

## CHAPTER III.

## THE BOGUS AFFIDAVIT.

THE next noteworthy person who entered upon the crusade against the Book of Mormon was a Congregationalist minister of Holliston, Massachusetts, named Storrs.

This man was greatly annoyed at the loss of some of the best members of his congregation through the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and in his anger published to the world what he asserted was the affidavit of the widow of Solomon Spaulding, but which she afterwards repudiated, as shown from the following article published in the Quincy (Illinois) *Whig* shortly after the appearance of the bogus affidavit:

“A CUNNING DEVICE DETECTED.

“It will be recollected that a few months since an article appeared in several of the papers, purporting to give an account of the origin of the Book of Mormon. How far the writer of that piece has effected his purposes, or what his purposes were in pursuing the course he has, I shall not attempt to say at this time, but shall call upon every candid man to judge in this matter for himself, and shall content myself by presenting before the public the other side of the question in the form of a letter, as follows:

“Copy of a letter written by Mr. John Haven, of Holliston, Middlesey Co., Massachusetts, to his daughter, Elizabeth Haven, of Quincy, Adams Co., Illinois.

“Your brother Jesse passed through Monson, where he saw Mrs. Davison and her daughter, Mrs. McKinstry, and also Dr. Ely, and spent several hours with them, during which time he asked them the following questions, viz.:

Question.—‘Did you, Mrs. Davison, write a letter to John Storrs, giving an account of the origin of the Book of Mormon?’

Answer.—‘I did not.’

Q.—‘Did you sign your name to it?’

A.—‘I did not, neither did I ever see the letter until I saw it in the *Boston Recorder*, the letter was never brought to me to sign.’

Q.—‘What agency had you in having this letter sent to Mr. Storrs?’

A.—‘D. R. Austin came to my house and asked me some questions, took some minutes on paper, and from these minutes wrote that letter.’

Q.—‘Have you read the Book of Mormon?’

A.—‘I have read some in it.’

Q.—‘Does Mr. Spaulding’s manuscript and the Book of Mormon agree?’

A.—‘I think some few of the names are alike.’

Q.—‘Does the manuscript describe an idolatrous or a religious people?’

Q.—‘An idolatrous people.’

A.—‘Where is the manuscript?’

A.—‘D. P. Hurlburt came here and took it, said he would get it printed and let me have one half of the profits.’

Q.—‘Has D. P. Hurlburt got the manuscript printed?’

A.—‘I received a letter stating that it did not read as he expected, and he should not print it.’

Q.—‘How large is Mr. Spaulding’s manuscript?’

A.—‘About one-third as large as the Book of Mormon.’

Q.—‘To Mrs. McKinstry: ‘How old were you when your father wrote the manuscript?’

A.—‘About five years of age.’

Q.—‘Did you ever read the manuscript?’

A.—‘When I was about twelve years old I used to read it for diversion.’

Q.—‘Did the manuscript describe an idolatrous or a religious people?’

A.—‘An idolatrous people.’

Q.—‘Does the manuscript and the Book of Mormon agree?’

A.—‘I think some of the names agree.’

Q.—‘Are you certain that some of the names agree?’

A.—‘I am not.’

Q.—‘Have you read any in the Book of Mormon?’

A.—‘I have not.’

Q.—‘Was your name attached to that letter, which was sent to Mr. John Storrs, by your order?’

A.—‘No, I never meant that my name should be there.’

‘You see by the above questions and answers, that Mr. Austin, in his great zeal to destroy the Latter-day Saints, has asked Mrs. Davison a few questions, then wrote a letter to Mr.

Stores in his own language. I do not say that the above questions and answers were given in the form that I have written them, but these questions were asked, and these answers given. Mrs. Davison is about seventy years of age, and somewhat broke.'

"This may certify that I am personally acquainted with Mr. Haven, his son and daughter, and am satisfied they are persons of truth. I have also read Mr. Haven's letter to his daughter, which has induced me to copy it for publication, and I further say, the above is a correct copy of Mr. Haven's letter.

A. BADLAM."

Notwithstanding the above refutation and *expose* the opponents of "Mormonism" have continually from the time of its publication, copied, re-published and harped upon this forged affidavit of Mrs. Davison. Their ears have been ever deaf and their eyes blind when the refutation of the slander has been presented to them. They did not then, and do not now want it; they prefer the lie which one of their number has concocted and spread broad-cast through the world.

We must now turn to Sidney Rigdon who by many is regarded as the agent or go-between by and through whom Joseph Smith came into possession of the "Manuscript Found," and who was, in fact, the chief instrument in converting that romance into the Book of Mormon. It is urged that Joseph had neither the learning, ability nor industry to perform so arduous a literary work, but that Rigdon had the audacity, cunning and education necessary to perpetrate such a fraud, and that Joseph Smith was his willing tool, whom he used as a screen to protect himself from public observation and through whom he palmed his imposture on the world. None of those who accept this theory have yet been able to explain what possible motive Rigdon could have had in taking such a course, were such an arrangement possible; but we have most trustworthy and reliable testimony that it could not be so for two altogether sufficient reasons:

First: Sidney Rigdon never was at Pittsburg or any other place at the same time as Mr. Spaulding's manuscript was there and therefore he could not have seen or read it, it being remembered that it never was out of the possession of the

author's family only during the short time it is said to have been in the hands of Mr. Patterson.

Second: Sidney Rigdon never saw Joseph Smith until years after the latter received the sacred plates, indeed, not until after the Book of Mormon had been printed and the Church of Jesus Christ organized.

Let us consider the first of the above propositions. Mr. Spaulding resided in Pittsburg only for a short time between 1812, when he lived at Conneaut, and 1816 when he died a Amity. The general opinion is that he moved to the last named place in 1814. It was then, between 1812 and 1814, that, if ever, the manuscript was in the hands of Mr. Patterson; Sidney Rigdon was then a youth of not more than twenty years of age, residing on and working his deceased father's farm at St. Clair, Pennsylvania. To make this point more clear, we will here give a short sketch of Rigdon's early life:

Sidney Rigdon was born in St. Clair township, Alleghany Co., Pa., on the 19th of February, 1793. In his twenty-fifth year he connected himself with a society, which in that country was called Regular Baptists. In March, 1819, he received a license to preach in that society, and in the following May he left Pennsylvania and went to Trumbull Co., Ohio, where he was afterwards married. In 1821 he was called to the pastoral charge of the first Baptist church of Pittsburg, which invitation he accepted early in the following year, and soon became a popular minister. After ministering in that position for two and a half years he withdrew from that sect, because he considered its doctrines were not altogether in accord with the scriptures. With Mr. Alexander Campbell he founded the "Campbellite" or "Disciples" church; but having retired from the ministry he for two years worked as a day laborer in a tannery; after which he removed to Bainbridge, Geauga Co., Ohio, where the people solicited him to preach. He complied with their request and soon grew quite popular. He advocated the doctrines of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, and baptized numbers from all the country round. During this time he removed from Bainbridge to Mentor, some thirty miles distant, and it was there that Parley P. Pratt and other Elders found him, in the Fall of 1830.

We will now give the testimony of a number of persons who were most intimately acquainted with Sidney Rigdon during his youth. These testimonies we copy from a work lately published by Mr. Robert Patterson, of Pittsburg, son of Mr. Patterson, the printer, to whom the Spaulding romance is said to have been taken. He is the person called "the present writer" in these extracts, which in his work follow a short account of Sidney's early life:

"1. Rigdon's relatives at Library, Pa., Carvil Rigdon (his brother) and Peter Boyer (his brother-in-law), in a written statement dated Jan. 27th, 1843, certify to the facts and dates as above stated in regard to his birth, schooling, uniting with the church, licensure, ordination and settlement in Pittsburg in 1822. Mr. Boyer also in a personal interview with the present writer in 1879 positively affirmed that Rigdon had never lived in Pittsburg previous to 1822, adding that they were boys together and he ought to know. Mr. Boyer had for a short time embraced Mormonism, but became convinced that it was a delusion and returned to his membership in the Baptist church.

"2. Isaac King, a highly-respected citizen of Library, Pa., and an old neighbor of Rigdon, states in a letter to the present writer, dated June 14th, 1879, that Sidney lived on the farm of his father until the death of the latter, in May, 1810, and for a number of years afterwards, farming with very indifferent success; 'it was said he was too lazy and proud to make a good farmer;' received his education in a log school-house in the vicinity; 'began to talk in public on religion soon after his admission to the church, probably at his own instance, as there is no record of his licensure;' went to Sharon, Pa., for a time, and was there ordained as a preacher, but soon returned to his farm, which he sold (June 28th, 1823) to James Means, and about the time of sale removed to Pittsburg.

"3. Samuel Cooper, of Saltsburg, Pa., a veteran of three wars, in a letter to the present writer, dated June 14th, 1879, stated as follows: 'I was acquainted with Mr. Lambdin, was often in the printing-office; was acquainted with Silas Engles, the foreman of the printing-office; he never mentioned Sidney Rigdon's name to me, so I am satisfied he was never engaged

there as a printer. I was introduced to Sidney Rigdon in 1843; he stated to me that he was a Mormon preacher or lecturer; I was acquainted with him during 1843-45; never knew him before, and never knew him as a printer; never saw him in the book-store or printing-office; your father's office was in the celebrated Molly Murphy's Row."

"4. Rev. Robert P. Du Bois, of New London, Pa., under date of Jan. 9th, 1879, writes: 'I entered the book-store of R. Patterson & Lambdin in March, 1818, when about twelve years old, and remained there until the Summer of 1820. The firm had under its control a book-store on Fourth Street, a book-bindery, a printing-office (not newspaper, but job-office, under the name of Butler & Lambdin), entrance on Diamond Alley, and a steam paper-mill on the Allegheny (under the name of R. & J. Patterson). I knew nothing of Spaulding (then dead) or of his book, or of Sidney Rigdon.'

"5. Mrs. R. W. Lambdin, of Irvington, N. Y., widow of the late J. Harrison Lambdin, in response to some inquiries as to her recollection of Rigdon and others, writes under date of Jan. 15th, 1882: 'I am sorry to say I shall not be able to give you any information relative to the persons you name. They certainly could not have been friends of Mr. Lambdin.' Mrs. Lambdin resided in Pittsburg from her marriage in 1819, to the death of her husband, Aug. 1st, 1825. Mr. Lambdin was born Sep. 1st, 1798.'

In addition to this we have the testimony of Sidney Rigdon's mother. She informed one gentleman, who published her statement years ago, long before the Spaulding story was concocted, and therefore with no design to mislead on that matter, that her son lived at home and worked on the farm until the twenty-sixth year of his age; and was never engaged in public life until after that period, either politically or religiously. Thus, according to his mother's statement which is sustained by these other testimonies, he did not leave home until 1819. He did not go to Pittsburg until 1822; eight or nine years after the manuscript of Spaulding's romance had been returned to its author (if, indeed, it had ever been out of his hands), and that author had removed from Pittsburg and died.

Again it is asserted that Sidney Rigdon was associated with the printing-office of Patterson and Lambdin during his stay in Pittsburg. The testimony above given is very strong evidence to the contrary. In addition to which we have Rigdon's own refutation of the falsehood, made at the time that Mrs. Davison's bogus affidavit was first given to the world. He asserts in effect, most positively, that when he went to Pittsburg he did so as a minister of the gospel at the call of a religious congregation, and was never in any way directly or indirectly connected with any printing office during his stay there; and if he had been associated with a Pittsburg printing office nobody claims that the "Manuscript Found" was in that city at that late date (1822). According to Mrs. McKinstry's already quoted affidavit it was then hid up in an old trunk at a small village called Hardwicks, in the state of New York, hundreds of miles from Pittsburg. To tide over this difficulty some one has suggested that probably Spaulding made a copy of his romance for the printer, and it was this copy that Rigdon afterwards found. But this is a baseless supposition; until lately such an idea was never thought of, and it loses all its force from the fact that those best acquainted with the history of that manuscript say that the copy Spaulding gave to Patterson was returned to him; it was not left in the office to be found by Rigdon, or any one else in after years.

It may be asked, is there no conflicting testimony? Do not some persons assert that Rigdon was in Pittsburg and acquainted with Patterson and Lambdin years before 1822? Yes, but their testimony is of little value for many reasons. It is, in the first place, almost invariably second hand. They do not testify of what they themselves actually knew on these points, but of what somebody else knew, or said, or told them. In the second place, they are made, as a rule, by very aged persons, whose memory, when we consider the mass of trash that has been published on this subject, cannot be trusted. They, where desiring to be truthful, have mixed up what they really knew and what they have since heard and read. A third class are "divines," men with "reverend" tacked on their names, whose testimony, it is a sad fact but it is a truth, can scarcely ever be trusted on anything pertaining to "Mormonism." One

very aged lady, whose father and husband kept the post office from 1804 to 1833, says that Rigdon and Lambdin used to come together to the post office for mail matter as early as 1815, if not earlier, and that as youths they were very intimate. But it must be remembered that there was a difference of six or seven years in the ages of these two young men, Rigdon being the elder, and Mr. Lambdin's wife asserts of him and others that "they certainly could not have been friends of Mr. Lambdin." Again it is altogether inconsistent to believe that a young man of Rigdon's ambition would associate with a boy so many years his junior; the supposition is altogether more consistent that this lady has mixed her names and dates, and that young Lambdin having a companion who came with him for letters, she has in the course of many years confused this companion with Rigdon who doubtless often visited the post office at a later period, and at a time when his name would be well known through all Pittsburg.

But it is an open question whether Mr. Patterson ever had the "Manuscript Found" in his possession. The Spaulding family say that he had, he asserts that he had not. On being interrogated on the subject, soon after the publication of Mrs. Davison's bogus affidavit, he said that he knew nothing of any such manuscript.\* Even Hurlburt states that "he called on Mr. Patterson who affirmed *his entire ignorance of the whole matter.*" Here is evidently a grand mistake or a gross falsehood. To us, it seems from the evidence, that the story of Mr. Patterson having received the manuscript was first invented by Priest Storrs on purpose to connect Sidney Rigdon with the "Manuscript Found" and the ladies of the Spaulding family have heard it so often reiterated that in their old age they have imagined that they have some recollection of such an incident, when, in truth, it is only the confused remembrance of what has been ding-donged into their ears by over-anxious opponents of "Mormonism" for the last forty years. It is a well-known fact that the human mind is so constituted that after brooding over imaginary circumstances for a lengthened

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\*—The gentleman to whom he made this statement is understood to have been Mr. Ephraim S. Green, of Philadelphia.



period it will frequently grow to regard such fables as facts. This peculiarity of the human mind has often been commented upon. A laughable incident in this connection is related regarding King George IV., of England. He got it into his head that he was present at the battle of Waterloo, and was especially fond of referring to the circumstance in the presence of the Duke of Wellington, and then requiring the aged warrior to back up his statement. It is said that the duke, with the true instinct of the courtier, would reply on such occasions, "I have heard your majesty mention that circumstance before." So Mrs. Davison and her daughter have so frequently heard the statement that the Book of Mormon was taken from the "Manuscript Found," that the "Manuscript Found" related to the lost ten tribes, that Mr. Patterson borrowed it in Pittsburg, and that Sidney Rigdon had something inexplicable to do with it, that these ladies actually came to believe that these assertions were all truths, and in their old age were willing to make affidavit to their belief in many things about which in earlier days they were nothing like so sure.

With regard to the second point, as to when Joseph Smith first saw Sidney Rigdon, we draw attention to the two following extracts from the writings of Elder Parley P. Pratt:

"THE MORMONITES.

*"To the Editor of the New York Era :*

"Sir.—In yours of the 20th inst., there is an article copied from the *Boston Recorder*, headed, 'Mormon Bible,' and signed, 'Matilda Davison,' which, justice to our society and to the public requires me to answer, and I trust that a sense of justice will induce you, sir, to give your readers both sides of the question.

"I am one of the society who believe the Book of Mormon, and as such I am assailed in the statement professing to come from Matilda Davison.

"In the first place, there is no such thing in existence as the 'Mormon Bible.' The 'Mormons,' as they are vulgarly called, believe in the same Bible that all Christendom profess to believe in, viz.: the common version of the Old and New Testament. The Book of Mormon is not entitled a Bible, except by those who misrepresent it. It is entitled the 'Book of Mormon.'

"The religious sect alluded to in your paper, are there accused of knavery and superstition. Now we are not sensible of being guilty of knavery, and we do not know wherein we

are superstitious, but very much desire to know in order that we may reform. If some good minister or editor will condescend to particulars and point out our superstitions, we will take it as a great kindness, for we are the declared enemies to knavery and superstition.

“If a firm believer in the gospel of a crucified and risen Redeemer, as manifested to all nations, and as recorded in their sacred books, amounts to superstition, then we are superstitious. If preaching that system to others and calling them to repentance is superstition, then we are superstitious. If refusing to fellowship the modern systems of sectarianism which are contrary to the pure doctrines of the Bible be superstition, then we are superstitious, for we hereby declare our withdrawal from all the mysticism, priestcraft and superstitions, and from all the creeds, doctrines, commandments, traditions and precepts of men, as far as they are contrary to the ancient faith and doctrine of the Saints; and we hereby bear our testimony against them.

“We do not believe that God ever instituted more than one religious system under the same dispensation, therefore we do not admit that two different sects can possibly be right. The Churches of Jesus Christ, in any age or country, must be all built upon the same faith, the same baptism, the same Lord, the same Holy Spirit, which would guide them into all truth, and consequently from all error and superstition. The Book of Mormon has never been placed by us in the place of the sacred scriptures, but, as before said, the sacred scriptures stand in their own place, and the Book of Mormon abundantly corroborates and bears testimony of the truth of the Bible. Indeed there is no society, within our knowledge, whose members adhere more closely to the Bible than ours. For proof of this we appeal to the multitudes who attend our religious meetings in this city and in all other places.

“The piece in your paper states that ‘Sidney Rigdon was connected in the printing office of Mr. Patterson’ (in Pittsburg), and that ‘this is a fact well known in that region, and as Rigdon himself has frequently stated. Here he had ample opportunity to become acquainted with Mr. Spaulding’s manuscript (romance) and to copy it if he chose.’ This statement is utterly and entirely false. Mr. Rigdon was never connected with the said printing establishment, either directly or indirectly, and we defy the world to bring proof of any such connection. Now the person or persons who fabricated that falsehood would do well to repent and become persons of truth and veracity before they express such acute sensibility concerning the religious pretensions of others. The statement that Sidney Rigdon is one of the founders of the said religious sect is also incorrect.

"The sect was founded in the state of New York, while Mr. Rigdon resided in Ohio, several hundred miles distant. Mr. Rigdon embraced the doctrine through my instrumentality. I first presented the Book of Mormon to him. I stood upon the bank of the stream while he was baptized, and assisted to officiate in his ordination, and I myself was unacquainted with the system until some months after its organization, which was on the 6th of April, 1830, and I embraced it in September following.

"The piece further states that 'a woman preacher appointed a meeting at New Salem, Ohio, and in the meeting read and repeated copious extracts from the Book of Mormon.' Now, it is a fact well known, that we have not had a female preacher in our connection, for we do not believe in a female priesthood. It further says that the excitement in New Salem became so great that the inhabitants had a meeting and deputed Doctor Philastus Hurlburt, one of their members, to repair to Spaulding's widow, and obtain from her the original manuscript of the romance, etc. But the statement does not say whether he obtained the manuscript, but still leaves the impression that he did, and that it was compared with the Book of Mormon. Now who ever will read the work got up by said Hulburt, entitled: 'Mormonism Unveiled,' will find that he there states that the said manuscript of Spaulding's romance was lost and could nowhere be found. But the widow is here made to say that it is carefully preserved. Here seems to be some knavery or crooked work; and no wonder, for this said Hurlburt is one of the most notorious rascals in the western country. He was first cut off from our society for an attempt at seduction and crime, and secondly he was laid under bond in Geauga county, Ohio, for threatening to murder Joseph Smith, Jr., after which he laid a deep design of the Spaulding romance imposition, in which he has been backed by evil and designing men in different parts of the country, and sometimes by those who do not wish to do wrong, but who are ignorant on the subject. Now what but falsehood could be expected from such a person? Now if there is such a manuscript in existence, let it come forward at once and not be kept in the dark. Again, if the public will be patient, they will doubtless find that the piece signed 'Matilda Davison' (Spaulding's widow) is a base fabrication by Priest Storrs, of Holliston, Mass., in order to save his craft, after losing the deacon of his church, and several of its most pious and intelligent members, who left his society to embrace what they considered to be truth. At any rate, a judge of literary productions, who can swallow that piece of writing as the production of a women in private life, can be made to

believe that the book of Mormon is a romance. For the one is as much like a romance as the other is like a woman's composition.

"The production signed 'Matilda Davison,' is evidently the work of a man accustomed to public address, and the Book of Mormon I know to be true, and the Spaulding story, as far as the Book of Mormon is connected with it, I know to be false.

"I now leave the subject with a candid public, with a sincere desire that those who have been deluded with such vain and foolish lies, may be undeceived.

"Editors, who have given publicity to the Spaulding story, will do an act of justice by giving publicity to the foregoing.

"P. P. PRATT.

"New York, Nov. 27th, 1839."

The following explicit statement is also copied from the earlier writings of Elder Parley P. Pratt:

"About A. D. 1827, Messrs. A. Campbell, W. Scott, and S. Rigdon, with some others, residing in Virginia, Ohio, etc., came off from the Baptist, and established a new order, under the name of Reformed Baptist, or Disciples. And they were termed by their enemies, Campbellites, Rigdonites, etc. This reformation as to its doctrine, consisted principally of the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins, etc. And Mr. Rigdon in particular held to a literal fulfillment, and application of the written word, and by this means he was an instrument to turn many from the false notions of sectarianism, to an understanding of the prophecies, touching the great restoration of Israel, and the mighty revolutions of the last days. Many hundred disciples were gathered by his ministry, throughout the lake country of Ohio, and many other preachers stood in connection with him in these principles. I was then pursuing agricultural life, and mostly occupied in converting the wilderness into a fruitful field. But being a member of the Baptist church, and a lover of truth, I became acquainted with Mr. Rigdon, and a believer in, and teacher of the same doctrine. After proclaiming those principles in my own neighborhood, and the adjoining country, I at length took a journey to the state of New York, partly on a visit to Columbia county, N. Y., my native place, and partly for the purpose of ministering the word. This journey was undertaken in August, 1830; I had no sooner reached Ontario county, N. Y., than I came in contact with the Book of Mormon, which had then been published about six months, and had gathered about fifty disciples, which were all who then constituted the church of Latter-day Saints. I was greatly prejudiced against the book,

but remembering the caution of Paul, 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good,' I sat down to read it, and after carefully comparing it with the other scriptures, and praying to God, He gave me the knowledge of its truth, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and what was I, that I could withstand God? I accordingly obeyed the ordinances and was commissioned by revelation, and the laying on of hands, to preach the fulness of the gospel. Then, after finishing my visit to Columbia county, I returned to the brethren in Ontario county, where, for the first time, I saw Mr. Joseph Smith, Jr., who had just returned from Pennsylvania to his father's house in Manchester. About the 15th of October, 1830, I took my journey in company with Elders O. Cowdery and Peter Whitmer, to Ohio. We called on Elder S. Rigdon, and then for the first time his eyes beheld the Book of Mormon. I, myself, had the happiness to present it to him in person. He was much surprised, and it was with much persuasion and argument, that he was prevailed on to read it, and after he had read it, he had a great struggle of mind, before he fully believed, and embraced it; and when finally convinced of its truth, he called together a large congregation of his friends, neighbors and brethren, and then addressed them very affectionately for nearly two hours during most of which time, both himself and nearly all the congregation were melted into tears. He asked forgiveness of everybody who might have had occasion to be offended with any part of his former life; he forgave all who had persecuted or injured him in any manner, and the next morning, himself and wife were baptized by Elder O. Cowdery. I was present, it was a solemn scene, most of the people were greatly affected, they came out of the water overwhelmed in tears. Many others were baptized by us in that vicinity, both before and after his baptism, insomuch that during the Fall of 1830, and the following Winter and Spring, the number of the disciples was increased to about one thousand, the Holy Ghost was mightily poured out, and the word of God grew and multiplied, and many priests were obedient to the faith. Early in 1831, Mr. Rigdon having been ordained under our hands, visited Elder J. Smith, Jr., in the state of New York, for the first time, and from that time forth rumor began to circulate that he, Rigdon, was the author of the Book of Mormon.

"The Spaulding story never was dreamed of until several years afterwards, when it appeared in 'Mormonism Unveiled'—a base forgery, by D. P. Hurlburt and others of similar character, who strove to account for the Book of Mormon in some other way than the truth. In the west, whole neighborhoods embraced Mormonism, after this fable of the Spaulding story had been circulated among them: indeed, we never considered it worthy of an answer, until it was converted, by the ignorant

and impudent religious editors of this city, into something said to be positively certain, and not to be disputed. Now, I testify that the forgers of the Spaulding lie (concerning S. Rigdon and others), are of the same description as those who forged the lie against the disciples of old, accusing them of stealing the body of Jesus, etc."

We also insert, at this point, the affidavit of the only surviving sister of Joseph Smith, which conclusively shows that Sidney Rigdon had no communication with the Prophet or any other of the family until months after the Book of Mormon was published.

"STATE OF ILLINOIS, }  
Kendall county. } ss.

"I, Katherine Salisbury, being duly sworn, depose and say, that I am a resident of the state of Illinois, and have been for forty years last past; that I will be sixty-eight years of age, July 28th, 1881.

That I am a daughter of Joseph Smith, Senior, and sister to Joseph Smith, Jr., the translator of the Book of Mormon. That at the time the said book was published, I was seventeen years of age; that at the time of the publication of said book, my brother, Joseph Smith, Jr., lived in the family of my father, in the town of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, and that he had, all of his life to this time made his home with the family.

"That at the time, and for years prior thereto, I lived in and was a member of such family, and personally knowing to the things transacted in said family, and those who visited at my father's house, and the friends of the family, and the friends and acquaintances of my brother, Joseph Smith, Jr., who visited at or came to my father's house.

"That prior to the latter part of the year A. D. 1830, there was no person who visited with, or was an acquaintance of, or called upon the said family, or any member thereof to my knowledge, by the name of Sidney Rigdon; nor was such person known to the family, or any member thereof, to my knowledge, until the last part of the year A. D. 1830, or the first part of the year 1831, and some time after the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ, by Joseph Smith, Jr., and several months after the publication of the Book of Mormon.

"That I remember the time when Sidney Rigdon came to my father's place, and that it was after the removal of my father from Waterloo, N. Y., to Kirtland, Ohio. That this was in the year 1831, and some months after the publication of the Book of Mormon, and fully one year after the Church was organized, as before stated herein.

“That I make this statement, not on account of fear, favor, or hope of reward of any kind; but simply that the truth may be known with reference to said matter, and that the foregoing statements made by me are true, as I verily believe.

“KATHERINE SALISBURY.

“Sworn before me, and subscribed in my presence, by the said Katherine Salisbury, this 15th day of April, A. D. 1881.

“J. H. JENKS, *Notary Public.*”

Has it ever entered into the thoughts of our opponents that if Sidney Rigdon was the author or adapter of the Book of Mormon how vast and wide spread must have been the conspiracy that foisted it upon the world! Whole families must have been engaged in it. Men of all ages and various conditions in life, and living in widely separate portions of the country must have been connected with it. First we must include in the catalogue of conspirators the whole of the Smith family, then the Whitmer's, Martin Harris and Oliver Cowdery; further, to carry out this absurd idea, Sidney Rigdon and Parley P. Pratt must have been their active fellow-conspirators in arranging, carrying out and consummating their iniquitous fraud. To do this they must have traveled thousands of miles and spent months, perhaps years, to accomplish—what? That is the unsolved problem. Was it for the purpose of duping the world? They, at any rate the great majority of them, were of all men most unlikely to be engaged in such a folly. Their habits, surroundings, station in life, youth and inexperience all forbid such a thought. What could they gain, in any light that could be then presented to their minds, by palming such a deception upon the world? This is another unanswerable question. Then comes the staggering fact, if the Book be a falsity, that all these families, all these diverse characters, in all the trouble, perplexity, persecution and suffering through which they passed, never wavered in their testimony, never changed their statements, never “went back” on their original declarations, but continued unto death (and they have all passed away save a very few), proclaiming that the Book of Mormon was a divine revelation, and that its record was true. Was there ever such an exhibition in the history of the world of such continued, such unabating, such undeviating falsehood? if falsehood it was. We cannot find a place in the annals of their

lives where they wavered, and what makes the matter more remarkable is that it can be said of most of them, as is elsewhere said of the three witnesses, they became offended with the Prophet Joseph, and a number of them openly rebelled against him; but they never retracted one word with regard to the genuineness of Mormon's inspired record. Whether they were friends or foes to Joseph, whether they regarded him as God's continued mouthpiece or as a fallen Prophet, they still persisted in their statements with regard to the book and the veracity of their earlier testimonies. How can we possibly with our knowledge of human nature make this undeviating, unchanging, unwavering course, continuing over fifty years consistent with a deliberate, premeditated and cunningly-devised and executed fraud!

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## CHAPTER IV.

### MRS. DICKENSON'S SPECULATIONS.

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WE next invite attention to one of the latest versions of the "Spaulding story." It appeared in *Scribner's Magazine* for August, 1880, and purports to be written by Mrs. Ellen E. Dickenson, a grand-niece of Mr. Spaulding. It is conspicuous for its inexactness, but is valuable as containing the affidavit of Mrs. M. S. McKinstry already considered.

Referring to the discovery by Mr. Spaulding of bows and other relics in a mound near his home at Conneaut, Mrs. Dickenson writes:

"This discovery suggested to him the subject for a new romance, which he called a translation from some *hieroglyphical writing* exhumed from the mound. This romance purported to be a history of the peopling of America by the *lost tribes of Israel*, the tribes and their leaders *having very singular names*, among them Mormon, Moroni, Lamanite, Nephi. The romance the author called 'Manuscript Found.' This all occurred in 1812, when to write a book was a distinction, and Mr. Spaulding read his manuscript from time to time to a circle of *admiring friends*. He determined finally to publish