

**THE ACTS OF THE ELDERS:
COMMONLY CALLED
THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM**

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The Acts of the Elders: Commonly Called the Book of Abraham by Abraham Norwood

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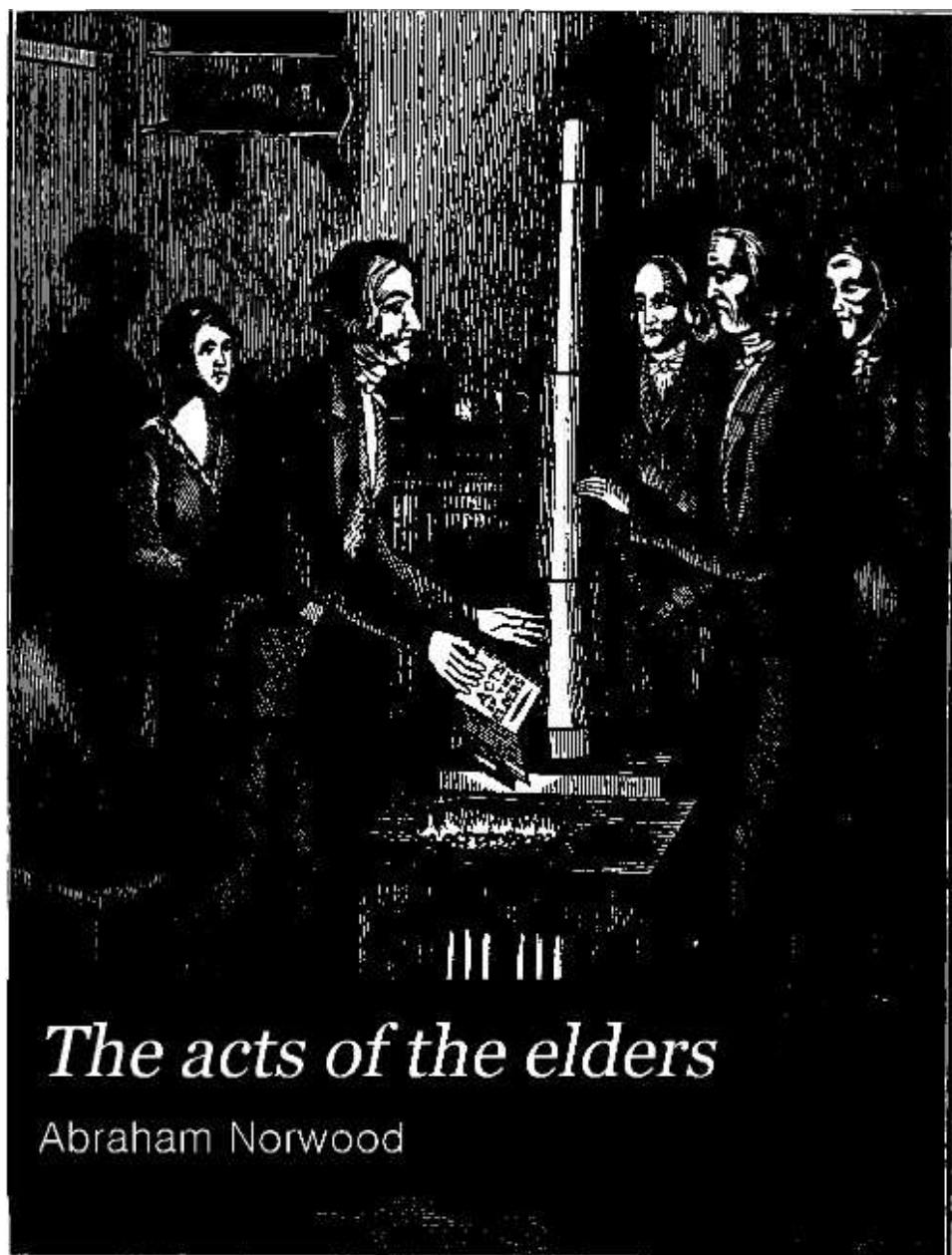
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ABRAHAM NORWOOD

**THE ACTS OF THE ELDERS:
COMMONLY CALLED
THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM**



The acts of the elders

Abraham Norwood

THE ACTS OF THE ELDERS,
COMMONLY CALLED
THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM;
TO WHICH IS APPENDED
A CHAPTER FROM THE
BOOK OF RELIGIOUS ERRORS,
WITH NOTES OF EXPLANATION.
CALCULATED FOR THE MERIDIAN OF RHODE ISLAND;
BUT WILL ANSWER FOR THE
NEW-ENGLAND STATES.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Abraham Forewood.

"I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying—' * * * * * 'What thou seest, write in a book, and send it ~~to~~ the * * * churches."—REVELATOR.

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SOCIETY

BOSTON, MASS.:

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1846.

DEDICATION.

To all religious denominations in general, and to each and every sect in particular—to all Christians wheresoever gathered together or scattered abroad—but especially, to the Calvinistic Arminian Baptists; and more especially to those of them sojourning in the Providence Plantations; and more especially still, to the “Elders,” whose “Acts” are plainly written therein, is the “Book of Abraham” most respectfully inscribed and dedicated, by

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

STOP a moment, reader. Don't be in a hurry; for "the more haste the worse speed." I have a word to say to you. You must always read the Preface, even if you neglect the book; for if a writer cannot make an interesting introduction, you may not expect to be interested in the main body of his work.

A Preface is always written last, in order to be read first; but frequently left to be read last, and then not read at all. How unkind, not to read a Preface, when an author takes the trouble to write one! And then no one can tell what he loses by such unpardonable neglect. It is not strange if a man (or a woman either) has a few fine things that he feels just like saying, as he gladly, for the first time, takes an adieu of his book, and an introduction to his reader. And perchance he may wish to say a good thing or two—very modestly, of course—about his production, lest by simply reading it, you should neither realize its value, nor appreciate its beauties. Now this is very kind in him, because otherwise you might not in some cases, get enough good to counterbalance the actual first cost. Or he may even want to speak disparagingly of his "unpretending little volume," so that others, seeing his extreme modesty, and utter destitution of vain pretensions, may the more readily "puff it into notice," as the saying is. Or he may want you to clearly conceive of the curious combination of conflicting and complicated circumstances, which frictionized his feeble faculties, and elicited the light he has so kindly sent forth to illuminate the world.

Or more than likely he would desire to tell you what particular, vacant corner or niche it was admirably designed to fill, in the great theological, political, scientific or philosophical world. For, of course,

every author thinks his own production the very desideratum needed in some particular and important department of the reading community.

And it is very likely, that even the "Book of Abraham" is calculated to fill some hitherto unoccupied, and humble place, in this great world of science and ignorance. But if it cannot find its proper destination without a "guide board" from the author, why, let it go in some other direction. But whether a writer has all, or half, or more than the above reasons for producing a Preface, you should be sure to read it. But enough of this.

The printer says, that almost every other book has a Preface, or something like it, and that therefore, the "Acts of the Elders" must do likewise, or it will be an "odd volume," which, of course, its author never intended.

Much of the "Book of Abraham" was written for, and published in, the "Gospel Messenger," of Providence, R. I., without an expectation of its ever assuming the form, though it had the name, of a book.

But so numerous and pressing were the requests for its publication in its present form, that the author consented to have it done.

There were, however, other considerations which influenced him in making this decision.

1. Many errata, some of which were important, occurred in the publication of the Chapters which have been given to the public; and which are now corrected.

2. Judging from the reception and circulation of the numbers of the "Messenger" containing Chapters, the author was confident that the Book, if published, would convey some, at least, of the simple truths of the Gospel, into houses and hearts that would not, for the present, be reached by any other method. We must take the world as we find it, not as we may wish to have it.

There are those, who will read and receive truths, if presented in a new dress, or a novel style, or in a way somewhat out of the common course; but who will not trouble themselves to read a long, prosy, common-place, elaborate, doctrinal article, or work, however great may be its merits and intrinsic value.

It may be said, however, that we should not "cater to the taste" of those, who will receive food if dressed in a light manner, but reject it, if served up in a more refined and substantial way.

Though there may be truth in this saying, yet we should remember that, according to Moses, the world was not made in one day; and that

men do not usually stride from the lower to the upper round of a ladder, by one exertion. And would one, who has attained the top, assist others to ascend, he must either come or stoop down nearly to where they are, or they cannot be reached.

If to one unaccustomed to read much and reflect deeply, you present new truths, for which, of themselves, he cares little or nothing, in a manner in which he is not interested, he becomes disgusted, and your labor is lost. But let them be presented in some manner which attracts his attention, and excites his curiosity, and your object will be gained; for he will, almost imperceptibly to himself, receive them into his mind. You would not certainly refuse bread to a Grahamite, merely because he prefers to eat his wheat in the bran thereof; neither should important truths be withheld from an individual, merely because he prefers to receive them in a humorous manner, or an antique dress.

And Gospel truth, above all other, should never be wrapped in dark, and gloomy, and forbidding drapery, like the sun in an eclipse, or Rachel mourning for her children, because they are not. But she should always be garbed in those habiliments, be they what they may, most likely to secure for her an invitation, and cordial reception in those hearts, where her influence is most needed, and least experienced.

Should any fastidious mind object to the following work, because the scripture style is partially employed therein, some of the above remarks will apply to the case. And moreover, the writer can see no reasonable objection to adopting the scripture style in the conveyance of scripture instruction, or in giving information respecting those, who profess to be christian ministers; especially if such style will best secure attention to what he wishes to make known.

3. Another inducement to publish the "Acts of the Elders," was, the fact that there are many, in a time of great excitement about religion, who do not stop to reflect and reason, whose minds are so excited and prejudiced that they cannot be profitably conversed with; and who, on the same account, can hear and see nothing but what appears right, even in sayings and doings that, in their calm moments, they would utterly condemn as improper and sacrilegious. But by having such things placed before them for consideration, when reason has resumed her empire, they will be likely to see them in their proper light, and henceforth to walk more circumspectly.

The reader may be assured, that no language attributed to the "Elders" is in the least exaggerated; but in many cases, their expressions