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## A GLIMPSE OF THE OHIO VALLEY

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### Letter 12 - The Sects (Part 3 of 3)

The transition from the Pietist to Visionary or Illuminate was perhaps rightly attributed to the famous Broli alias Count Leon or Müller, who claimed to be both these characters. He greeted Rapp in a letter (later published) from Frankfurt am Main as "the Patriarch of the New Jerusalem." He was solemnly accepted in Rapp's Economy, but soon created in the bosom of that community intrigues that were surely unworthy of this supposed Messiah. Thus sometime later, after a long and bitter fight that cost Rapp many thousand dollars, Broli was expelled together with a large following that he had torn away from Rapp in the hope of ruining him. In order to put this scheme into action he and his followers settled just a bit to the south on the opposite bank of the Ohio River in Phillippsburg which he immediately began to develop. Here he plotted his own group's foundation together with a Mr. Göntgen, former chief librarian of Frankfurt, or so he signed himself in a letter to Rapp. Broli also started his own religion and mightily promised that he would free and purify it from Christianity and from the countless sectarian beliefs and from ecclesiastical or papal domination. He promised this in a printed German prospectus that was the forerunner of his soon to be published *Trumpet of Sion*. However, while he awaited the resurrection of buried Christianity, it was

suddenly announced that Broli had absconded during the night. He fled with a few of his intimate friends and left behind his books and similar valuable possessions which were taken as compensation or were sold by those who were left stranded there.<sup>20</sup> And thus Broli's Messianic role ended finally from lack of money even though he claimed to possess the key to the secrets of alchemy. Unfortunately, he was unable to concoct anything valuable, except for coal from the banks of the Ohio river. Rumor has it that he went to Texas where he died.

Comparable to Broli's religious adventures is another fanatical group that falls within the same epoch and the same category of cunning fanatics but it was located farther north. I refer to the Mormons or believers in the "Golden Bible," that is, the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Jews and pagans. Mormonism is the fruit of religious fanaticism combined with fraud, cunning and ignorance. It arose from the kind of Yankee who would like to become rich without hard work. The founders are the Smiths, father and son, who were formerly peddlers, but lately became preachers. Associated with them is a wealthy landowner named Harris, a man of the wildest imagination, full of biblical information and quotations, a disciple and admirer of all sorts of revival meetings.<sup>21</sup> The story begins with a treasure hunt in the region between Lake

Canandaigua and the little town of Palmyra in the northwestern part of New York State. The Messrs. Smith had often heard that whole chests full of hidden treasure were said to have been discovered on the coast of New England. So they kept their disciples busy for a long time searching for these chests to the extent that even today these excavations are still found in that region. Their efforts were fruitless, until finally a Mr. Ringdon was called in. He was a renowned treasure hunter from the vicinity of Painesville, Ohio, on Lake Erie. He was also an ex-preacher of various denominations and a teacher of all sorts of morality. He knew well how to make a magnificent appearance at camp meetings, prayer meetings, revivals, etc. He had just begun shoveling on a certain spot (soon called the Golden Bible Hill) when it was reported that Joseph Smith had a vision pointing out that exact hill as the place where a chest would be found buried deep in the ground and containing golden plates on which the Books of Mormon were written. These plates, engraved with indecipherable letters, were supposedly buried there by a wandering tribe of the children of Israel long before the birth of Christ. Only someone inspired by heaven could be able to read the document.<sup>22</sup> Joe Smith played his part beautifully. He was soon proclaimed and chosen as the elect of God to appear before the world. By reason of this call as the Second Messiah he would announce the word of life everywhere and convert the world and lead it into the New Jerusalem.

Now indeed a treasure was found. Many joined this sect and laid all their wealth at the feet of their apostle. Wives often separated from their husbands unless they also were willing to follow the new light. Painesville in Geauga County, Ohio, was regarded at first as the Promised Land. However, the prophet soon beckoned toward a more distant kingdom on the opposite side of the Mississippi. Whole caravans of families followed him from this northeastern county of

Ohio. Individual followers proclaimed their teachings everywhere and preached in favor of departure. They even wanted to take over Jackson County in Missouri on the pretext that they were commanded by God to do so (they quoted the Book of Mormon). But while the local inhabitants at first laughed at such claims, they soon felt compelled to defend their rights with weapons. Then blood flowed until finally the civil government intervened and, generally faithful to the Constitution, it used its power to set limits to religious fanaticism when civil laws were involved and broken.

I shall not enter into an analysis of Mormon doctrines, which are spread by means of their printing press which strives to demonstrate the authenticity of the Book of Mormon as the necessary key to the Bible. But I will merely quote a few excerpts from a reply sent from Palmyra on May 28, 1831, by a Mormon to one of his skeptical friends in Ohio. "Since I have only a few moments to deal with a subject about which you require a lengthy explanation, it is impossible for me to answer, even at sufficient length, your questions, important as they are. A serious study of the Book of Mormon opens a field that would be too extensive for the limitations of a mere letter. It necessarily involves a discussion of both Old and New Testaments. It is the key to all the prophets whose writings have been so little understood for so many centuries and have given rise to so much speculation even among those who call themselves Christians. The Book of Mormon must, therefore, be regarded as the main textbook in this search to discover the truth of Holy Scripture since it is no less astonishing than true that neither the Old nor the New Testament is understood. A veil covers all flesh when the Bible is read. This is why everyone is so confused as to whether they should believe in it or not. But once this veil is lifted from our eyes, then the Book of Mormon is accepted and revered without any further contradiction. The words of

Ezekiel (ch. 37, v. 17) agree loud and clear with Holy Scripture in this connection that both these books cannot be separated. With the collapse of one the other falls." Following this quotation the letter explains that Holy Scripture points to a merely temporal salvation for the Israelites when it uses the expression "chosen people", and that the fullness of time will come when all heathens will come to Sion and Israel will be restored. The sword of judgment hangs over the present generation. All of the religious sects constitute a Babylon, the city of confusion, but the New Jerusalem will be erected in America. And so the most important statements of the prophets will now be fulfilled. Our time in which the second coming of Christ will take place must be accompanied by great signs, etc., because all this is the preparation for the Millennium.<sup>23</sup>

Such millennia and such second resurrections, etc., are dreamt of and foretold by many other smaller sects and are announced by farmers, shoemakers and women. They crop up every day and then disappear (like will-o-the-wisps among the swamps of American primeval forests where they are especially bright and visible). I will not speak of the log cabin meetings of the so-called "New Lights" as the newly created ones fall themselves, or of the handshakes with which they begin their meetings or of the holy kiss used by some (for this also is contained in Holy Scripture), nor of the scandalous conduct of the Adamites and other peculiar aberrations.

This is more or less the picture of the sects in America. It is basically merely a reappearance, a copy of what has been observed in Europe for a long time. This is partly a necessary result of the original cause which must be sought in the sixteenth century. This is the fruit of the countless church reforms which have flourished everywhere in the world, and especially in the New World and which can be seen among that class of people who generally, I must confess, are more ignorant than malicious or perhaps are

suffering from an odd sort of soul-sickness. Indeed Americans are not lacking in intelligence or schools or, least of all, in Bibles. Our learned Mr. von Haller nicely and correctly remarks that unbelief is unlikely and that disbelief in the old truths is belief in the new falsehood. Therefore, all these sects keep multiplying as soon as they are torn loose from the organism of true Christianity and become unending and despicable. A firm faith in something higher and supernatural, namely, in God and revelation, can no more be stifled in the human heart or be annihilated than a human body even when it has decayed and rotted. Just as all its component parts meet new elements and unite with them and produce new and strange forms, so also these religious sects mingle and are modified and emerge in an endless process of disintegration and contamination. They plunge from error to error, from blind alley to blind alley, wherein thousands of souls gasp out a life whose eternal salvation depends on truths that they vainly fought over, vainly sought, or pretended to accept. This is precisely the idea that stirs up bad people or sophists, who esteem themselves wise, to pose the question to mankind, "Why does an all-powerful God who is so concerned about men's souls, allow mankind to fall into all sorts of error? Why does a Sublime Being tolerate such contradictions even among Christians? This is a scandal because of which many educated people in the United States turn to indifferentism. As I remarked before, it consists generally not so much in a malicious or systematic denial as in the commonly held thought that all religions are equal or optional. In fact, indifferentism ends in loss of all religion. For this reason the latest revival campaigns of the sects are striving to reawaken a dormant religious life.

The Catholic Church can no longer ignore the spirit of curiosity and the restless search for proof on the part of agnostics. This spirit follows from the rebellious nature of all sects whose whole evolution either shared in it or had plenty of time

and opportunity to be infected with it. Inquiry is now a logical consequence of faith in order to find the rational service of God, in a word, the *obsequium rationabile* of the Apostle of the Gentiles. For this reason we note the fear and the latest upheavals of various sects and the outcries of their prophets, for example, Lorenz Dow and others. The tolerant attitude of ordinary people cannot satisfy the need for a united faith in this chaos of misbegotten creeds, nor arouse complete trust and that charity which should unite and embrace all people.<sup>24</sup> One hopes for the realization and fulfillment of their desire for unity, a unity which can only result from the restoration of dismembered Christianity to its ancient unity.

The Catholic Church is steering a sure course among such reefs in the sight of the entire United States and never feels ashamed of the Cross, its exclusive proper emblem in America. For some years the Church has aroused more attention because it is more wide-spread and better known for its unity and its changeless dogmas, for the uniformity and dignity of its worship, for the learning of its teachers, and the excellence of its schools. For this reason so many of our separated brethren admire the Church and even exclaim in their writings: "The Catholic Church in America is altogether different from the Church in Europe." Naturally this follows from the fact that they can now see and hear and experience the opposite of what they were accustomed to hear and believe from their childhood.<sup>25</sup> The wide-spread cloud of gross prejudice seems suddenly to be thinning and dissipating more and more<sup>26</sup>, so that the truth of the Catholic religion appeals to the better and more reasonable people of all classes through their serious study of its doctrines. As a result, many of them are led to our altar and to inner peace. I need hardly mention that even senators from Maryland and Missouri and several lawyers from various states and some Protestant preachers (the Bishop of Vincennes told me a

few days ago about two recent convert preachers) were received into the bosom of our Holy Church.<sup>27</sup> What temporal motive could have prompted these men to take such a step? Was it the money and riches of Catholics? Catholics are generally poor but industrious and thrifty. Or was it ambition for high office and honors? But the number of Catholic voters is one to six in most States, not to mention the politico-religious intrigues to which an ambitious man would be exposed in such an endeavor.<sup>28</sup>

But enough! The one thing that keeps the older sects going and spreading at least nominally is lacking to Catholics, namely, their proud status and money aristocracy. Indeed, centuries of history teach us to survive this handicap of lack of transitory wealth. In fact, our holy religion has pointed out through the centuries the importance of Christ's promise and of the spirit and strength of eternal truth. The Church holds out the enduring consolation of Christ's call: "Go, I am with you all days even to the end of the world. Go forth and teach all nations and baptize them. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Mt. 28, v. 19,20)

And so, my good patron, perhaps I may have burdened you with too many details of the real state of the Far West in its struggle on behalf of religion and civilization. However, as Your Reverence requested I have indicated in this hasty sketch and tried to clarify the state of the Catholic Church in our dark, shadowy primeval forests. You now have a good idea of the struggle which the Bride of Christ fights in this wilderness "in hardship and want, in journeys and enduring labor, endangered by false brethren" (2 Cor., ch. 11).

May this struggle be aided by the prayers and help of all good men on behalf of the salvation of distant brothers in Christ and of future generations!



## NOTES

(20) Excerpts and characterizations from public and, as far as possible, authentic news releases. Cf. "Letters about Mormonism" in the *Catholic Press*, Dec. 22, 1851.

(21) Joe [Smith] actually supplied a translation of that document with the aid of a higher inspiration. I myself saw the copy printed in Palmyra. It is a good-sized octavo volume, full of the strangest stories composed in a style that imitates biblical language, but shows traces of Yankee idioms. In short, it is worthy of an author of the Talmud or the Koran.

(22) From the political point of view, the authors of the Constitution of the United States hoped to win not only lasting duration for its provisions amid the manifold and diverse forms of religion, but also a sure guarantee for keeping internal peace by granting equal rights which all would strive to respect. For this reason a general outburst of indignation arose some years ago when the Presbyterians tried to contrive a union between Church and State. They hoped thereby to become the ruling Church.

(23) To learn about the origin of the Golden Bible see texts in Revelation, 5, 1; Isaiah, 19, 11; Daniel, 12, 9; Isaiah, 8, 16; Hosea, 8, 12; Habakuk, 2, 2 and 3; Psalm 75, 11; and Deut. 33, 19. To find out about the original inhabitants of America, see Genesis, 49, 22-26; Deuteronomy, 33, 13-16; Zachary, 4, 12; Revelation, 11, 4; Micheas, 4, 8; Isaiah, 2; Jeremiah, 33, 5 and 15; Isaiah, 11, 21; Zachary, 3 8; Psalm 80, 15, and so forth. As proof that a branch of Israel was separated and planted elsewhere, read Ezekial, 17, 22-23. When the dry land of America was populated after the Deluge, read Genesis, 11, 8ff. How inexhaustible and always new and always has been the "dead" Bible!

(24) A proof of how far religious tolerance can go is had in the many cases where children of better and wealthier Protestant families are expected to choose their religion only after they are old enough to make a personal choice. However, daughters are seldom allowed this choice. They must wait and see what choice of belief their future husband will make. Thus they hope to ensure domestic peace and happiness. That is how far good nature and frequently self-interest will go!

(25) Regretfully we still have all too many examples of the shabby insolence that crops up in sectarian publications.

It is a shame that a newspaper like *The Protestant* printed in New York should try to justify Protestantism with that sort of ammunition. These publications collect old wives tales about convents and grind them out with all their dirty insinuations. These tales are similar to the ones that Protestant Europe dished out against the Catholic Church years ago. Among other things these wretched sectarian leaders assured their misguided followers, who had little contact with Catholics, that Catholics immediately kill all heretics wherever they find them, and that their priests eat no meat and have horns and goats' feet, etc. We are speaking from experience, but even these falsehoods eventually worked in favor of the Church.

(26) The members of the United States Senate gave proof of this when they chose almost unanimously a Catholic priest, Father Pise, as their chaplain, for the duration of the 1833 session of Congress. Some years ago it would have been loudly denounced as a crime if a Catholic priest had appeared in the Senate chamber of the Capitol in Washington and offered a prayer while wearing a cassock, surplice and stole! Before that, in 1826, John England, Bishop of Charleston, South Carolina, often preached in the Hall of Representatives at their invitation.

(27) The greatest increase of converts to our growing Church comes naturally from our various schools and from mixed marriages, and also from death bed conversions and from hospitals. The true religion wishes the salvation of all men and is no respecter of persons. Indeed, our Church had earned the respect of everyone who has experienced examples of the self-sacrifice of its servants; for example, the gentle care of the Sisters of Charity. Once when asked about his religion on board a steamship, a certain gentleman answered, to the applause of all, "I belong to the religion of the Sisters," even though the questioners boasted that they believed in nothing.

(28) Thus Vice President VanBuren was hysterically denounced as a Catholic when he was Secretary of State because he sent a respectful letter of congratulations to our present Holy Father on the occasion of his election as Pope.

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This concludes our presentation of the letters of Bishop Henni, as published in his 1836 booklet. We hope to run a biographical sketch of him, concentrating on his work in Ohio, in the future.

## Early Baptismal Records of St. Joseph's near Somerset Additions and Corrections

In the very first *Bulletin* published by Monsignor Herman Mattingly for the Society in 1975, and in subsequent issues running into 1976, were published the "Early Baptism Records of St. Joseph's Somerset, Ohio" from 1818 to 1834. These he copied from the parish register, the original at that time being located in the archives of the Dominican Fathers at their House of Studies in Washington, D.C.

To make these records more readily available, the original publication is being scanned into an electronic file, with the intention of posting it on the Society's website. In order to make the posted records as accurate as possible, your editor has compared the published version with the original, using two extant microfilm copies of the original. In doing this, it has become apparent what a great debt is owed to Monsignor Mattingly for his pioneering work, for this book is a confusing mass of records in different scripts and in different arrangements, quite difficult to read in places, with some records scattered around in odd chronological order, and with some records repeated and changed in the process, sometimes with additional information, sometimes with less, and sometimes with different dates.

Using two microfilms, one with a sharper image and the other with better contrast, and a reader/printer to make prints that are more legible than the film, and having the advantage of working with the first transcription and index, none of which were available to Monsignor Mattingly, it has been possible to improve the transcription, make corrections, and find additional records that were missed in the first effort.

Records that were missed in 1975 are published below, along with records in which additional or

corrected names of the baptised person or parents were noticed. Many other corrections will be made in the version to be posted on the website, including date changes, corrected names of sponsors, and some additional notes on the names of the priests.

### 1819

- Feb. 2 Pius Chambers, of John and Elizabeth Chambers
- May 13 Conrad and Andrew Snider, twins
- July 10 Sarah Shearn, of Patrick and Mary Shearn [not Sheridan]
- Nov. (?) 13 John Crogan, of William & Mary
- Nov. 15 Shadrick [not Frederick] Draper, of John and Priscilla

### 1820

- Jan. 15 Sarah Ann of [blank] Musselman, sponsors H. Dittoe and Sarah Fink
- Apr. 7 Jane Delong, of Edward & Rachael
- June 11 Catherine Beckwith, of Tobias & Bridget
- June 25 Richard H. Dugan, of Peter & Maria
- July 22 Thomas E. Hart
- Aug. 18 [not 12] John Gallighar, of Peter & Bridget [not Michael & Mary]
- Aug. 19 Sarah Warden, of John & Ann
- Oct. 30 Mararet Waterhouse [not Water]
- Nov. 5 Mary Ann Collopy, of William & Mary
- Nov. 28 Barnabas Burns, of "Andras" & Sarah [not James and Margaret]
- Nov. 29 Adah Archer, of George and Rebecca [previously illegible]
- Nov. 29 Joseph Carrol, of George and Ann
- Nov. 30 [previously illegible] Simon Lindicum, of David [not Daniel] & Mary

### 1821

- May 19 [previously Nov. or Dec.] Elizabeth Megegan [i.e. McGahan, not Morgan], of Barney and [blank]

July 29 Mary, daughter of John & Christina Barry  
Nov. 21 Drusilla [not Priscilla] Arnold, of Samuel and Elizabeth. [The year is not obvious; it is after May, 1820 and before 1824.]

#### 1822

Feb. 3 Thomas Logue [not Logan], of Patrick and [blank]  
Oct. 5 Mary Rebecca Harden, adult, sponsor Catherine Crossin

#### 1823

June 11 Eliza Ann Alexander, of Andrew & Mary, sponsor Susan Bain  
Oct. 2 Catherine Lantern, of George Lantern & Mary Shipton, spons. Barnabas Mullin  
Oct. 8 Greenberry Blacker, of Luke Blacker and Rebecca Aulban; sponsor Joseph Myres  
Nov. 26 Catherine Susan Conry of George Conry & Mary Walter; spons. Philip Flowers & Susanna Burgoon

#### 1824

Jan. 29 Francis Dittoe, of Peter & Ann Dittoe  
Feb. 25 ? [blank] Danhoer; spons. Stephen Freeman and [blank] Danhoer  
Sept. 2- Daniel McChrystall, of Patt. McCrystal and Mary Martin; spons. Hugh Griffin & Mary Clark. [father's name and sponsors]  
Oct. -- Anthony Bathoon, son of Lewis Bathoon & Mary Magd. Bathoon; spons. James Grace & Elizabeth Brungarner [previously Anthony Bardeen with no other data, from an entry on another page]

#### 1825

June 12 Joseph August. Hunter, of [blank]; sponsors Adam Fink and Mary Fink. A transcription of this entry corrects it to Joseph August Poujade, son of John Peter and Mary.  
July 10 John Himler [not Hensler], of John and

Catherine (Adams)  
Aug. 1 John Cornyn [not Corney], of Peter and Bridget (McGovern)  
Oct. 25 John O'Brien, son of James and Eleanor (F---); spons. Thomas O'Reilly and Eleanor Coffee

#### 1826

Jan. 10 Charles Colerick, son of Charles  
The records without month and day in 1826 and 1827 were written by Rev. Thomas Martin when he returned from missionary journeys. Among these, two were collapsed into one in the 1975 transcription:  
- Christopher Foley, of James and Margaret (Carr); spons. John O'Rourke and Jane O'Rourke  
- James O'Reilly, son of Thomas and Elizabeth (McEvoy); spons. William McEvoy and Eleanor Finelly

#### 1827

Jan. 1 Luke, son of Daniel Kelly and Mary Kelly; spons. Hugh Connolly and Mary McMullon. F. X. Marshall  
Jan. 2 Mary Ann, daughter of Thomas Coady and Ann Coady; spons. Ann Rooney(?)  
May 19 Julia, of Mary Robare(?); spons. Mary J. Domia(?)  
May 20 Mary D. Patterson, wife of Mr. Hartman; spons. Barbara Ho--fross and Francis Kertam

#### 1829

May 20: the baptisms of the Lisch, Bergin, and Fail children were at the Congregation of St. Barnabas [Deavertown]

#### 1830

The Ledlie baptisms were on November 14, at Rutland, Meigs County, O.

#### 1831

These three records were entered and later crossed out; no doubt they were in the

Danville area:

- Jan. 1 Thomas Sapp, spons. M. Magers [&] Winifret. C. D. Bowling
- Jan. 3 Simon Sapp, spons. Eleanor & Th. Sapp C. D. Bowling
- Jan. 5 Eleanor Durben, spons. B. Durben & Mary Burckenham C. D. Bowling
- July 3 David Shanks [not Hanks], born March 4, 1803, of Tobias Shanks and Sarah Hoban; spons. Patrick Lynch. Frater D. J. O'Leary, O.P.
- Sept. or Oct.: Felix McTeirnan [not McTevinan], of Michael and Ann McTeirnan; spons. John Nangle and Mary McFadden
- Dec. 11 Margaret, of John McKierney [not McKeney] and Rosanna Keating; spons. Peter Keating and Mary Clark. D. J. O'Leary, O.P.

1832

- May 20 Daniel Miles Kense [not Dense], of John Kense and Elizabeth Dittoe; spons. Miles Clooney and Margaret Clooney.
- June 21 William Augustine Dean, son of James and Jemima Dean; spons. John Greene and Catharine Greene. J. V. Bullock

1833

- Jan. 4 Mary Ann, born Dec. 28, 1832, of John Baptist Pfaff and Anna Mary Runser [not

- Bunter]; spons. James Bertlie and Anna Mary Bernards. T G V[an] D[en] Broek
- June 2 Mary Cecilia, daughter of James McEntire [not McEnlin] and Elizabeth Costigan; spons. Thomas Walker and Amelia Walker. F. Tho. Martin, O.P.
- Aug. 27 Henry, born the second of this month, son of Michael Metscher and Apolonia Reiman [not Redmond]; spons. John Kiem and Fidelis Marx(?) T G V D Broek
- Nov. 3 Jane McCann, daughter of Daniel McCann and Ann Cassilly [not Copelly]; spons. Patrick O'Hara and Mary Kane [not Ring]. F. Thos. Martin

1834

- Jan. 11 Elizabeth, of John Keese [not Peek] and Elizabeth Smits; spons. George Keese and Elizabeth Keese. T G V D Broek
- June 15 in the church in Lancaster, Michael Sandorson, son of Louis and Mary (Schoerkle); spons. Peter Gallus Schurhamer and Barbara Schurtgel. J. G. A. Alleman
- July 27 John Jay, son of William and Ann (Wartham); spons. Joseph Jay and Sarah Wartham. J. M. M. Grady
- July 27 in Lancaster, Mary Eleanor, daughter of Henry Blaire [not Blaine] and Henrietta Ann Elizabeth Barrick [not Banuk]; spons. Augustine Lilly and Theresa Littlejohn(?). J. G. A. Alleman