but being a manuscript upon an entirely different subject. This manuscript I left with E. D. Howe, of Painsville, Geauga county, Ohio, now Lake county, Ohio, with the understanding that when he had examined it he should return it to the widow. Said Howe says the manuscript was destroyed by fire, and further the deponent saith not.

(Signed)

“D. P. HURLBURT.”

Mrs. Davison says Hurlburt obtained the “Manuscript Found.” He, in the above, says it was nothing of the kind, but *was a manuscript upon an entirely different subject*. What was that subject? Hurlburt in his original statement says, (these are his own words,) “It is a romance, purporting to have been translated from the Latin, found on twenty-four rolls of parchment, in a cave, but written in modern style—giving a fabulous account of a ship 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.”

Such is his description of the manuscript he received. No wonder it did not suit his purpose. No work treating on the ancient inhabitants of America could be more unlike the

Book of Mormon than this. But Mrs. Davison says this was the original of the "Manuscript Found." We regard it altogether more probable that this was the plot of Mr. Spaulding's romance than the ten tribe version, which we consider to be a later invention, manufactured by some ignorant anti-"Mormon," who really imagined that the Book of Mormon conveyed that idea. We have nothing more than unauthenticated gossip for the assertion that Mr. Spaulding ever believed that the American Indians were of Israelitish descent. In fact, it is stated that during the later years of that gentleman's life he was strongly inclined to infidelity.

If the papers given to Hurlburt contained the "Manuscript Found," as stated by Mrs. Davison, we know what became of it, if we can believe D. P. Hurlburt. It was burned so that it might never be brought up to confront those who claim that in it is to be found the origin of the Book of Mormon. If Hurlburt did not receive it, Mrs. Davison must have retained it. Then what became of it? Solomon Spaulding's family could have no possible motive for not publishing it. To them it would have been a mine of wealth; at least they thought so, as evidenced by the agreement between Mrs. Davison and Hurlburt, that she was to have half of the profits accruing from its publication, as hereafter shown in her interview with Mr. Haven.

There is another fact that strongly bears out Mrs. Davison's statement. It is this, that it is highly improbable that Mr. Spaulding would write two entirely distinct and varying romances on the ancient inhabitants of America. We never hear of him writing more than one on this subject. If then the Roman story was not the "Manuscript," what was it? It certainly in many particulars agrees with the statements of those who profess to know something about Mr. Spaulding's writings. Both (if there were two) are said to have been written in the Latin language; both were found, supposedly, in a cave near Conneaut, Ohio. This is altogether unlikely. The evidence, we believe, to be overwhelming that Hurlburt did receive the "Manuscript Found," and not finding it what he wanted, he destroyed it or had it destroyed.

We have previously referred to the Jacksons of Jackson settlement, Pennsylvania, from whom Hurlburt first heard of Mr. Spaulding's writings. In justice to Mr. Jackson it must be stated that on one occasion Hurlburt called on him and asked him to sign a document which testified to the probability of Mr. Spaulding's manuscript having been converted into the Book of Mormon. This he indignantly refused to do. He had read both books and knew there was no likeness between them. He then and there stated that there was no agreement between the two; adding that Mr. Spaulding's manuscript was a very small work in the form of a novel, which said not one word about the children of Israel, but professed to give an account of a race of people who originated from the Romans, which Mr. Spaulding said he had translated from a Latin parchment that he had found. The Book of Mormon, Mr. Jackson continued, purports to be written by a branch of the house of Israel; it is written in a different style, and is altogether different. For this reason he refused to lend his name to the lie, and expressed his indignation and contempt at Hurlburt's base and wicked project to deceive the public.

Mr. Jackson's recollection of the plot of the "Manuscript Found" tallies exactly with Hurlburt's description of the contents of the manuscript he received from Mrs. Davison, and is confirmatory evidence of the truth of her statement, that she gave the work to Hurlburt. It is also the strongest kind of testimony in favor of the theory that Spaulding's romance had nothing Israelitish in its narrative, but was Roman from beginning to end, in detail, incident, language, writing, parchment and all.

To return to Hurlburt's work; those who were anxious that it should be published, discovered that it would be better that it should not appear in his name, his reputation having grown too bad. The manuscript was therefore sold to Mr. Howe of Painesville, Ohio, for \$500 and was published by him. It did not prove a financial success, its circulation was but small. Mr. Howe eventually offered the copies at half price, but they would not sell even at that reduction. Hurlburt rapidly spent his ill-gotten gains in drink, and for many years bore a most

undesirable reputation. He is now an old man, residing at Gibsonburg, Ohio.

The following remarks regarding D. P. Hurlburt, are from the writings of the late Elder Joseph E. Johnson

"In the year A. D. 1833, then living in Kirtland, Ohio, I became acquainted with a man subsequently known as Dr. Hurlburt. He was a man of fine physique, very pompous, good looking and very ambitious, with some energy, though of poor education. Soon after his arrival he came to my mother's house to board, where he remained for nearly a year. While there he made an effort to get into a good practice of medicine, sought position in the Church, and was ever striving to make marital connection with any of the 'first families.'

"Finally in 1834, he was charged with illicit intercourse with the other sex; was tried and cut off the Church. He denied, expostulated, threatened, but of no use, the facts were too apparent, and he at once vowed himself the enemy of the Church—threatened to write a book that would annihilate 'Mormonism,' and went to Painesville, ten miles, and allied himself to a publisher there, who agreed to print his book if he would furnish the matter. A fund was raised by the anti-'Mormons' in the village around, and enough means raised to send Hurlburt east to hunt up and obtain the writings of Solomon Spaulding, called the 'Manuscript Found', which had already become famous as the alleged matter from which the Book of Mormon was written.

"Hurlburt went east and was absent some two or three months—and on his return publicly declared that *he could not obtain it*, but instead brought several affidavits from persons who claimed to have heard Solomon Spaulding read his 'Manuscript Found' in 1812, and believed, as well as they could remember, that the matter and story were the same as printed in the Book of Mormon. And these were published in his book of 'Mormonism Exposed,' in that or the subsequent year, but not a sentence from the 'Manuscript Found,' which it appears that *he did really obtain*, but finding no similarity between the two, suppressed the Spaulding manuscript, while he publicly announced in his book that he had entirely failed to obtain it. Hurlburt proved himself to be a man of gross immorality and was untruthful and unreliable."