

# A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

## JOE SMITH

### AND THE DEVIL!

[Enter Devil with a bundle of handbills, which he is in the act of posting.]

#### WANTED IMMEDIATELY,

All the liars, swindlers, thieves, robbers, incendiaries, cheats, adulterers, harlots, blackguards, drunkards, gamblers, bogus makers, idlers, busy bodies, pickpockets, vagabonds, filthy persons, hireling clergy, and their followers, and all other infidels and rebellious, disorderly persons, for a crusade against Joe Smith and the Mormons. Be quick, be quick, I say, or our cause will be ruined, and our kingdom overthrown by that d—d fool of an impostor and his associates, for even now all earth and hell is in a stew.

[Joe Smith happens to be passing, and hails his Majesty.]

Good morning, Mr. Devil. How now, you seem to be much engaged; what news have you got there?

DEVIL [slipping his bills into his pocket with a low bow]—O! good morning, Mr. Smith; hope you are well, sir. Why—I—was just out—out on a little business in my line; or finally, to be candid, sir, I was contriving a fair and honorable warfare against you and your impostions, wherein piety is outraged, and religion greatly hindered in its useful course. For, to be bold sir, [and I despise anything underhanded,] I must tell you to your face that you have made me more trouble than all the ministers, or people of my whole dominion, have for ages past.

SMITH. Trouble! what trouble have I caused your Majesty? I certainly have endeavored to treat you, and all other persons, in a friendly manner, even my worst enemies; and I always aim to fulfil the Mormon creed, and that is, to my mind, my own business exclusively. Why should this trouble you Mr. Devil?

DEVIL. Ah! your own business, indeed. I know not what you may consider your business, it is so very complicated; but I know what you have done, and what you are aiming to do. You have disturbed the quiet of Christendom, everthrown churches and societies, you have dared

to call in question the truth and usefulness of old and established creeds, which have stood the test of ages; and have even caused tens of thousands to come out in open rebellion, not only against wholesome creeds, established forms and doctrines, well approved and orthodox, but against some of the most pious, learned, exemplary, and honorable clergy, whom both myself and all the world, love, honor and esteem, and this is not all. But you are causing many persons to think who never thought before, and you would fain put the whole world a thinking; and then where will true religion and piety be? Alas! they will have no place among men, for if men keep such a terrible thinking and reasoning as they begin to do, since you commenced your business, as you call it, they never will continue to uphold the good old way in which they have jogged along in peace for so many ages; and thus, Mr. Smith, you will overthrow my kingdom, and leave me not a foot of ground on earth, and this is the very thing you aim at. But I, sir, have the boldness to oppose you by all the lawful means which I have in my power.

SMITH. Really, Mr. Devil, your Majesty has of late become very pious; I think some of your Christian brethren have greatly misrepresented you. It is generally reported by them that you are opposed to religion. But—

DEVIL. It is false; there is not a more religious and pious being in the world than myself, nor a being more liberal minded. I am decidedly in favor of all creeds, systems, and forms of Christianity, of whatever name or nature; so long as they leave out that abominable doctrine, which caused me so much trouble in former times, and which, after slumbering for ages, you have again revived; I mean the doctrine of direct communion with God, by new revelation. This is hateful, it is impious, it is directly opposed to all the divisions and branches of the Christian Church. I never could bear it. And for this very cause, I helped to bring to condign punishment all the prophets and the apostles of old, for while they were suffered to live with this gift of revelation, they were always exposing and slandering me, and all other good pious men in exposing our deeds and purposes, which they called wicked, but which we considered as the height of zeal and piety; and when we killed them for these crimes of dreaming, prophecy, and vision-seeing, they raised the cry of persecution, and so with you miserable and deluded Mormons.

SMITH. Then, your most Christian Majesty is in favor of all other religions but this one, are you?

DEVIL. Certainly. I am fond of praying, singing, church building, bell ringing, going to meeting, preaching, and withal, I have quite a missionary zeal. I like also long faces, long prayers, long robes, and learned sermons; nothing suits me better, than to see people who have been for a whole week oppressing their neighbor, grinding the face of the poor, walking in pride and folly, and serving me with all their heart. I say nothing suits me better, Mr. Smith, than to see these people go to meeting on Sunday, with a long religious face on, and to see them pay a portion of their ill-gotten gains for the support of a priest, while he and his hear-

ers pray with doleful groans and awful faces, saying, "Lord, we have left undone the things we ought to have done, and done the things we ought not;" and then, when service is ended, see them turn again to their wickedness, and pursue it greedily all the week, and the next Sabbath repeat the same things. Now, be candid, Mr. Smith; do you not see that these, and all others, who have a form and deny the power, are my good christian children, and that their religion is a help to my cause?

SMITH. Certainly, your reasoning is clear and obvious as to these hypocrites, but you would not be pleased with people getting converted either at camp meeting, or some where else, and then putting their trust in that conversion, and in free grace to save them—would you not be opposed to this?

DEVIL. Why should I have any objection to that kind of religion, Mr. Smith? I care not how much they get converted, nor how much they cry Lord, Lord, nor how much they trust to free grace to save them, so long as they do not do the works that their God has commanded them; I am sure of them at last, for you know all men are to be judged according to their deeds. What does their good Bible say? Does it not say, "not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into my kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." No, no, Mr. Smith, I am not an enemy to religion, and especially to the modern forms of christianity, so long as they deny the power, they are a help to my cause; see how much discord, division, hatred, envy, strife, lying, contention, blindness, and even error and bloodshed, has been produced as the effect of these very systems. By these means I gain millions to my dominion, while at the same time we enjoy the credit of being pious christians; but you, Mr. Smith, you are my enemy, my open and avowed enemy, you have even dared in a sacriligious manner to tear the veil from all these fine systems, and to commence an open attack upon my kingdom, and this even when I had almost all christendom, together with the clergy, and gentlemen of the press, in my favor. How dare you venture thus to commence a revolution without reserve, and without aid or succor, and in the midst of innumerable hosts of my subjects?

SMITH. Why, sir, in the first place, I knew that I had the truth on my side, and that your systems and forms of christianity were so manifestly cerrupt, that one had only to lift the veil from your fooleries on one side, and to present plain and reasonable truth on the other, and the eyes of the people could at once distinguish the difference so clearly that, except they chose darkness rather than light, they would leave your ranks and come over to truth. For instance, what is easier than to show from the history of the past, that a religion of direct revelation was the only system ever instituted by the Lord, and the only one calculated to benefit mankind?—What is easier than to show that this system saved the church from flood, famine, flames, war, division, bondage, doubt, and darkness, many times, and that it is the legitimate way and manner of God's government of his own peculiar people in all ages and dispensations.

DEVIL. To be candid with you, Mr. Smith, I must own that what you have now said, neither myself nor my most able ministers have been able to gainsay by any argument or fact. But then you must recollect that tradition and custom, together with fashion and popular clamor, have in all ages had more effect than plain fact and sound reason. Hence you see we are yet safe, so long as we continue the cry from press and pulpit, and in Sunday schools, and all these things are done away and no longer needed. In this way, though God may speak, they will not hear; angels may minister, and they will not believe; visions may reveal, and they will not be enlightened; prophets may lift their voice, and their warnings pass unheeded; so you see we still have them as safe as we had the people in olden time. God can communicate no message to them which will be examined or heard with any degree of credence or candor. So for all the good they get from God, all communication being cut off, they might as well be without a God. Thus you see I have full influence and control of the multitude by a means far more effectual than argument or reason, and I even teach them that it is a sin to reason, think, or investigate, as it would disturb the even tenor of their pious breathings and devout groans and responses. Smith, you must be extremely ignorant of human nature, as well as of the history of the past, to presume that reason and truth would have much effect with the multitude. Why, sir, look how effectually we warded off the truth at Ephesus, when Paul attempted to address them in the theatre. Strange, that with all these examples before you, you should venture to raise the hue and cry which has so oft been defeated, and this with no better weapon on your side than reason and truth. Indeed, you may thank my christian spirit of forbearance that you have escaped so far without a grid-iron; but take care for the future, I may not always be so mild.

SMITH. But why is your majesty so highly excited against me and my plans of operation, seeing that you consider that you have the multitude perfectly safe; and why so enraged and so fearful of the consequences of my course, and the effect of my weapons, while at the same time you profess to despise them as weak and powerless. Alas, it is too true that you have the multitude safe to all appearance at present, and that truth can seldom reach them: why not then be content and leave me to pursue my calling in peace? I can hardly hope to win to the cause of truth any but the few who think, and these have ever been troublesome to your cause.

DEVIL. True, but then you are, in spite of all my efforts, and that of my fellows, daily thinning our ranks by adding to the number of those who think, and such a thinking is kept up that we are often exposed in some of our most prominent plans, and are placed in an awkward predicament, and who knows what defeat, disgrace, and dishonor may befall the pious cause, if you are suffered to continue your rebellious course.

SMITH. But, Mr. Devil, why, with all these other advantages on your side, do you resort to such mean, weak, and silly fabrications as the Spaulding Story. You profess to be a gentleman, a christian and a cler-

gyman, and you ought for your own sake, and for the sake of your cause to keep up outward appearances of honor and fairness. And now, Mr. Devil, tell the truth for once: you know perfectly well that your Spaulding Story, in which you represent me as an impostor, in connection with Sidney Rigdon, and that we were engaged in palming Solomon Spaulding's romance upon the world as the Book of Mormon, is a lie, a base fabrication, without a shadow of truth, and you know that I found the Original Records of the Nephites, and translated and published the Book of Mormon from them, without ever having heard of the existence of Spaulding, or his romance, or of Sidney Rigdon either. Now, Mr. Devil, this was a mean, disfranchiseful, and underhand trick in you, and one of which even you have reason to be ashamed.

DEVIL. Well, Mr. Smith, to be candid, I acknowledge that what you say is true, and that it was not the most honorable course to the world. But it was you who commenced the war, by publishing that terrible book which we readily recognized as a complete expose of all our false and corrupt christianity, not even keeping back the fact that we had continued during the dark ages, to rob the Scriptures of their plainness, and we feel the utmost alarm and excitement, and without much reflection, in the height of passion, we called a hasty council of Clergy and Editors, and other rascals, in Painesville, Ohio, and, thinking that almost any means was lawful in war, we invented the Spaulding Story, and fathered it upon the poor printer Howe, of Painesville, although Doctor Hulburt [thanks to my aid] was its real author. But mark, Mr. Smith, mark one thing, we had not a face so hard; nor a conscience so abandoned, as to publish this Spaulding Story at the first as a positive fact; we only published it as a conjecture, a mere probability, and this you know, we had a right to do; without once thinking of the amount of evil it would eventually accomplish. But, sir, it was some of my unfortunate clergymen who, more reckless, hardened, and unprincipled, than myself, have ventured to add to each edition of this story, till at last, without my aid or consent, they have set it down for a positive fact, that Solomon Spaulding, Sidney Rigdon, and yourself, have made up the Book of Mormon out of a romance. Now, Mr. Smith, I am glad of this interview with you, as it gives me the opportunity of clearing up my character. I acknowledge with shame that I was guilty of a mean act in helping to hatch up and publish the Spaulding Story as a probability, and I associated with rascals far beneath my dignity, either as a sovereign prince, or religious minister, or even as an old, honorable, and experienced Devil, and for this I beg your pardon. But, really, I must deny the charge of having assisted in making the additions which have appeared in the later editions of that story, in which my former probabilities and mean conjectures are set down for positive facts. No, Mr. Smith, I had no hand in a trick so low and mean; I despise it, as the work of priests and editors alone, without my aid or suggestion, and I do not believe that even the meanest young devils in our dominion would have stooped to such an act.

SMITH. Well, I must give your majesty some credit for once at least,

if what you say is true, but how can you justify your conduct in dishonoring yourself so far, as to stoop to the level of the hireling clergy, and their followers, in still making use of this humbug story [which you affect to despise,] in order to still blind the eyes of the people in regard to the origin of the Book of Mormon.

DEVIL. O! Mr. Smith, it does take so readily among the pious of all sects, that it seems a pity to spoil the fun, and I cannot resist the temptation of carrying out the joke now it is so well rooted in their minds. And you can't think how we devils shake our sides with laughter when we get up in the gallery in some fine church, put on our long face, and assist in singing, and in the devout responses; this done, the Spaulding Story is gravely told from the pulpit, while the pious old clergyman wears a face as long as that of Balaam's beast. All is swallowed down for solid truth by the gaping multitude, while we hang our heads behind the screen, and laugh and wink at each other in silence, as any thing overheard would disturb their worship: and as bad as I am I never wish to disturb those popular modes of worship, which decency requires us to respect. So you see, Mr. Smith, we have our fun to ourselves, at your expense; but, after all, we do not mean any hurt by it, although I must acknowledge, upon the whole, it serves our purpose.

SMITH. Well we will drop the subject, as I want to inquire about some other stories which have had an extensive circulation by means of your editors and priests. For instance, there is the story of my attempting to walk on the water and getting drowned the numerous stories of my attempting to raise the dead as a mere trick of imposition, and getting detected in it; and the stories of my attempting to appear as an angel, and getting caught and exposed in the same; and besides this, you have me killed by some means every little while. Now, you old hypocrite, you know that none of these things ever happened, or any circumstance out of which to make them; and that so far from this I deny the principle of a man's working miracles, either real or pretended, as a proof of his mission, and contend that miracles, if wrought at all, were wrought for benevolent purposes, and without being designed to convince the unbeliever. Why, then, do you resort to such silly stories in your opposition to me, seeing that you have many other advantages? Not that I would complain of such weak opposition, as if it were calculated to hinder my progress, but rather to mention it as something well calculated to injure your own cause, by betraying your weakness and folly.

DEVIL [laughing]—Ha, ha, ha, eh, e, O! Mr. Smith; I just put out these stories for a joke, in order to have my own fun, and without the most distant idea, that any being on earth would be so silly as to give any credence to them; but judge my surprise and joy, when I found priests, editors, and people, so depraved in their judgment and tastes, so in love with lies, and so ready to catch at every thing against their common enemy, as they call you, that these jocose stories of ours, actually look in their credulous cranium for grave truths, and were passed

about by them, and sought after and swallowed by the multitude as greedily as a young robin swallows a worm when it is dropped into its mouth, which is stretched at full width, while its eyes are closed. So you see, Mr. Smith, that without meaning any particular harm to you, I have my fun, and am besides so unexpectedly fortunate as to reap great advantages from circumstances where I had neither expected nor calculated. So I hope you will at least bear my folly, nor set down aught in malice, where no malice was intended.—You know we devils are poor miserable creatures at best, and were it not for our fun, and our gambling, and our religious exercises, we would have nothing to kill time.

SMITH. Well, well. I see plainly you will have a creep out some how or other, rather than bear the disgrace and stigma which your conduct would seem to deserve. But forgetting the past, let me inquire what course you intend to pursue in future, and whether this warfare between you and me, will still be prosecuted? And if so, what course do you intend to pursue hereafter? You know my course. I have long since taken the field at the head of a mere handful of brave patriots, who are true as the pole stars, and firm as the rock of Gibraltar. They laugh at and despise your silly stories, and with nothing but a few plain simple weapons of truth and reason, aided by revelation, we boldly make war upon your whole dominion, and will never quit the field, dead or alive, till we win the battle, and deprive you of every foot of ground you possess. This is our purpose; and although your enemy, I am bold and generous enough to declare it. So you see I am not for taking any unwary advantage, notwithstanding all your pious tricks upon me and the public.

DEVIL. Mr. Smith, I am too much of the gentleman not to admire your generous frankness and your boldness, and too much of a christian not to appreciate your honesty; but as you commenced this war, and I only acted at first on the defensive, with the pure motive of defending my kingdom. I think this ought in some degree at least to excuse the means I have made use of. And that you may have no reason to complain in future, I will now fully open to you the plan of my future campaign. Here [pulling out his bundle of hand bills] is what I was doing this morning, when by chance we met; and by the reading of which you will see my course. Heretofore I have endeavored to throw contempt upon your course, in hopes to smother it and to keep it under, as something beneath the notice of us well informed christians. For this cause I have generally caused it to be represented, that you was a very ignorant silly man, and that your followers were made up of the unthinking and vulgar, and not worthy of notice. But the fact is, you have made such rapid strides, and have poured forth such a torrent of intelligence, and gathered such a host of talented and thinking men around you, that I can no longer conceal these facts under a bushel of burning lies, and therefore I now change my purpose and my man-

ner of attack. I shall endeavor to magnify you and your success from this time forward, and to make you appear as much larger than the reality, as you have heretofore fallen short. If my former course has excited contempt, and caused you to be despised, and thus kept you out of notice, my future course will be to excite jealousy, fear, and alarm, till all the world is ready to arise and crush you, as if you were a legion of Sampsons, commanded by Bonaparte. This, I think, will be a more successful in putting you down, than the ignoble course I have heretofore taken---so prepare for the worst.

SMITH. I care as little for your magnifying powers, as I have heretofore done for your contempt; in fact, I will endeavor to go ahead to that degree, that what you will say in regard to my great influence and power, though intended by you for a falsehood, shall prove to be true, and by so doing I shall be prepared to receive those whom you may excite against me, and to give them so warm a reception, that they will never discover your intended falsehood, but will find all your representations of my greatness to be a reality; so do your worst, I defy you.

DEVIL. Well, time will determine whether the earth is to be governed by a prophet and under the sway of truth, or whether myself, and my christian friends will still prevail. But remember Smith, remember, I beseech you for your own good beware what you are doing. I have the Priests and Editors with a few exceptions, under my control, together with wealth, popularity and honor. Count well the cost before you again plunge into this warfare. Good bye, Mr. Smith, I must away to raise my recruits and prepare for a campaign.

SMITH. Good bye to your Majesty.

(They both touch hats and turn away.)

DEVIL. (Recollecting himself and suddenly turning back,) O! say, Mr. Smith, one word more if you please, [in a low and confidential tone, with his mouth close to his ear,] after all, what is the use of parting as enemies; the fact is, you go in for the wheat and I for the tares. Both must be harvested; are we not fellow laborers? I can make no use of the wheat, nor you of the tares, even if we had them; we each claim our own, I for the burning, and you for the barn. Come, then, give the poor old Devil his due, and let's be friends.

SMITH. Agreed; I neither want yours nor you mine; a man free from prejudices, will give the devil his due. Come, here is the right land of fellowship, you to the tares, and I to the wheat, [they shake hands cordially.]

DEVIL. Well, Mr. Smith, we have talked a long while, and are agreed at last; you are a noble and generous fellow; and would not bring a railing accusation against even a poor old Devil, nor cheat him of one cent. Come, it is a warm day, and I feel as though it is my treat. Let us go down to mammy Brewer's Celler and take something to drink.

SMITH—Agreed, Mr. Devil, you appear very generous now.

[They enter the cellar together.]

DEVIL. Good morning, Mrs Brewer; I make you acquainted with my good friend, Mr. Smith, the prophet. [The landlady smiling a little and looking a little surprised,] why, Mr. Devil, is that you; sit down, you're tired; but you don't say this is Mr. Smith, your greatest enemy? I am quite surprised. What will you have, gentlemen, for if you can drink together, I think all the world ought to be friends.

DEVIL. As we are both temperance men, and ministers, I think perhaps a glass of spruce beer a-piece will be all right—what say you Mr. Smith?

SMITH. As you please, your Majesty.

[They now take the beer.]

DEVIL. [Holding up his glass.] Come, Mr. Smith, your good health, I propose we offer a toast.

SMITH. Well, proceed.

DEVIL. Here's to my good friend Joe Smith may all sorts of ill luck befall him, and may he never be suffered to enter my kingdom, either in time or eternity, for he would almost make me forgot that I am a devil, and make a gentleman of me, while he gently overthrows my government, at the same time that he wins my friendship.

SMITH. Here's to his Satanic Majesty; may he be driven the from earth, and be forced to put to sea in a stone canoe with an iron paddle, and may the canoe sink, and a shark swallow the canoe and its royal freight, and an alligator swallow the shark, and may the alligator be bound in the north west corner of hell, the door be locked, key lost, and a blind man hunting for it.

(Exit Devil, Prophet, and all.)

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN TRADITION, REASON, AND SCRIPTUS

Mr. Tradition: Good morning, Mr. Reason. I understand that you have lately embraced the Book of Mormon as a divine record, and believe Joseph Smith to be a prophet inspired of God. I am astonished that intelligent men like yourself should be so easily deluded.

Mr. Reason. I am not sensible of having embraced any delusion. But as man is but a short-sighted mortal, and liable to be deceived, I shall be under infinite obligations to you, Mr. Tradition, if you will have the kindness to point out the deception.

Mr. Tradition. Why sir, the canon of Scripture is full; and the very idea of any more revelation is the height of absurdity.

Mr. Reason. Well, Neighbor Tradition, if you can prove your last assertion, viz: that "The canon of Scripture is full," you will do me a great favor, and save a soul from error.

Mr. Tradition. I am pleased to see you so willing to be undeceived. There is hope in your case; for a world of evidence can be brought forward to prove that there is to be no more revelation. Why, sir, our fathers, our mothers, our kindred, our neighbors, and our nation, have all testified that the Scriptures are full. Thousands of Protestant reformers among every class and society, have borne the same testimony. And

finally, almost every Christian denomination for many centuries past, have proclaimed, boldly and publicly, that the volume of Scriptures was completed by the Apostles, and that there was to be no more. What more evidence do you want?

Mr. Reason. I hope, Mr. Tradition, that you will not be offended when I tell you that the "world of evidence" which you have now adduced, is not evidence, but merely tradition, the assertions of uninspired men without proof. How am I to know that all or any part of these witnesses, to which you refer, testify the truth? Do they prove their assertions by the scriptures? If not, how do they know that the canon of Scripture is full? Must I believe and put my trust in their foolish traditions, and vain assertions without one scriptural proof? 'Cursed,' saith Isaiah, "Is he that trusteth in man, or maketh flesh his arm."

Mr. Tradition. Do you suppose that so many millions of people are deceived upon this subject?

Mr. Reason. If they found their conclusions upon their own imaginations and vain traditions they are just as liable to be deceived as the millions of heathen who have deceived *themselves* with the vain traditions of their fathers. And now Mr Tradition, if you will furnish us with some scriptural evidence to support your assertions, you will confer upon me a great favor; but away with unfounded traditions.

Mr. Tradition. I am not much of a scriptorian myself, but depend chiefly upon the ministers for scriptural knowledge. Ah! yonder comes my old friend, the minister, who has studied the Bible and preached these forty years. He will show you that the bible contains all that God ever has revealed, or ever will reveal to man,

(Enter the Rev. Mr. Scriptus, with a Bible in his hand.)

Good morning, Mr. Scriptus. I am happy to see you. You have arrived just in the right time. Your services are much needed. Mr. Scriptus, I introduce you to my unfortunate neighbor Reason, who has lately embraced that fatal delusion—the Book of Mormon as a divine revelation. He seems to be an honest man; and it is a pity that he should be so imposed upon. Will you, Mr. Scriptus, have the kindness to show him, by the Bible, that there is to be no more revelation?

Mr. Scriptus. It is to be greatly lamented that any honest man should be so grossly deceived. But, Mr. Reason, are you willing to admit the Scriptures as evidence?

Mr. Reason. Most certainly. The scriptures are esteemed very highly, both by myself and by all who believe the book of Mormon. And I can assure you, that I shall receive all evidence drawn from that source with the greatest satisfaction. And if you really believe that I am deluded, I earnestly desire that you should bring forward the strongest and most convincing arguments that you are in possession of, that I may be reclaimed.

Mr. Scriptus. I will read to you, Mr. Reason, the 15, 16 and 17 verses of the iii chap of II Timothy. "From a child thou hast known the

holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

You will perceive; Mr. Reason, that Timothy had enough Scripture when he was a child, to make him wise unto salvation; and what necessity was there for any more? Could he be benefitted by any more.

Mr. Reason. Will you please to tell me, Mr. Scriptus, what Scriptures Timothy was acquainted with when he was a child?

Mr. Scriptus. The Old Testament, I suppose; for the New Testament was not yet written.

Mr. Reason. Then according to your argument; the New Testament is useless, inasmuch as the Old was able to make Timothy wise unto salvation. What a pity it was that the Lord and his angels, while John was on the Isle of Patmos, did not know that mankind had enough Scripture years before, or in the days of Timothy's childhood; it would have saved them the trouble of revealing that lengthy revelation to John, and saved him the trouble of writing it and saved mankind from delusion in believing it. How long is it, Mr. Scriptus, since you made the important discovery that all the Scriptures given since Timothy's childhood are useless?

Mr. Scriptus. I must confess, Mr. Reason, that I never thought of the arguments which you have now advanced; and I clearly perceive that there is no evidence in that passage against more revelations being given; but I think that you must be convinced by the two following passages that we have enough to perfect the man of God, and thoroughly furnish him unto all good works.

Mr. Reason. I do not perceive, Sir, any such declaration in the passages to which you refer. It does not say that enough Scripture is given by inspiration of God, to make the man of God perfect, &c., that there is no necessity for any more. But it says that "all Scripture is given &c." Leaving the man of God to be perfected by *all Scripture* which should come to his knowledge, given at any period of time, indeed, as a proof that more Scripture was given after Paul wrote this, you are referred to that given on the Isle of Patmos many years afterwards.

Mr. Scriptus. I perceive, Neighbor Reason, that you have a happy faculty of overturning my arguments. Your reasons are so very plain that I cannot withstand their force, and only marvel at the weakness of my own arguments. But I have one more passage of Scripture left, which I think is so pointed and definite against any additional Scripture, that it will be your turn next to yield the argument; and renounce the delusive doctrine of more revelation. It will be found in the last chapter of John's Revelations. I will read it, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall

add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." This, I consider, friend Reason, to be positive proof that the canon of Scriptures is full, and no more to be added.

Mr. Reason. Well, Mr. Scriptus, as you have fled, to your strong hold and last refuge, the battering ram of Reason will try its strength upon it, by asking a few questions. Is there any thing in this passage which you have just read, that prohibits God from adding more revelations?

Mr. Scriptus. O no. It is "man" who is under restraint, and not God.

Mr. Reason. You perceive, then, that God might give ten thousand more revelations, for aught there is contained in that passage.

Mr. Scriptus. But do you not think that the idea is there indirectly conveyed that God would give no more?

Mr. Reason. Surely not. For the same restraint was placed upon man as early as the days of Moses, saying, "That thou shalt not add nor diminish to the words which I command you." Would you not have considered the children of Israel very foolish, if they had said to Moses, that the canon of Scriptures was full? Yet they would have been as much justified in drawing the conclusion from the caution given in the book of Deuteronomy, as we are from the book of John's prophecy.

Mr. Scriptus. I perceive the strength of your reasoning. You have overturned my strongest hold; and I know of no other scripture that conveys the most distant idea that the volume of Scriptures was completed by the Apostles.

I find, friend Reason, that I have been too much under the influence of my neighbor Tradition, to judge of things according to reason, and shall henceforth endeavor to shun his company, and shall esteem it as a great favor, if you will permit me to associate more frequently with you, for I am highly delighted with the soundness of the reasons you have advanced, and think that you have honorably extricated yourself from the charge of delusion.

Mr. Tradition, who had attentively listened to the conversation, became very much excited on hearing himself so lightly spoken of, and abruptly left the room, muttering the following soliloquy: My old friends, Reason and Scriptus, have both forsaken me and treated me with contempt. But I don't care. Whatever my fathers believed I will believe too; for my great grandfather, Mr. Heathen Tradition, was highly respected by millions, and died a happy martyr in testimony of our cause, and my grandmother, Mrs. Roman Catholic, and my own dear mother, Mrs. Protestant, with all of her numerous descendants, have been almost inflexible in the fate of their fathers. And of all the Tradition family but a very few apostatise and they are generally led away by the unpopular Reason and Scriptus families.