

"Book of Mormon" purported to contain a history of the people of Nephii, the Lamanites and Jaredites, races which came to America after the destruction of the Tower of Babel, and of two colonies which left Jerusalem B. C. 600, from whom the North American Indians descended.

John the Baptist also appeared to Joseph Smith, ordaining him to the Aaronic priesthood, and subsequently said Smith was ordained to the Melchisedek priesthood by the apostles Peter, James and John. Thus with the keys of the priesthood in his hands, Joseph Smith started out as the herald and high priest of a New Dispensation. The above is the Mormon account, (see their Catechism.)

The facts of the case, however, are simply these: One Joseph Smith, a vicious, immoral, crafty rascal, whose duplicity and cunning had drawn on him the opprobrium of the neighborhood in which he lived, concocted the scheme of founding a new religion, of which he was to be the prophet, and consorting with one Sidney Rigdon, a renegade and expelled Baptist minister, and one Martin Harris, a well-to-do farmer who furnished the money as a pecuniary speculation, they took a manuscript written by Rev. Solomon Spaulding, intended by the author to be a fabulous record of a long-lost race, and by certain alterations and additions adapted it to their use, and palmed it off on their credulous dupes as a new revelation from God.

Finding their deception too transparent to be practiced in New York, where their characters and the facts of the case were well known, they removed to Kirtland, Ohio, where they gathered inefficient adherents and money to erect "a temple," but becoming "involved in accusations of immoral and criminal practices" they removed in 1834 to Independence, Mo. It was at Kirtland that Brigham Young joined them, and with him came the first formal establishment of the Mormon hierarchy, in the form of a high council consisting of twelve apostles and one or three presidents, as the case might require.

Joseph Smith was the first President, and before his death bestowed on the "twelve apostles" every "key that was necessary to save and exalt mankind in the celestial kingdom of God," (see Mormon Catechism.) He was to receive revelations "even as Moses," which were to be implicitly obeyed by the people. At his death this power passed to Brig-

ham Young, and at his death to the present President, John Taylor.

Thus was founded an absolutism, which makes the hold of the Mormon hierarchy on the souls and bodies of its adherents as great, if not greater, than that of Rome. It enabled Smith, when his own life became so immoral as to need excuse in the eyes of his followers, to introduce as a new revelation "Spiritual Wifism," the preliminary step to Polygamy.

At Independence Sidney Rigdon took temporary lead, but was soon followed and superseded by Smith and Young, who having been engaged in Ohio in "wild-cat banking," fled from their enraged creditors. At Independence they laid the foundation of a temple, which they still expect to finish, (see Mormon Catechism,) and "there the new Jerusalem will be commenced."

The Missourians soon became infuriated at the licentious character and fraudulent practices of "the saints." They rose *en masse* to drive them from their State, and the militia of the State had to be called out to preserve the peace.

General Clark, who commanded the Missouri troops, in a despatch to Governor Boggs, November 10, 1838, thus describes the character of the Mormons:—"There is no crime from treason down to petit larceny, but a majority of these people have been guilty of—all, too, under the counsel of Joseph Smith, Jr., the prophet. They have committed treason, murder, arson, burglary, robbery, larceny and perjury. They have societies formed under the most binding covenants in form, and the most horrid oaths, to circumvent the laws and put them at defiance, and to plunder, burn and murder and divide the spoils for the use of the church."

Thence they removed to Nauvoo, Illinois, and there in May 1846, dedicated an immense temple. Converts were gathered in the United States or imported from Europe. Smith now put in full practice his "Spiritual Wifism," and had a palatial residence built for himself and his "forty wives." He was elected Mayor of the city and commandant of the Nauvoo Legion, and was even announced in the Mormon papers as a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. But the people of Illinois became restive under the vices and criminalities of the Mormons; suits-at-law were instituted against them, mob violence culminated in the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, and finally the Mormons arose and started for their present settlement—the great Salt Lake Valley.