

LETTER FROM REVEREND JOHN H. BRUCE,  
PROTESTANT MINISTER

Milroy, Rush Co. Ind.  
July 18th 1843

Mr. Joshua Bruce

Revn`d and dear Sir. after So long a time I take up my pen to acknowledge the receipt of yours which came to hand some time last year. I was truly glad to hear from you all & it offered me great satisfaction to hear from my relations. Altho I never had the oportunity of Seeing you, yet the reception of a letter from you always does me good and particularly So because of your age and experience in the Christian Ministry. It would be a source of much comfort to me to visit you and your country which is the land of my birth, if circumstances would permit but So long as my health is good, I cannot leave my work, for I consider it of more importance to try to Save Souls, than to Spend my time in the gratification of worldly curiosity-

You wished me to let you know Some thing about the Mormons. I will say first they are Situate[d] in the State [of] Illinois on the Bank of the Mississippi River. they have a large town probably 20,000 Inhabitants. the country round is dencely Settled with them. Jo. Smith is Prophet Priest and King amongst them. Smith has been Imprisoned several times but the Mormons reskue him by force. he was arrested last month & put in Prison for Shooting Govenor Boggs and 350 armed men went and reskued him. he and his followers are pursuing precisely the course that Mahomet and his followers pursued. they are training a heavy Body of troops every day. they Steal almost ever thing they can in the vicinity in which they live. if a drove of Beef cattle passes through their country they frequently drive a number of them a way. if forbidden they answer that the Lords has use for them & has sent them for them.

In reference to their Religious tenets they believe in the eternity of Matter they believe that God is

Matter and is possessed with all the Qualities and atributes of man they are Arians upon the doctrine of the trinity they Say that there has not been a true church since the fourth century, the woman then went into the wilderness and was delivered of a child and the child was caught up to heaven. They say that the woman was the church the child was the Priesthood hence the priesthood was taken from the curch until 1830 when it was given to Jo. Smith. they say that Baptism is for or in order to the remission of Sins. they profess to possess all the merracalous gifts that were possessed by the Apostles--

Their Book of Mormon contradicts our Scriptures in a variety of places: 1st the Law of Moses only authorized two orders of Priests and they were to be of the house of Levi or of Aaron. if a stranger (or one of another family) attempted to Sacrifice at the Altar they were put to death, but Lehi (in the book of Mormon) is of the tribe of Joseph. & yet amongst his people he is an acceptable priest unto God & the people and that too under the Mosaic Law which States positively that no priest could be of any other Family that those named. again their Book Says that Jessus was born in (or at) Jerusalem and John Baptised in Bethabara, but represent the christian institution as practised amongst the Israelites. Long before christ was born, and the Jews were called christians while under the Law of Moses, if we had room we could present you with many more. the Orthography and syntax of the whole work is very bad; it is packed from beginning to end, with I Saith unto you-- ye Saith unto him &c. and it is without exaggeration, the meanest Book in chrisendom that is writen in the English Language, and yet it is translated from golden plates through Stone Spectacles by Jo Smith who was divinely inspired to do this work. I suppose then that the imperfections of it are to be attributed to the Almighty. It has not one good Sentence in it, save the profanation of those Sentences taken from the oracles of God. I would as soon compare a bat to the American Eagle, a mouse to the mammoth, or the deformities of a Apectre to him whom John Saw in the Patmos as to contrast it with one chapter in all the writings of the Jewish or christian Scriptures. it

is as certainly the fabrication of man as Satan is the Father of Lies or darkness the offspring of night.

I have written more upon Mormonism than I intended but I would just Say that their principles I so perfectly abhor that I cannot write, without feeling my indignation arising against them--

The times are pretty hard in this country money is scarce the times are rising however We have been favored with the most glorious & universal revival of religion in this country we have ever witnessed both in this state & in Ohio it seemes in some parts of the country that if Milenial glory was about to burst in upon us, & when neighbor shall not Say to neighbor know the Lord when all Shall know him from the least to the greatest.

We are all well at preasant I am living in Milroy, Rush Co Ind. the last time I herd from Mother She was well So of my Brother & Brother-in-Law, with their Families.

Our Conference will meet in October 19th. I wish you to write to me Soon, that I may get an answer before I leave.

I remain yours as ever,  
John H. Bruce.

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Source: A photocopy of the original manuscript, along with a typescript, is located in the Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah, MSS A 3023.