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Bishop Spalding's Jumps in the Logical Process

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Abstract: This article shows that Bishop Spalding makes three unwarranted inferences in his pamphlet “Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator”—that the Book of Abraham is translated incorrectly, that the Book of Mormon cannot be authentic if the Book of Abraham is poorly translated, and that all Mormon belief should be discarded since the Book of Mormon is the basis of the religion.

opinion among the learned, we think it not unreasonable to accept the Prophet's views. As you remarked, the reclining figure looks anything but like a corpse.

Dr. W. writes "the gods are a row of mummy-pots!" That may be, but the sacred mummy-pots would themselves be objects of adoration, and the top, at least, is formed into characteristic shapes. Their difference of form indicates that they represent something.

Dr. Budge thinks that No. 2 is from the late Dr. Birch's papers. I could find none of Dr. Birch's early writings in the public library here. I found a list of them, however, and they might be examined at the British Museum.

As this inquiry with its responses from Egyptologists of eminence quite

equal to those Bishop Spalding quotes, antedates the latter's inquiry by ten or a dozen years, it at least serves to show that we have not been lax, nor afraid to learn from whatever light the wisdom of the world might throw upon the illustrations of the Book of Abraham and their translation by the Prophet Joseph.

Believing the above might prove of interest to your readers and that it should find the permanence of publication, I take pleasure in submitting it for your use and comment.

Respectfully,

JUNIUS F. WELLS,
Salt Lake City, 19th December, 1912.

Bishop Spalding's Jumps in the Logical Process

BY JOHN HENRY EVANS, OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' UNIVERSITY

"In almost every act of our perceiving faculties," says John Stuart Mill, "observation and inference are intimately blended. What we are said to observe is usually a compound result of which one-tenth may be observation and the remaining nine-tenths inference."

If we substitute the word "fact" for the word "observation" in this passage, we shall have a most accurate description of the logical process involved in the pamphlet on "Joseph Smith, Jr., As A Translator," by Bishop F. S. Spalding, of the Utah Episcopal church. Fact and inference are here so "intimately blended" that special attention to this phase of the question is needed before one can appreciate the numerous errors in the reasoning process. And so I shall undertake in this brief article to point out where links are missing in the bishop's chain of reasoning.

Bishop Spalding submits to eight Egyptologists the three fac-similes in the Book of Abraham with explanations by the Prophet Joseph Smith, for the purpose of getting their opinions as to whether they were translated correctly. The scholars answer substantially that they were not correctly translated. That is the fact. What is the inference drawn

from the fact? That the Book of Abraham as a whole was not translated correctly! Is this leap in the logical process warranted?

For the benefit of those who are afraid of the scholars, let me say that this leap is not made by the eight learned men. They tell us only that the figures submitted to them were not translated correctly. Before they would be warranted in saying that the entire Book of Abraham was not properly translated, they would have to examine the original papyrus, or a copy of it, from which the Book of Abraham was translated. The inference therefore is wholly the bishop's, so that we are not here bucking the scholarship of the special scholar but rather the logic of the logician; and nobody has a corner on reasoning. Now, as a matter of fact, the hieroglyphics submitted to the scholars constitute less than one-seventh of the Book of Abraham and that only an accompaniment of the text. The question therefore, becomes, "Is any one justified in drawing a conclusion respecting an entire manuscript from a statement which was made with respect only to a very small part of that manuscript?"

The scholars are practically agreed

that the hieroglyphics are badly copied. If so, and there is ample room for doubt of that, may not some part of the learned men's observations concerning them point to the conclusion that the translator was a poor copyist rather than a poor translator? This appears to be the more probable from the fact of differences in the interpretation of the scholars. And then, too, may it not be possible that these particular hieroglyphics present peculiar difficulties? For every one knows, who has done any work in translation, that not all parts of a given literary production are of the same ease in the translation. And the uninitiated in the lore of the ancient Egyptians would naturally imagine that the unevenness would be still greater in hieroglyphic writing.

I do not wish to claim too much for my point. I do not say definitely and positively that this is so. But I do insist that the doubt thus thrown on the bishop's inference makes it impossible for him reasonably to build so high a superstructure as he does on so frail a foundation. The inference is clearly unwarranted.

II.

In the next place, the bishop declares that, since the translation of the Book of Abraham was incorrect, and since also the inspiration in the translation of the Book of Mormon, and that of the Book of Abraham were the same, therefore the Book of Mormon, too, was incorrectly translated. This is a longer jump in the logical process than the one I have just pointed out. And here again I ask, "Is the inference warranted?"

The inference here turns on the point, Was there a sufficient difference between the translation of the Book of Mormon and the translation of the Book of Abraham to weaken or destroy the reasonableness of this inference? If it can be shown that there is a single difference in an essential particular, then the inference falls to the ground.

A vital difference in the mode of

translating the two books lies in the directness of the inspiration, in the case of the Book of Mormon, as compared with the Book of Abraham. In the translation of the Nephite record the Prophet used the Urim and Thummim; in the case of the Abrahamic manuscript there is no mention of any direct means in the translation. Then again, Joseph expressly says that he studied the writings of the ancient Patriarch for the purpose of constructing a grammar of the language. Moreover, he was at work on the papyrus intermittently from February, 1835, to the same month in the year 1842—a period of seven years. Do not these facts, which the bishop admits inferentially, point to the greater use of the Prophet's own resources in the translation of the Book of Abraham than was the case in the translation of the Book of Mormon? And is not this difference sufficient to invalidate the reasoning of Bishop Spalding?

In saying this, I am not denying the inspiration in the translation of the Book of Abraham. I am merely emphasizing a distinction, well known to the bishop as a theological student; namely, that between direct revelation and inspiration. But the fact that there was an essential difference between the translation of this record and the Book of Mormon destroys the force of the bishop's reasoning that the Nephite volume was incorrectly translated because the Book of Abraham contains errors in the translation.

III.

A third false inference lies in the transition from the thought, "Joseph Smith was not an inspired translator," to the thought, "Therefore the Latter-day Saints to be consistent are required to 'repudiate' not only the Book of Mormon but also the whole body of belief, which has been built upon it." There are two points here that deserve consideration.

The first is the bishop's queer blunder that the whole body of the "Mormon" belief is built upon the Book of Mormon. For this is the only meaning I can give to the phrase. As a

matter of fact, the Book of Mormon bears no more basic a relation to the work known as "Mormonism" than the other visions and revelations given in this dispensation. The body of belief of the Latter-day Saints, in addition to the Book of Mormon, is built upon (1) the vision of the Father and the Son to the prophet, (2) the appearing to him of John the Baptist, (3) the visitation of Peter and James and John, (4) the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, and (6) the oral and written teachings of the prophet during the years of his personal ministry. If the Nephite record had not been revealed at all, in this dispensation, it is doubtful whether the body of "Mormon" belief would in any essential particular be different from what it is. I do not say this in disparagement of the Book of Mormon, nor in a spirit of criticism of the way in which our dispensation was ushered in, for there appear what to me are sufficient reasons for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon at the time of its appearing; but I call attention to the fact as showing how little the whole body of belief of the Latter-day Saints really depends on the revelation of the Nephite record. It would be impossible to point out any writing in the Church literature that is so simple and clear on the principles of the gospel, and the "Mormon" elders find in it a great storehouse of lucid exposition; still it is far from being the structural foundation of our body of belief that the bishop's words require.

The second point is this: Suppose that the whole body of belief of the Latter-day Saints were built upon the Book of Mormon, would it therefore follow that this body of belief ought to be repudiated on the hypothesis that the Nephite record was not translated correctly? Is this inference logically drawn?

Once a man gets an idea, or a system of ideas, it does not matter, so far as philosophical or practical purposes are concerned, where or how he got them. The only questions we may

properly ask about them are, are they true? are they consistent with one another? do they produce good results in the lives of those who accept them? Here, for instance, is the idea of honesty. You have applied it in your life, and have felt its uplifting effects. Suppose, now, it could be shown that the man who first got the idea was self-deceived. Would you therefore have to repudiate the idea? And yet according to Bishop Spalding's reasoning the results of this principle, in your life, would count for nothing as compared with the questions where did you get honesty? how did you come by it?

The same test should be applied to the whole body of "Mormon" belief before we are asked to repudiate it on the grounds proposed by the bishop. The Church has now been in existence long enough to have borne fruit. Is this fruit good or not? I can only indicate the line of thought to be followed in the casting up of results. There is, for example, the material prosperity "Mormonism" has created in the body of its adherents. The substantial qualities of industry, thrift, strength, fortitude, courage, have been enforced and reinforced by the Church. The history of civilization proves these to have brought everywhere good fruit, and any one who is acquainted with the "Mormon" people knows that these virtues are both taught and practiced by the Latter-day Saints. A Gentile banker in Salt Lake City declared not long ago that he preferred to hire boys from "Mormon" homes because of the practical teachings they have received there. Then there is the great organization known as the "Mormon" Church, conceded to be one of the most remarkable in the world. Tested by efficiency in doing its work, it does not stand in any pressing need of "readjustment." And finally there is the large and consistent body of doctrine of the Church, with its splendid outlook on life. Will the bishop tell us precisely in what respect and how much of all this it is necessary for us to "repudiate" or "readjust?"

Judged by results, it seems to be a very satisfactory body of belief, indeed!

What then is the sum of the whole matter? This: We are asked to "re-adjust" the body of our belief because Joseph Smith its early founder was not an inspired translator; who was not an inspired translator of the Book of Mormon, because he did not translate correctly the Book of Abraham; and the reason why we know he did not translate the Book of Abraham correctly is that learned men say he did not translate correctly a very small part of that book! Here is a string of inferences for you! The conclusion is out of all proportion to the first fact. What a crushing

burden the innocent and diverse testimony of those eight scholars is made to carry! Overlooking all the evidential facts in favor not only of the divinity of the Book of Mormon but also of the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the bishop has gone on complacently piling inference on inference till he has a superstructure of argument that on first glance is really disconcerting. But never was a conclusion more tortuously reached. Never was man asked to give up a belief that satisfied him, on slighter grounds.

No intelligent Latter-day Saint will feel called upon to "repudiate" anything through any such process of reasoning as this of the Bishop's!

"The Book of the Dead."

BY LEVI EDGAR YOUNG, M. A.

"The Book of the Dead," said by some scholars to be the oldest book in the world, is a collection of writings on religion and morals, written and compiled in the earliest ages of Egyptian history. The authors of the collection of books were priests and prophets of the inhabitants of the Nile valley, whose civilization dates back at least four thousand years before Christ. One of the titles which the ancient Egyptians gave this book was "The Per-em-Hru," the translation of which has caused no end of controversy. Possibly the best interpretation of it is: "The Books of the Going Forth From Darkness to Light." These books were composed in something of the spirit as were the books of the Old Testament. They were to direct the children of the gods to their future life. Used for a period of over four thousand years, they were engraved in parts on tombs, obelisks, and monuments; and written on papyrus rolls, that were buried with the dead. They were also often engraved upon the walls of pyramids and the exteriors of sarcophagi. Many parts have been found

engraven upon plates, of gold and brass.

In order to understand what influence the "Book of The Dead" had in the history of Egypt, it is necessary to know something about the different periods of Egyptian history.

There were two principal periods of Egyptian history, before the time of Christ. The first is called the Memphite period which lasted from about 4,000 B. C. to 2,500 B. C. The second was the Theban, which flourished at the time of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt. It was during the Memphite period that the pyramids were built, near the old city of Memphis, located near the mouth of the Nile river. At this time, the Egyptians built great irrigating canals and large reservoirs, and developed the science of astronomy and mathematics. They were taught the circumference of the earth, and its relation to the diameter, and computed the distance of the planets from the sun, which they regarded as the center of the universe. With all this knowledge of the Egyptians pertaining to Astronomy, it is interesting to note here that Abraham