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## A APPEAL FOR ARE TO THE SEXTANT OF THE OLD BRICK MEETINHOUSE.

BY A. GASPER.

[The following appeal to a sexton for pure air in the meeting-house, should have a general circulation. The spelling is not very good, but the argument is irresistible. It is from the Detroit Tribune.]

O sextant of the meetinhouse, wich sweeps  
And dusts, or is supposed to and makes fiers,  
And lites the gass, and sumtimes leaves a screw loose,  
In wich case it smells orful—worse than lamp-jic;  
And wrings the Bel and toles it when men dies  
to the grief of survivin pardners, and sweeps pathes;  
And for the servases gits \$100 per a-num,  
Wich them that thinks deer, let em try it;  
Getin up befor starlite in all wethers and  
Kinella fiers when the wether is as cold  
As zero, and like as not green wood for kindlers;  
I wouldnt be h'rd to do it for no some—  
But o Sextant! there are 1 kermoddity  
Wich's more than gold, wich doant cost nothin,  
Worth more than anything exsep the Sole of Mann!  
I mean the pewer Are, sextant, i mean pewer Are!  
O it is plenty out o dories, so plenty it doant no  
What on airth to do with itself, but flys about  
Scatterin leavs and blow'n off men's hats;  
In short, its jest "free as are" out dories.  
But o sextant, in our church its scarce as piety,  
scarce as bank bills when agints beg for mischuns,  
Wich some say is purty often (taint nothin to me,  
Wat I give aint nothin to nobody) but o sextant,  
n shet 500 men, wimmin and children,  
Speshally the latter, up in a tire place.  
Some has bad brethrs, none aint 2 swete,  
Some is fevery; some is scroffuls, some has bad teath,  
And some haist none, and some haist over cleen,  
But every 1 on em breathe in & out and out and in,  
Say 50 times a minit, or 1 million and a half brethrs an  
out.

Now how long will a church ful of are last at that rate,  
I ask you, say 15 minits, and then what's to be did?  
Why then they must breathe it all over agin.  
And then agin and so on, till each has took it down.  
At least 10 times, and let it up agin, and wats more,  
The same individdle dont have the privelege  
of brethren his own are, and no ones else;  
Each one must take watever comes to him.  
O Sextant, doant you know our lungs is bellusser;  
To blo the fier of life, and keep it from  
goin out; and how can bellusses blo without wind,  
And aint wind ARE? I put it to you conschens.  
Are is the same to us as milk to babies,  
Or water is to fish, or pendulums to clox—  
Or roots and airbs ur to an Injun Doctor,  
Or H'le pills unto an omeopath,  
Or boys to girls. Are is for us to breathe.  
Wat signifies who preaches if I cant breathe?  
Wats Pol? Wats Polls? to sinners who are ded?  
Ded for want of breth? why sextant, when we dye  
Its only cause we cant breathe no more—that's all.  
And now, o sextant, let me beg of you  
2 let a little are into our church.  
(Pewer are is sertin proper for the pewe)  
And do it weak days and Sundays tew—  
It aint much trouble—only make a hole  
And the are will cum in of itself;  
(It luvs to cum in where it can get warm!)  
And o how it will rouse the people up,  
And sperrit up the preecher, and stop gars,  
And yawns and figgits as effectooal  
As wind on the dry Boans the Proffitt tells of.

## DISCOURSE

By Orson Pratt, Tabernacle, Jan. 2, 1859.

REPORTED BY G. D. WATT.

I will commence my discourse by reading the testimony of three witnesses of the Book of Mormon:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety, that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shewn unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true, and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found

spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,  
DAVID WHITMER,  
MARTIN HARRIS."

I will also read the testimony of eight witnesses:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jr., translator of this work, has shewn unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shewn unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety, that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world to witness unto the world that which we have seen; and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,  
JACOB WHITMER,  
PETER WHITMER, Jr.,  
JOHN WHITMER,  
HIRAM PAGE,  
JOSEPH SMITH, Sen.,  
HYRUM SMITH,  
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

Brethren and friends:

I appear before you to-day for the first time for many months, feeling grateful to our Father in heaven for his condescension and mercy unto us as a people, that we are once more, through his kind providence, permitted to assemble ourselves together in this Tabernacle for the purpose of public worship.

Whether I say much or little, it is my sincere desire to be dictated by the Spirit of the living God. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was established upon the earth in the year 1830. Had it not been for the Book of Mormon which I now hold in my hands, such a church would not have had an existence. The probability is there would have been no settlements formed in this Territory—no cities to adorn these dreary wastes—no tabernacles erected for divine worship, and no congregations assembled to hear the words of life. The vast solitudes of these deserts would have been interrupted only by the howling of wild beasts, or the still more dismal yells of the ferocious savage. But this wonderful book has wrought a vast change; and these sterile regions, now "rejoice and blossom as the rose." This book professes to be sent forth as a divine revelation from God.

If it be an imposition, many of our opposers say, then this church is an imposition also, and our faith and hope are vain. On the other hand, if the Book of Mormon be a divine revelation, as the witnesses have testified—if God has, indeed, brought forth the ancient history of the American continent, and writings of the ancient prophets and apostles that once inhabited this land, if he has done this and re-established his kingdom and church upon the earth, then our opposers, that condemn the book, will be found under condemnation. If this book be of God, it must have sufficient evidence accompanying it to convince the minds of all reasonable persons that it is a divine revelation. If it has been translated by the gift and power of God, through the means of the Urim and Thummin, and angels have been sent from heaven to bear testimony of its truth, then all the inhabitants of the world are concerned and have an interest in it.

It is not the few individuals only, who are within the walls of this tabernacle that are interested in its truths; it is not the few individuals only who inhabit this territory, and the few Saints abroad in the world who are interested in it; but all the nations of the earth without one exception; their emperors, kings and nobles; their presidents, governors and rulers; their popes, archbishops and bishops, their learned and unlearned of every religious society, whether Jews, Mahomedans, Pagans, or Christians, are all equally interested in it, if it be what it professes to be.

If the Lord will assist and strengthen me by his Holy Spirit, which I believe he will do through your prayers, I will endeavor to bring forth some few of the evidences which establish the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

I shall compare this evidence with the evidence for the divine authenticity of the Bible. If the two books are supported by an equal amount of evidence, then all are required to have the same faith in the one as the other. But if the divinity of the Book of Mormon does not rest upon as sure a foundation as the Bible, then the people will have some little reason for rejecting it.

In the first place, I shall examine what evidences the present generation have to believe the various books incorporated in the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to

be of divine origin. It must be recollected that the book called the Bible was translated from manuscripts 247 years ago by king James' translators. The manuscripts from which the Bible was taken are not now in existence. Up to the year 1749, they were deposited at a Spanish University, called Alcala, anciently named Complutem. The librarian sold them to one Toroyo, who dealt in fire-works, as materials for making sky-rockets. [For authority, see Marsh's Michaelis vol. 2., part 1., page 441.]

The oldest manuscripts of any of the books of the Old Testament at the present day, date from the twelfth century of the christian era. You will find proof of this in the Encyclopædia Britannica, the eighth edition, vol. 4, page 695, which series is now being published in Edinburgh, Scotland. That celebrated work says, "The sacred books of the Old Testament have come down to our times in MSS., the oldest of which date from twelfth century. Nothing is known of the history of the text previous to that period after the return of the Jews from their captivity."

It is believed by the learned, that the Old Testament scriptures were all destroyed by the Assyrians nearly six hundred years before Christ. The Apocrypha informs us that Esdras was inspired to re-write them. In this manner, it is conjectured that the Jews again came in possession of their sacred writings. These books again perished in the great persecution of Antiochus. For further information upon this subject, see Brett's Dissertation in Bishop Watson's Collect, vol. 3, page 5.

The history of the inspired writings anterior to the Babylonish captivity is very brief. The number of copies were very few. In the days of Josiah, all of the Jews seem to have been destitute of a copy of the law. During the reign of that king, in repairing the house of the Lord, a copy of the book of the law was found, and when presented to the king, he sent five messengers to Huldah the prophetess, saying "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel, and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found." The messengers returned and reported to the king that the book found was, indeed, a divine revelation, and the king caused all the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be assembled to hear the words of the book. [See 11 Chron. 34.]

For a long period previous to finding the book, the Jews had been ignorant of the scriptures and had fallen into the grossest idolatry. A new revelation through the prophetess Huldah seems to have been sufficient to convince the king and all Israel of the divinity of the book. They must have been inclined in that age of the world to believe the history of the servants of God more than in this age; for now the people generally require a vast amount of evidence; the testimony of a dozen witnesses is scarcely regarded.

I have already observed, through the persecutions raised against the house of Israel, their books were destroyed; yes, even the tables of stone for some reason were taken from them, and all Israel were left without even a copy of the law, until accidentally they happened to find one that had been hid in the house of the Lord, as I have already named, and they were so ignorant with regard to this copy they were obliged to send for Huldah, one of the prophetesses in Israel, to inquire of the Lord to know if it really was his word. They found a book, but they did not know whether it was true or false, and they thought it important that it should be determined by the immediate word of God.

Why not this generation go and do likewise? Why not inquire of the Lord, whether the Book of Mormon is a divine revelation? The copy found anciently contained the words of the Lord. And the people were so rejoiced that the whole nation of Jews gathered together to hear it read, and rejoiced over it, and gave heed to its precepts. They were not like the present generation, they did not fight it and testify all manner of evil against it, and publish lies against it, but they believed it on the testimony of the prophetess.

It is very probable that the Jews copied these sacred writings, upon various materials. Bishop Watson informs us that "The Hebrews went so far as to write their sacred books in gold, as we may learn from Josephus compared with Pliny." He further says, "Those books which were inscribed on tablets of wood, lead, brass, or ivory, were connected together by rings at the back, through which a rod was passed to carry them by." "The first books," continues Bishop Watson, were in the form of blocks and tables, of which we find frequent mention in scripture, under the appellation of SEPTER, that is, square tables. That form which obtains among us, (he quotes from Pliny,) is the square, composed of separate leaves; which was also known, though little used among the ancients."

These copies of the scriptures were destroyed so that the Jews were again left destitute of the sacred writings. How they again obtained a copy, this generation are not informed. Esdras informs us in the Apocrypha that he

was inspired of God to write a great number of the books of the Old Testament scriptures so that the Jewish people might again be in possession of them; but how are this generation to know whether Esdras was a true prophet or not? How are they to know that he was actually inspired of God to perform so great a work? It seems that the learned have no confidence in him or they would not have placed his books among the Apocryphal writings as being doubtful.

But soon after the days of Esdras the sacred books again perished. How did the Jews again obtain copies? None of the learned can answer this question. For seventeen long centuries, the history of the sacred text is unknown. We are informed by learned writers that about three centuries before Christ the Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek called the Septuagint; but have we any copies of the Septuagint? No. You may search all the archives of the nations and you cannot find one of these ancient copies. Fifteen hundred years after this supposed translation, you find some Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Let us inquire into the situation of the manuscripts from which our present Hebrew and Greek Bibles were formed. We are informed by St. Chrysostom, an ancient christian writer who lived soon after the days of Christ, that "many of the prophetic monuments have perished; for the Jews being careless, and not only careless, but also impious, have carelessly lost some of these monuments; others they have partly burned, partly torn in pieces."

We are also informed by St. Justin, another early christian writer, that the Jews actually did destroy a great number of the prophetic books in order that the world might not perceive the agreement between the ancient prophets in the Old Testament and christianity. Here then we have the testimony of early Christian writers, that many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament were destroyed.

We are also informed by the Catholics, "That many, and very many of the canonical books of scripture have quite perished, and not so much as appeared in the days of the very ancients fathers; so that nothing but the names of those books have come unto us." (See Mumford's Question of Questions, Sec. I. 7.)

We are also informed by those manuscripts that are dated from the 12th century of the Christian era, that the few books that were preserved during the long reign of persecution and error, had become very much altered and mutilated, so much so, that when the learned gathered a large number of manuscripts together they found no two that agreed. A great variety of readings in these manuscripts discouraged many of our translators, some three centuries ago, from translating the Old Testament, lest the world should turn to Atheism; if they had translated them all, they would have had several hundred Bibles, all clashing and differing from each other.

It must be recollected that the Catholic canon of scripture was not formed until the year 397. Prior to that period, the people were left, some of them to believe in this manuscript, and some in that; some to reject this one, and some that; and many of the Christian fathers in the second and third centuries of the Christian era were entirely unable to determine what manuscripts were spurious and what ones to receive as divine. Mumford speaks thus upon this subject:

"If you fly to the tradition of the church only of the first four hundred years, remember that the Council of Carthage just after the end of those years, alleged the ancient tradition of their fathers which they judged sufficient for defining our canon. They, who were so near those first four hundred years, knew far better the more universal tradition of that age, than we can twelve hundred years after it. True it is, (nothing being defined till then) private doctors were free to follow what they judged to be truest; and as you find them varying from our canon, some in some books, some in others; so you will find them varying from one another, and varying also from you" (meaning the Protestant Canon). "For in those first four hundred years, Melitus and Nazianzen excluded the Book of Esther, which you add. Origen doubts of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the second of St. Peter, of the first and second of St. John; St. Cyprian and Nazianzen leave the apocalypse or revelations out of their canon. Eusebius doubts of it."

Mumford further says:—"All those holy fathers agreed ever in this, that such books were evidently God's word, which had evidently a sufficient tradition for them; now in the days of those fathers who thus varied from one another, it was not by any infallible means made known to all, that those books about which their variance was, were recommended for God's infallible word, by a tradition clearly sufficient to ground belief; for the church had not as yet examined and deined, whether tradition did clearly enough show such and such books to be God's infallible word. But in the days of St. Austin, the Third