

**For the Gospel Luminary.**  
**THE NEW BIBLE,**  
*Written on plates of Gold or Brass.*

This is said to be written in Egyptian, and an inspired translation of this wonderful record, by Joseph Smith, who styles himself the author, is now in the press, to be ready for subscribers the commencing part of next year: --

Copies of the title page, and other means, have been taken to sell next year this wonderful translation. Wishing success to the affair, if it could be substantiated by indisputable evidences and witnesses, I wrote to those concerned in, and witnesses to the facts and circumstances; and requested them to educe and publish evidences possible. For Deists, Atheists, and Infidels to Christianity on one hand; and sectarianism, phariseism, bigotry and Orthodoxy on the other, would attack, oppose and examine the witnesses and testimonies with the utmost severity; and rightly would they do so. For why, should the world be duped, gulled, or imposed on. Those, who take such means to make and sell their books to a wondering community, ought to afford incontrovertible truths.

But what is the answer to so rational a solicitation? You shall have it readers in their own words, after they had been digesting it for many weeks:— and judge ye, if it is satisfactory.

*“Palmyra, Wayne, co., N. Y., Nov. 9th, 1829.*

*Sir;— You wrote to Mr. Harris, some time since, respecting the book of Mormon, of which he was concerned in the publication.”—*

“Your first inquiry was, whether it was proper to say, that Joseph Smith Jr., was the author? If I rightly understand the meaning of the word author, it is, the first beginner, or mover of any thing, or a writer. Now Joseph Smith Jr., certainly was the writer of the work, called the book of Mormon, which was written in ancient *Egyptian characters*,— which was a dead record to us until translated. And he, by a gift from God, has translated it into our language. Certainly he was the writer of it, and could be no less than the author.”

I was sorry they could not perceive, how improper it was, that the translator, should assume authorship of the Egyptian book of Mormon; written it seems, by the real author in hieroglyphics. Hooker explains, (says Dr. Samuel Johnson,) *author* to be the first beginner or mover of any thing. But Joseph Smith is not the first beginner, or mover of the book of Mormon; or is he. But if he is not: then he is not the author, or first beginner; but the translator, or last copyist, or translator of a golden leaved book, written ages ago, in Egyptian symbolical pictures, or hieroglyphics. Dryden explains Author, to be the efficient, that produces any thing: the first writer of any thing. Was J. Smith Junr., the first writer of the book of Mormon? If he was not, why does he call himself the author? as though the book of Mormon was a fiction of his own invention? We may as well say, that the copyists of the scriptures of truth, were the authors of the writings of Moses, the prophets and apostles, as to say (if Joseph Smith Junr., speaks truly,) that Joseph is the author of Mormon, written ages ago, on golden plates or leaves.

The letter continues to say,—“This record which gives an account of the first inhabitants of this continent, is engraved on plates, which have the appearance of gold; and they are of very curious workmanship.”

What a pity it is the golden leaves of about 30 lbs., (as I have heard,) cannot be examined and attested by more than three or four persons? But say they—

“The reason stated in a prophecy written before the coming of Christ in the flesh, why the record should not be shown to all the world, [i. e. only to three or four, it seems] at the time of its coming forth to the children of men is that the book should be sealed, by the power of God.”

The two witnesses, the two candle sticks, or olive branches are (I believe,) revelation and reason: or divine and rational truth. Are we to be unjustly deprived of rational testimony in this case, by preventing men and women of virtue and veracity, from seeing and attesting to these plates or brass or gold? Yes, they answer, “that the book may be sealed by the power of God.” A book which is written by the power of God is sealed, to all those, who have not this power, even while they read, hear, or possess the writing. “For the things of God, knoweth no man but the spirit of God.” Spiritual things being always sealed or hidden from those, who have not spiritual discernment; the gospel being always hid to them, who are lost;— or are in a wicked state; why then should plates written in hieroglyphics, (which they incorrectly call Egyptian characters) be kept out of sight? who could interpret them, when seen? Or if they could,— could they, unless in God’s spirit, understand them without special revelation to unseal them? It appears, therefore, a very unreasonable thing to deprive mankind of good, sufficient and incontrovertible testimony, of evidence that shall silence bigoted pharisees infidels, Jews, Mahommedans or pagans. Such an ancient, curious, and most precious golden relic of primitive ages, I should judge, would be estimable beyond conception, and would be preserved, with the greatest care by good or wise brothers, from any violence or rudeness; But they say—

“The prophecy also states there shall also be a revelation sealed in the book, which will reveal all things from the foundation of the world to the end thereof.” And because of the iniquity of the world, at the time of its coming forth; it shall be hid from the eyes of the world; that the eyes of none shall behold it, (save it be that three witnesses shall behold it by the power of God) besides him, to whom the book should be delivered. And none other should see it, only a few,—if it should be wisdom in God.”

These I understand are the three, that were favored with a sight of it by the angel from heaven, in a clear day, and in an open field. By this it would seem, that the book came from heaven. The letter farther says:—

“And after that which was not sealed, was translated, the book should again be hid-up, unto the Lord, that it might not be destroyed; and come forth again, in the own due time of him, who knows all things [coming] unto the children of men.”

“You also wished Mr. Harris to inform you respecting his seeing this book, whether there could not possibly have been some juggling at the bottom of it. A few words on that point may suffice.—

“It was a clear, open beautiful day, far from any inhabitants, in a remote field, at the time we saw the record, of which it has been spoken, brought and laid before us, by an

angel, arrayed in glorious light, [who] ascend [descended I suppose] out of the midst of heaven.”

“Now if this is human juggling—judge ye.”

Yours with much esteem,

OLIVER H. P. COWDERY.

“P. S. I write this at the request of Messrs. Harris and others. The edition of this work now printing will not possibly be finished before the first of next February 1830.[”]

I am thankful for their esteem, and replying, and from their saying “Judge ye” —I presume they expected I and my friends should read and judge. And I think the public ought to judge too; on so important a matter as a new bible; as wondrous as the Koran of Mahomet, and requiring the most incontrovertible facts, circumstances and proofs. The above statement appear to me to be far from being of this character.

CORNELIUS C. BLATCHLY.

(*Gospel Luminary*, Vol. II, No. 49, Thursday, December 10, 1829, page 194, New York City.)

**NOTE:**

Cornelius Blatchly wrote his letter of inquiry about October 1829. He mentioned in February 1830 that his letter was “to Joseph Smith, Jun. Martin Harris, and David Whitmore.” Blatchly further explained, “I sought for evidences, and such as could not be disputed, of the existence of this bible of golden plates. But the answer was—the world must take their words for its existence; and that the book would appear this month.” He also heard that “The whole of the plates are said to weigh about thirty pounds.”

(*New-York Telescope*, Vol. VI, No. 38, Saturday, February 20, 1830, page 150.)