

"By the Gift and Power of God"

The Method of Translation of the Book of Mormon

By James E. Lancaster

Illustrations by Jill Lind

LIKE the Judeo-Christian tradition of which we are heirs, the Restoration is grounded in historical reality and is not the product of mere wishful thinking or philosophical theology. This church is the result not of man's *ideas* about God but of his *experience with* God. In the church today there is an increasing interest in the history of those initial revelatory experiences. It is probable that as an outgrowth of this concern, new and broader interpretations will be placed upon the events which transpired from 1820 to 1844. One focal point of interest at the present time is centered on the method of translation of the Book of Mormon. A recent example of this is an article appearing in the *Saints' Herald*, September 1, 1962.

It is a principle of history that the further we are in time from a historical event, the more we see this event through the haze of the intervening years. This is also true of the history of the church. The previous generations of this church in many respects knew the facts of our history better than we today. In the latter half of the previous century eyewitnesses to the early events of the Restoration were still living. These eyewitnesses on numerous occasions left testimonies describing things that transpired in their day.

We can more fully understand the method used by the prophet, Joseph Smith, in his translation of the Book of Mormon if we endeavor to look at this event through the firsthand accounts of the early witnesses. These accounts often surprise and sometimes even disturb us. Because of the many years that separate us it is difficult for us to understand and maturely interpret their testimony. We must, however, strive for that understanding. As a church, we have an obligation to truth.

Joseph's Testimony

Any consideration of the method of translation of the Book of Mormon must begin with the testimony of its translator, Joseph Smith, Jr. The prophet testified on numerous occasions regarding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. A record exists of what transpired on one of the first occasions where Joseph Smith was publicly asked regarding the particulars of the book. A conference of the church was held at Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, on October 25, 1831; twelve high priests, seventeen elders, four priests, three teachers, four deacons, and a large congregation attended.¹ At this conference, several of the brethren took occasion to testify to the truth of the Book of Mormon. At that point . . .

Brother Hyrum Smith said that he thought best that the information of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon be related by Joseph himself to the elders present, that all might know for themselves.



Joseph Smith, Jr.

Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things.²

One week later these words appeared in a revelation given through the prophet at a special conference of the church meeting at Hiram, Portage County, Ohio: ". . . and after having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., might have power to translate, through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon" (*Doctrine and Covenants* 1:5 d). This was the pattern that Joseph Smith was to follow throughout his life when asked regarding the Book of Mormon. Never at any point did he reveal any of the details of the method of translation. He did, however, invariably stress the divine aspects of this translation.

His earliest published testimony appears in the *Silder's Journal* of July, 1838. He wrote:

Moreni, the person who deposited the plates, from whence the Book of Mormon was translated, in a hill in Manchester, Ontario County, New York, being dead, and raised again therefrom, appeared unto me, and told me where they were; and gave me directions how to obtain them. I obtained them, and the Urim and Thummim with them, by the means of which, I translated the plates and thus came the Book of Mormon.³

In March, 1842, in response to a letter from John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, Joseph Smith printed in the *Times and Seasons* a brief statement of belief as well as a short history of the Mormon movement. This history appeared in the form of a letter to Wentworth and as such is often referred to as the "Wentworth Letter."

With the records was found a curious instrument which the ancients called Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim on a bow fastened to a breastplate.

Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record, by the gift and power of God.⁴

In the next issue of the *Times and Seasons*, Joseph Smith, due to public interest aroused by the Wentworth Letter, began the publication of his biography. Though first published in 1842 it indicates that it was written in 1838. Regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith says in his biography:

By this timely aid was I enabled to reach the place of my destination in Pennsylvania, and immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters of the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father in the month of December, and the February following.⁵

What is possibly the prophet's last published statement regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon was made in a letter to N.F. Seaton printed in the *Times and Seasons*:

The Book of Mormon is a record of the forefathers of our western tribes of Indians, having been found through the ministrations of an holy angel, and translated into our own language by the gift and power of God, after having been hid up in the earth for the last 1,400 years, containing the word of God which was delivered unto them.⁶

As the foregoing quotations indicate, the statements of Joseph Smith published during his lifetime are general in nature and give no detailed information regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon. They are, however, unwavering in their testimony that it was by "the gift and power of God" that the record of the Nephites was made available to the world.

Emma Smith

Emma Smith Bidamon was interviewed late in her life by her son Joseph Smith III regarding her knowledge of the important events which transpired in the early church. This interview took place in February, 1879, in the presence of Major Lewis C. Bidamon, her husband.

- A. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.
- Q. Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read or dictated to you?



Emma Smith

- A. He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.
- Q. Could he not have had, and you not know it?
- A. If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.
- Q. Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?
- A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen tablecloth, which I had given him to fold them in. . . .
- Q. Where did father and Oliver Cowdery write?
- A. Oliver Cowdery and your father wrote in the room where I was at work.⁷

Many are familiar with this well-known testimony but are seemingly unaware that when examined in detail the wife of the prophet relates that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by sitting with his face in his hat, with a stone placed in the hat. He did not look at the plates which were nearby, wrapped up in a small tablecloth.

David Whitmer

This same testimony is borne out by another witness to the translation of the Book of Mormon, David Whitmer. In 1887 he published a booklet entitled an *Address to All Believers in Christ*. This booklet is a summary of his beliefs made in his twilight years regarding the Restoration and the role he played in the movement. He states as follows:

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery,

who was his principle scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.⁸

Two Methods of Translation

How can the testimonies of Emma Smith and David Whitmer, describing the translation of the Book of Mormon with a seer stone, be reconciled with the traditional account of the church that the Book of Mormon was translated by the "interpreters" found in the stone box with the plates? It is the extreme good fortune of the church that we have testimony by Sister Emma Smith Bidamon on this important issue. Sometime in the early part of 1876 a woman by the name of Pilgrim wrote to Emma Bidamon, requesting information as to the translation of the Book of Mormon. Emma Bidamon replied in a letter to Sister Pilgrim, written from Nauvoo, Illinois, March 27, 1876. Sister Bidamon's letter states in part:

Now the first that my husband translated, was translated by the use of the Urim and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost, after that he used a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather a dark color. I cannot tell whether that account in the *Times and Seasons* is correct or not because someone stole all my books and I have none to refer to at present, if I can find one that has that account I will tell you what is true and what is not.⁹

Sister Bidamon's letter indicates that at first the Book of Mormon was translated by the Urim and Thummim. She refers to the instrument found with the plates. However, this first method was used only for the portion written on the 116 pages of foolscap which Martin Harris later lost. After that time the translation was done with the seer stone. Sister Bidamon's testimony is corroborated by David Whitmer in an interview appearing in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, October 17, 1886.¹⁰

The first 116 pages when completed were by permission of the prophet entrusted to the hands of Martin Harris, who carried them home to his incredulous relatives in triumph, hoping by the exhibition to convert his family and kinsfolk from their uncompromising hostility to the religious premises he had adopted. Upon retiring at night he locked up the precious pages in a bureau drawer, along with his money and other valuables. In the morning he was shocked to find that they had been stolen, while his money had been left untouched. They were never found and were never replaced, so that the Book of Mormon is today minus just 116 pages of the original matter, which would increase the volume fully one-fourth of its present size.



David Whitmer

This unpardonable carelessness evoked the sternest kind of chastisement from the Lord, who took from the prophet the Urim and Thummim and otherwise expressed his condemnation. By fervent prayer and by otherwise humbling himself, the prophet, however, again found favor, and was presented with a strange, oval-shaped, chocolate-colored stone, about the size of an egg, only more flat, which, it was promised, should serve the same purpose as the missing Urim and Thummim (the latter was a pair of transparent stones set in a bow-shaped frame and very much resembled a pair of spectacles). With this stone all of the present Book of Mormon was translated.

Somewhat the same account appears in a later interview with Whitmer.¹¹

Indications that there were two methods of translation also appear very early in anti-Mormon works. In a rather vicious book published in 1834, *Mormonism Unveiled*, by Eber D. Howe, the following statement appears:

Now, whether the two methods for translating, one by a pair of stone spectacles "set in the rims of a bow," and the other by one stone, were provided against accident, we cannot determine—perhaps they were limited in their appropriate uses—at all events the plan meets our approbation.

We are informed that Smith used a stone in a hat, for the purpose of translating the plates. The spectacles and plates were found together, but were taken from him and hid up again before he had translated one word, and he has never seen them since—this is Smith's own story.¹²

The actual author of the book, D.P. Hurlburt, in the latter part of 1833 collected stories told by townfolk in Palmyra, regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon. Taken by itself, his

statement would be of doubtful authenticity; however, supported by the statements of both Emma Smith and David Whitmer, it does add weight to the general conclusion that can be drawn.

Whitmer Corrects Newspaper Account

David Whitmer was interviewed numerous times in his later years by newspaper correspondents seeking information about the early days in the "Mormon" church from one of its founders. The resultant newspaper accounts do not always agree as to detail. This may be due in part to Whitmer's age, but it is more likely a result of the reporters' misunderstanding or carelessness. On numerous occasions he issued corrections to statements he was purported to have made. However, there are two statements by David Whitmer that do not come to us through this somewhat untrustworthy medium. The most important is his own booklet *Message to All Believers in Christ*, previously quoted. This he planned as his summary and final statement, the truthfulness for which he alone is responsible. The other is a statement he made to a member of the Reorganized Church, J. L. Traugbber, Jr., in October, 1879, and printed in *Saints' Herald*. In connection with this latter testimony it should be pointed out that David Whitmer never met Joseph Smith until June, 1829.¹³ According to the testimony of Emma Smith and David Whitmer, the angel took the Urim and Thummim from Joseph Smith at the time of the loss of the 116 pages. This was in June, 1828, one year before David became involved with the work of translation.¹⁴ David Whitmer could never have been present when the Urim and Thummim were used. All of this he clearly states in his testimony to Brother Traugbber:

With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a "Seer Stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English; at least, so Joseph said.¹⁵

One of the earliest interviews with Whitmer appears in the *Chicago Times*, August 7, 1875. Chicago papers also printed at least two other articles of a similar nature. One appeared on December 18, 1885, in the *Chicago Tribune*.¹⁶ A somewhat corrected summary of this later article appeared in the same

paper on January 24, 1888, on the occasion of Whitmer's death.¹⁷ In 1881 David Whitmer made a statement to the *Kansas City Journal* which appeared in that paper on June 5. This statement is of some interest since it is the only testimony ever given by Whitmer, or for that matter, any of the witnesses, to claim that the Book of Mormon was translated with two stones.

I, as well as all of my father's family, Smith's wife, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris were present during the translation. The translation was by Smith, and the manner as follows: "He had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light."¹⁸

In reading the various accounts given by David Whitmer we should remember that by his own testimony he was not an eye witness to any method of translation other than that of the "seer stone." It is possible his accounts of the translation by use of the Urim and Thummim which appear in some of his interviews are a result of conversation with Emma Smith or Martin Harris, who were Joseph's scribes at that earlier time.

Oliver Cowdery

What does Oliver Cowdery, Joseph's principle scribe, say regarding the method of translation? There are three published statements of Oliver Cowdery regarding the work he did in assisting



Oliver Cowdery

Joseph Smith in the translation of the Book of Mormon:

These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated, with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, "Interpreters," the history, or record, called "The Book of Mormon."²⁰

Still, although favored of God as a chosen witness to bear testimony to the divine authority of the Book of Mormon, and honored of the Lord in being permitted, without money and without price, to serve as scribe during the translation of the Book of Mormon, I have sometimes had seasons of skepticism, in which I did seriously wonder whether the Prophet and I were men in our sober senses when he would be translating from plates through "the Urim and Thummim" and the plates not be in sight at all.

But I believed both in the Seer and in the "Seer Stone," and what the First Elder announced as revelation from God, I accepted as such, and committed to paper with a glad mind and happy heart and swift pen; for I believed him to be the soul of honor and truth, a young man who would die before he would lie.²¹

I wrote, with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages), as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, or, as it is called by that book, "holy interpreters." *I beheld with my eyes, and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it was translated. I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the "holy interpreters."* That book is true. Sidney Rigdon did not write it. Mr. Spaulding did not write it. I wrote it myself as it fell from the lips of the Prophet.²²

It is interesting to note that Oliver Cowdery refers to the use of the "seer stone" but in such a way as to make it synonymous with the Urim and Thummim and the interpreters. He further states that the translation was done with the plates not being in sight. This in general supports the previous accounts that we have examined.

Martin Harris

The only reliable statement of the one remaining key witness, Martin Harris, was taken in the later years of his life when he resided in Utah. It is reprinted below:

Martin Harris related an incident that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone. Martin explained the transla-



Martin Harris

tion as follows: By aid of the "seer stone," sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraved on the plates, precisely in the language then used.

Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only were larger. Martin said these were not many pages translated while he wrote, after which Oliver Cowdery and others did the writing.²³

Martin Harris refers to the fact that the prophet, Joseph Smith, used two methods of translation. He also very clearly makes a distinction between the Urim and Thummim "which was obtained with the plates" and the seer stone. Interesting enough, Martin Harris does not tell us why Joseph Smith used the seer stone, which according to the testimony of other witnesses was due to Martin Harris' own indiscretion. Harris merely says that for "convenience" the prophet used the seer stone.

Other Eyewitnesses

One other person who was a witness to the events that transpired in the Whitmer home has left us an account of the translation of the Book of Mormon. Michael Morse who was married to Trial Hale, one of Isaac Hale's daughters, a sister to Emma Smith, was present at the time of the translation. In 1879 in an interview with W. W. Blair of the Reorganized Church, Mr.

Morse gave his testimony as to the method of translation of the Book of Mormon. From this testimony it appears that Mr. Morse was prejudiced neither for nor against the church. The pertinent parts of his testimony as related by President Blair are as follows:

He further states that when Joseph was translating the Book of Mormon, he, (Morse), had occasion more than once to go into his immediate presence, and saw him engaged at his work of translation.

The mode of procedure consisted in Joseph's placing the Seer Stone in the crown of a hat, then putting his face into the hat, so as to entirely cover his face, resting his elbows upon his knees, and then dictating, word after word, while the scribe—Emma, John Whitmer, O. Cowdery, or some other, wrote it down.²⁴

Isaac Hale, Emma's father, has also left his testimony regarding the translation of the Book of Mormon. This testimony first appeared in 1834, fairly early in the history of the church. Unlike Mr. Morse, Isaac Hale obviously felt very strongly against Joseph Smith and the Mormon movement. He stated:

The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods!²⁵

The same source also contains the testimony of Alva Hale, one of the sons of Isaac Hale. It is not worthwhile to quote it here because of its extreme bias.

In connection with this question William Smith, the brother of the prophet, is often quoted. It is highly improbable that he was present at any time when the translation of the Book of Mormon took place, therefore the testimony he gives is of a secondary nature. It is apparent from statements he made later in life that he did not clearly distinguish two methods of translation, and as a result his accounts contradict each other at points. However, since they are often quoted authoritatively they may be found in (1) *William Smith on Mormonism*, 1883, Lamoni, Iowa, pp. 10-12; (2) *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 31, No. 40, p. 644, October 4, 1884 (a sermon preached in Deloit, Iowa, June 8, 1884); and (3) *Rod of Iron*, Vol. 1, No. 3, page 6, February, 1924.

Consensus of Testimony

An examination of the relevant testimony produces these facts regarding the method of translation of the Book of Mormon: (1) with the plates on Hill

Cumorah were found Nephite interpreters called by many Urim and Thummim, (2) these interpreters were used at first in the translation of the plates, (3) the portion translated by use of the interpreters, was copied onto 116 pages of foolscap, later lost by Martin Harris, (4) because of the indiscretion of Martin and Joseph the Nephite interpreters were taken from them and never returned, (5) the Book of Mormon that we have today was translated by use of the seer stone, (6) Joseph Smith in translating would place the seer stone in his hat and cover his face with his hat to darken his eyes, (7) the plates were not used in the translating process and often were not even in sight during the translation, (8) other persons could be in the room while Joseph Smith dictated to his scribe, (9) all witnesses to the translation agree in their testimony to these facts.

In August, 1829, a newspaper in Palmyra, New York, the *Palmyra Freeman*, printed an article about the Book of Mormon. This is the earliest known reference to the Book of Mormon. The original issue of the *Palmyra Freeman* has been lost. Fortunately, the article was copied in the *Rochester Advertiser and Telegraph* of August 31, 1829. This latter newspaper is still available in the Reynolds Library in Rochester, New York. It is interesting to us because it is an attempt to explain the method of translation of the Book of Mormon prior to the publication of the book and subsequent prejudice and hostility.

The Golden Bible

The *Palmyra Freeman* says—The greatest piece of superstition that has come within our knowledge now occupies the attention of a few individuals of this quarter. It is generally known and spoken of as the "Golden Bible." Its proselytes give the following account of it.

In the fall of 1827, a person by the name of Joseph Smith, of Manchester, Ontario Co., reported that he had been visited in a dream by the spirit of the Almighty and informed that in a certain hill in that town was deposited this golden Bible, containing an ancient record of a divine nature and origin. After having been thrice visited, as he states, he proceeded to the spot, and after penetrating "nether earth" a short distance the Bible was found, together with a huge pair of spectacles. He had been directed, however, not to let any mortal examine them, "under no less penalty than instant death." They were therefore nicely wrapped up and excluded from the "vulgar gaze of poor wicked mortals." It was said that the leaves of the Bible were plates of gold, about eight inches thick on which were engraved characters of hieroglyphics. By placing the spectacles in a hat, and looking into it, Smith could (he said so at least) interpret these characters.

A similar article, still extant, was printed in the *Rochester Gem* of September 5, 1829. These early newspaper accounts conform generally to the statements eye-witnesses were later to make regarding the method of translation of the Book of Mormon.

Translation Not Mechanical

The consensus of testimony of the eyewitnesses seems to conflict with that of the prophet Joseph where he states that "with the records was found a curious instrument which the ancients called Urim and Thummim which consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breast-plate. Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim, I translated the record." Joseph Smith's account, however, can be reconciled with the seer stone testimony of Emma Smith and the witnesses. First of all it must be recognized that the translation of the Book of Mormon took place at the very beginning of Joseph's ministry. At that stage in his understanding of his prophetic role and his relationship with God he evidently had need for a physical symbol of God's power to assist in the translation. Regardless of the physical media used the essential quality of the translation was that of prophetic revelation or inspiration from God. In a statement to William H. Kelley and G. A. Blakesley, dated September 15, 1882, David Whitmer said the following regarding the inspirational nature of the translation of the Book of Mormon:

He had to trust in God. He could not translate unless he was humble and possessed the right feelings towards everyone. To illustrate so you can see: One morning when he was getting ready to continue the translation, something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife, had done. Oliver and I went upstairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out



"Listen! I think this next part was the high point of your sermon."

*into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, and asked Emma's forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and then the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save be was humble and faithful.²⁶

Soon after Oliver Cowdery began to act as a scribe for the prophet he began to desire the power himself to translate the records as was done by Joseph. Oliver was given a promise of this power and an explanation of it in a revelation through Joseph Smith in April, 1829. It appears in Section 8 of Doctrine and Covenants:

Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so sure shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which have been spoken, by the manifestation of my Spirit; yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you, and which shall dwell in your heart. . . . Ask that you may know the mysteries of God, and that you may translate and receive knowledge from all these ancient records which have been hid up, that are sacred, and according to your faith shall it be done unto you.

Oliver Cowdery attempted to translate, acting upon the revelation given, but because of his own lack of understanding was unable to succeed in this desire. In answer to Oliver's need another revelation was received by Joseph Smith a few days later. It appears in Section 9 of Doctrine and Covenants:

Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought, save it was to ask me; but, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right; but if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought, that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you can not write that which is sacred, save it be given you from me.

From the statements of the witnesses and from the revelations of God on this point we can understand that the translation of the Book of Mormon was not mechanical. Involved was a process of revelation. It would appear that the type of inspiration received by Joseph Smith in these circumstances was generally of a conceptual rather than a literal nature. It was necessary for Joseph Smith to express in his own

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words and phrases the inspired concepts that passed through his mind. That Joseph Smith did just this is indicated by the fact that he did not hesitate to change the wording of the 1830 Palmyra edition of the Book of Mormon for the publishing of the 1837 Kirtland edition. In preparing the 1837 edition, the prophet made several hundred changes in the original so that the language there would more adequately express the inspired truths that were given him.

During the period that the Book of Mormon was in translation Joseph Smith received revelations through what he referred to as the Urim and Thummim. From statements he later made in *Times and Seasons* it is evident that Sections 2 through 15 of our present Doctrine and Covenants were given in this manner. This corresponds to the period from the loss of the 116 pages to a time just prior to the restoration of the Melchisedec priesthood.

By the time of the organization of the church, Joseph Smith's understanding of the processes of inspiration had advanced to the point where he was able to dispense with the use of any material instrument in receiving revelation. It is recorded by David Whitmer that:

... after the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished, early in the spring of 1830, before April 6th, Joseph gave the stone to Oliver Cowdery and told me as well as the rest that he was through with it, and he did not use the stone any more. He said he was through the work that God had given him the gift to perform, except to preach the gospel. He told us that we would all have to depend on the Holy Ghost hereafter to be guided into truth and obtain the will of the Lord. The revelations after this came through Joseph as "mouth piece;" that is, he would enquire of the Lord, pray and ask concerning a matter, and speak out the revelation, which he thought to be a revelation from the Lord.²⁴

It is obvious here that Joseph Smith had grown beyond the use of the earlier media of translation. He established the policy that the newly founded church would depend solely on the Holy Spirit for revelations.

Early Saints Misunderstand

It is unfortunate that many of the Saints at first did not understand this more profound principle of revelation. We have earlier noted Oliver Cowdery's difficulties in this area. It is sad to relate that some of Joseph's early followers never grew beyond an almost

magical belief in the seer stone. David Whitmer was to make a statement near the end of his life that all the revelations given by the prophet after he had discarded the seer stone were not of God but were words of the man, Joseph Smith.²⁵ Possibly as a result of these erroneous ideas a revelation was given to the church through Joseph Smith at Fayette on April 6, 1830. This document stresses that revelation comes to the prophet by the Comforter.

Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words, and commandments, which he shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; for his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith. . . .

For behold, I will bless all those who labor in my vineyard, with a mighty blessing, and they shall believe on his words, which are given him through me, by the Comforter.²⁶

In spite of this, some of the members of the church still clung to a belief in a more mechanical method of revelation through a seer stone. Hiram Page, who had married David Whitmer's sister, Catharine, had in his possession a stone similar to that originally used by Joseph Smith. Brother Page claimed that he was obtaining revelations. It is unfortunate that the Whitmer family, which by marriage included Hiram Page and later Oliver Cowdery, believed many of the things supposedly coming forth from this stone. Accordingly, at a conference of the church which convened September 26, 1830, the following revelation was given to Oliver Cowdery through Joseph Smith:

Behold, I say unto thee, Oliver, that it shall be given unto thee that thou shalt be heard by the church in all things whatsoever thou shalt teach them by the Comforter, concerning the revelations and commandments which I have given.

But, behold, verily, verily I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., for he receiveth them even as Moses. . . .

And if thou art led at any time by the Comforter to speak or teach, or at all times by the way of commandment unto the church, thou mayest do it. . . .

And again, thou shalt take thy brother Hiram Page between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me, and that Satan deceiveth him; for, behold, these things have not been appointed unto him.²⁷

The church was plunged into dissension again on this point in 1837,²⁸ ultimately resulting in the expulsion from the church of many of the early believers.

In the light of these historical events involving the misunderstanding of the

church people regarding the true nature of revelation, I think it is possible for us to understand Joseph Smith's extreme reluctance in later years to discuss the details of the translation of the Book of Mormon. By 1838, when he wrote his biography, he chose not to discuss the translation in such a way that it would perpetuate in the church an elementary, instrumental view of revelation. Instead Joseph Smith, when pressed regarding the method of translation, was very careful all through his life to state that it was done by "the gift and power of God." Beyond this he did not and would not elaborate. It is the tragedy and the greatness of a prophet that his mind and spirit always put him beyond those about him.

In keeping with this policy, Joseph Smith apparently used the term "Urim and Thummim" to cover all types of instruments used to translate or determine the will of God. At a special conference at Ramus, Illinois, on April 2, 1843, he said:

The angels do not reside on a planet like this earth; but they reside in the presence of God. . . . where all things for their glory are manifest—past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord. The place where God resides is a great Urim and Thummim. This earth, in its sanctified and immortal state, will be made like unto crystal and will be a Urim and Thummim to the inhabitants who dwell thereon, whereby all things . . . will be manifest to those who dwell on it; and this earth will be Christ's. Then the white stone mentioned in Revelations ii. 17 will become a Urim and Thummim to each individual who receives one, whereby things . . . will be made known.²⁹

A careful study of his writings makes it clear that all devices used to make known the mind and will of God were to Joseph Smith "Urim and Thummim." Though the prophet translated the Book of Mormon using what was referred to by others as the seer stone, by his own definition he was justified in referring to the instrument as the Urim and Thummim.

Eyewitnesses Affirm Belief

It is possible that some of us today when reading the testimony of the witnesses may become too concerned with the seer stone and forget that the important ingredient in the situation was the "gift and power of God." We were not present when the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith, Emma Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were. All were unwavering in testimony to the end of their lives to their belief in the divine origin of the book. In the very same

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Bulletin Board

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Neal Pearson of Houston, Texas, became the parents of a son, Steven Barrett, on August 31. Mrs. Pearson is the former Florence Harper.

Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Theodore Prestar II of Houston, Texas, became the parents of a daughter, Tammy Renay, on September 9.

Mr. and Mrs. Duane Hillers of Shawnee Mission, Kansas, became the parents of a daughter, Sherry Lynn, on April 3. Mrs. Hillers is the former Velmeta Miller.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Wiseley of Saginaw, Michigan, announce the birth of a son, Michael Ralph, born September 22. Mrs. Wiseley is the former Christena McGuire.

Mr. and Mrs. Billy Gene Horn of St. Louis, Missouri, became the parents of a daughter, Andrea Jeanne, on September 19. Mrs. Horn is the former Barbara Bourgeret.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Hanna, Jr., of West Covina, California, announce the birth of a

son, Craig Robert, born September 18. Mrs. Hanna is the former Marilyn Nuckles.

Mr. and Mrs. Ned Wolter of St. Louis, Missouri, became the parents of a son, Gregory Allen, on January 30. Mrs. Wolter is the former Marianne Walker.

Mr. and Mrs. Kennon K. Shaw of Bronaugh, Missouri, became the parents of a son, Loren Todd, on July 30.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Quick of Independence, Missouri, announce the birth of a daughter, Anita Diane, born September 13. Mrs. Quick is the former Sandra Merrill.

Weddings

KELLY-CASHOUR.—Priscilla Ann Cashour and Alan Jon Kelly, both of Sturgis, Michigan, were married September 15 at the Reorganized Church in Coldwater, Michigan.

GATES-BEDDELL.—Barbara Bedell and Jimmy Gates, both of Tampa, Florida, were married September 1 at the Reorganized Church in Tampa.

RAMSEY-WALTERS.—Margaret June Walters and Roy B. Ramsey, both of Tampa, Florida, were married August 17 at the Reorganized Church in Tampa.

LUNDEN-BLES.—Barbara Ellen Bles and Charles Vernon Lunden were married October 6 at the Reorganized Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Deaths

HUGHES.—Emma Gaudet, was born June 11, 1864, in Logan, Utah, and died September 3, 1962, at Resthaven in Independence, Missouri.

MILLER.—John Lee, was killed instantly on the San Bernardino Freeway, Los Angeles County, California. He was seventeen years old and a resident of Anaheim, California.

SPILABURY.—Cornelius A. was born March 1, 1874, in Caynville, Ontario, and died September 24, 1962, in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He had served in the office of elder since July, 1928.

McLAREN.—James, was born October 2, 1876, at Ancaster, Ontario, and died September 1, 1962, at St. Thomas, Ontario.

GAW.—Lillie, was born July 13, 1876, at Courtright, Ontario, and died September 22, 1962, at Merlin, Ontario.

DEY.—Raymond, was born September 29, 1886, in Alton, Kansas, and died September 28, 1962, at his home near Oak Grove, Missouri. He had served in the office of deacon since September, 1920.

Request for Prayers

Mrs. John B. Smith, 604½ Jefferson Street, Madison, Indiana, requests prayers. Her husband, to whom she had been married for fifty-four years, died in August, and she lives in an area where there are no church members.

By the Gift and Power of God

(Continued from page 22)

testimony in which Emma Smith describes the method of translation of the Book of Mormon, she takes occasion to reaffirm her faith in it.

And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, "a marvel and a wonder," as much so as to any one else. . . .

My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired.¹⁷

Oliver Cowdery's last words as he lay dying in David Whitmer's home were these: "Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon."¹⁸ David Whitmer, who all through his life took occasion to testify to the authenticity of the book, requested before his death that there be engraved these words on his tombstone: "The record of the Jews and the record of the Nephites are one, truth is eternal." None of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon who had seen the book while in the process of translation and had received divine testimony of it were ever to deny their belief that the book was the work of God.

We today cannot be witnesses to the translation of the Book of Mormon and may not receive an angelic visitor to testify as to its truth. But we can have

a conviction of its spiritual worth. For us the ultimate authority of the book lies not in the particular manner in which it comes to us but in the Spirit that testifies to its teachings. We have this promise, found in Moroni 10:4, 5:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true;

And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.

¹⁷Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, No. 7, p. 462, April 1, 1844. *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Independence, Missouri, 1852, Vol. 1, p. 226.

¹⁸Far West Record, p. 12, as quoted in *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1890, Vol. 1, p. 215n.

¹⁹Elders' Journal, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 43, July, 1838.

²⁰Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, No. 9, p. 707, March 1, 1842. Also in Rupp, I. Daniel, *Religious Denominations*, 1844, pp. 406, 408.

²¹Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, No. 13, p. 772, May 2, 1842. *History of the RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

²²Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, p. 21.

²³Saints' Herald, Vol. 26, pp. 280, 290, October 1, 1870. *History of the RLDS Church*, Vol. 3, p. 368.

²⁴Whitmer, David, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Missouri, 1837, p. 12.

²⁵Sister Bidamon's letter is referred to and quoted by Fawn Brodie in *No Man Knows My History*, New York, 1946; the Reorganized Church archives are the source.

²⁶Chicago Inter-Ocean, October 17, 1886. Reprinted in *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 38, No. 43, pp. 705, 707, November 13, 1886.

²⁷Highland Democrat, January 26, 1888; from *Pittsburg Democrat*; reprinted in *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 35, No. 6, pp. 94, 95, February 11, 1888.

²⁸Howe, Elber D., *Mormonism Unveiled*, Palmyra, Ohio, 1834, p. 77.

¹⁷Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, No. 20, p. 884, August 18, 1842. *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 42.

¹⁸Ibid., Vol. 3, No. 14, p. 785, May 26, 1842. *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 28.

¹⁹Saints' Herald, Vol. 25, No. 22, p. 241, November 15, 1873.

²⁰Also reprinted in *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 32, 33, January 2, 1886.

²¹Also reprinted in *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 35, No. 4, p. 67, February 4, 1888.

²²As quoted in *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 28, No. 13, p. 198, July 1, 1881.

²³Messenger and Advocate, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 14, October 1881. (From a letter written by Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, September 7, 1834). Quoted in *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 33.

²⁴Cowdery, Oliver, *Defense in a Rehearsal of My Grounds for Separating Myself from the Latter Day Saints*, Norton, Ohio, 1830. Reprinted in *Saints' Herald*, Vol. 64, No. 22, pp. 259, 260, March 20, 1907.

²⁵Essex News, April 15, 1850. As quoted in *History of the RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 30n.

²⁶Millennial Star, Vol. 44, No. 6, pp. 86, 87, February 6, 1882.

²⁷Saints' Herald, Vol. 26, No. 12, pp. 209, 104, June 16, 1870.

²⁸Howe, Op. Cit., p. 256. Joseph Smith defended himself against the money-digger charge in *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, No. 15, p. 772, May 2, 1842. *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 17. See also *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 4, No. 8, p. 118, March 1, 1843. *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 117.

²⁹Trades, Clark and Kelley, E. L., *Public Declaration of the Issues between the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Church of Christ, Disciples, Held at Richmond, Ohio, St. Louis, 1834*, p. 185.

³⁰Whitmer, David, Op. Cit., p. 32.

³¹Ibid.

³²Doctrine and Covenants, Section 19.

³³Ibid., Section 27.

³⁴Smith, Lucy, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Propagators for Many Generations*, Liverpool, 1833, pp. 231-233, Plano, Illinois, 1880, pp. 221, 222.

³⁵Millennial Star, Vol. 20, No. 46, November 18, 1838. Also in Tullidge, Edward W., *Life of Joseph the Prophet*, Plano, Illinois, 1890, p. 448.

³⁶Saints' Herald, Vol. 26, pp. 280, 290, October 1, 1870. *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 3, p. 368.

³⁷Whitmer, David, Op. Cit., p. 8. Quoted in *History of RLDS Church*, Vol. 1, p. 54.

"Q.—Did he not hold marital relation with women other than yourself?

"A.—He did not have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge.

"Q.—Was there nothing about spiritual wives that you recollect?

"A.—At one time my husband came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or anything of the kind; and assured me that if I had, that they were without foundation; that there was no such doctrine, and never should be with his knowledge, or consent. I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise.

"Q.—What of the truth of Mormonism?

"A.—I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

"Q.—Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read or dictated to you?

"A.—He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.

"Q.—Could he not have had, and you not know it?

"A.—If he had had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.

"Q.—Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?

"A.—The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen tablecloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.

"Q.—Where did Father and Oliver Cowdery write?

"A.—Oliver Cowdery and your father wrote in the room where I was at work.

"Q.—Could not Father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery, and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?

"A.—Joseph Smith [and for the first time she used his name direct, having usually used the words, 'your father,' or 'my husband'] could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-ordered letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, 'a marvel and a wonder,' as much so as to anyone else.

"Q.—I should suppose that you would have uncovered the plates and examined them?

"A.—I did not attempt to handle the plates, other than I have told you, nor uncover them to look at them. I was satisfied that it was the work of God, and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so.

"Major Bidamon here suggested: Did Mr. Smith forbid your examining the plates?

"A.—I do not think he did. I knew that he had them, and was not specially curious about them. I moved them from place to place on the table, as it was necessary in doing my work.

"Q.—Mother, what is your belief about the authenticity or origin of the Book of Mormon?

"A.—My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity—I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible.

BIOGRAPHY OF DAVID WHITMER.

BY H. H. SMITH.

When a man separating himself from a church denies the testimony he has given to the truth of the claims of that church, we are not surprised. When a man withdraws from a church and in the few remaining years of his life keeps stern silence, neither admitting nor denying the truth of his former words, we look upon him with no feeling of wonder. But when a man cut off from the church of his belief, in his early manhood, lives over fifty years, and continually reaffirms the testimony he bore in his youth; stands true to the message on which that church was founded, we can not keep back our surprise, we can not help a feeling of wonder and admiration. Such a man was David Whitmer.



DAVID WHITMER.

Whitmer was born near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but shortly after his birth his father removed to Ontario [later Seneca] County, New York. Here he lived until 1831. His father was an old revolutionary soldier, a hard workingman, and a strict Presbyterian. There were eight children. Three daughters, Catherine who married Hiram Page, Nancy who died in childhood, and Elizabeth Ann, who married Oliver Cowdery, and five sons, Christian, Jacob, John, David, and Peter.

David Whitmer's own account of his conversion to the

Latter Day Saint faith, as given to the *Kansas City Journal*, is as follows:

I first heard of what is now termed Mormonism, in the year 1825. I made a business trip to Palmyra, New York, and while there stopped with one Oliver Cowdery. A great many people in the neighborhood were talking about the finding of certain golden plates by one Joseph Smith, Jr., a young man of the neighborhood. Cowdery and I, as well as many others, talked about the matter, but at that time I paid but little attention to it, supposing it to be only the idle gossip of the neighborhood. Mr. Cowdery said he was acquainted with the Smith family, and he believed there must be some truth in the story of the plates, and that he intended to investigate the matter. . . . I had never seen any of the Smith family up to that time, and I began to inquire of the people in regard to them, and learned that one night during the year 1823, Joseph Smith, Jr., had a vision, and an angel of God appeared to him and told him where certain plates were to be found, and pointed out the spot to him, and that shortly afterward he went to that place and found the plates, which were still in his possession. After thinking over the matter for a long time, and talking with Cowdery, who also gave me a history of the finding of the plates, I went home, and after several months, Cowdery told me he was going to Harmony, Pennsylvania, whither Joseph Smith had gone with the plates, on account of the persecutions of his neighbors, and see him about the matter. He did go, and on his way he stopped at my father's house and told me that as soon as he found out anything, either truth or untruth, he would let me know. After he got there he became acquainted with Joseph Smith, and shortly after wrote to me, telling me that he was convinced that Smith had the records, and that he (Smith) had told him that it was the will of heaven that he (Cowdery) should be his scribe to assist in the translation of the plates. He went on and Joseph translated from the plates, and he wrote it down. Shortly after this Mr. Cowdery wrote me another letter, in which he gave me a few lines of what they had translated, and he assured me that he knew of a certainty that he had a record of a people that inhabited this continent, and that the plates they were translating from gave a complete history of these people. When Cowdery wrote me these things, and told me that he had revealed knowledge concerning the truth of them, I showed these letters in my parents, and brothers and sisters. Soon after I received another letter from Cowdery. . . . I went down to Harmony and found everything just as they had written me. The next day after I got there they packed up the plates and we proceeded on our journey to my father's house, where we arrived in due time, and the day after we commenced upon the translation of the remainder of the plates. I, as well as all of my father's family, Smith's wife, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, were present during the translation. The translation was by Smith, and the manner as follows: He had two small stores of a chocolate color, nearly egg-shape, and perfectly

smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be pavement, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation, in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips. The scribe would then read the sentence written, and if any mistake had been made, the characters would vibrate to Smith until corrected, when they faded from sight to be replaced by another line. The translation at my father's occupied about one month, that is from June 1 to July 1, 1829.—*Kansas City Journal, June 6, 1861.*

Joseph Smith himself tells of becoming acquainted with David Whitmer:

I became acquainted with Mr. Peter Whitmer, of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, and also with some of his family. In the beginning of the month of June, his son, David Whitmer, came to the place where we were residing, and brought with him a two-horse wagon, for the purpose of having us accompany him to his father's place, and there remain until we should finish the work. He proposed that we should have our board free of charge, and the assistance of one of his brothers to write for me, as also his own assistance when convenient.

Having much need of such timely aid in an undertaking so arduous, and being informed that the people of the neighborhood were anxiously awaiting the opportunity to inquire into these things, we accepted the invitation, and accompanied Mr. Whitmer to his father's house, and there resided until the translation was finished and the copyright secured. Upon our arrival, we found Mr. Whitmer's family very anxious concerning the work, and very friendly towards ourselves. They continued so, boarded and lodged us according to proposal, and John Whitmer, in particular, assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work.

In the meantime, David, John, and Peter Whitmer, jr., became our zealous friends and assistants in the work; and being anxious to know their respective duties, and having desired with such earnestness that I should receive of the Lord concerning them, I did so, through the means of the Urim and Thummim, and obtained for them in succession the following revelations:

"Revelation, given to David Whitmer, at Fayette, Seneca County, New York, June, 1829.

"A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men. Behold, I am God; and give heed to my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore give heed unto my word.

"Behold, the field is white already to harvest, therefore whose desisteth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap

while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God; yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God; therefore if you will ask of me you shall receive, if you will kneel it shall be opened unto you.

"Seek to bring forth and establish my Zion. Keep my commandments in all things, and if you keep my commandments, and endure to the end, you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.

"And it shall come to pass, that if you shall ask the Father in my name, in faith believing, you shall receive the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance, that you may stand as a witness of the things of which you shall both hear and see, and also that you may declare repentance unto this generation.

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, who created the heavens and the earth—a light which can not be hid in darkness; wherefore I must bring forth the fulness of my gospel from the Gentiles unto the house of Israel. And behold, thou art David, and thou art called to assist, which thing if you do, and are faithful, ye shall be blessed both spiritually and temporally, and great shall be your reward. Amen."—*Supplement to Millennium Star, vol. 14, p. 17. (Revelations to John and Peter Whitmer follow.)*

In June David was baptized in Seneca Lake by Joseph Smith. Hyrum Smith and Peter Whitmer, jr., were baptized at the same time. Not long afterwards he was permitted to behold the plates as one of the three witnesses. Of this event we wish to speak later.

After the organization of the church, of which he was one of the original six members, he traveled with Joseph Smith, preaching and baptizing.

When Joseph went back to Harmony, Pennsylvania, Hiram Page, who was one of the eight witnesses, pretended to receive revelations through a certain stone. The Whitmers, as well as Oliver Cowdery, were deceived by him for a time. A revelation immediately came reprimanding and instructing him, a part of which follows:

Behold, I say unto you, David, that you have feared men and have not relied on me for strength, as you ought; but your mind has been on the things of the earth more than on the things of me, your Maker, and the ministry wherunto you have been called; and you have not given heed unto my Spirit, and to those who were set over you, but have been persuaded by those whom I have not commanded; wherefore, you are left to inquire for yourself, at my bar, and ponder upon the things

gospel, at least be interesting, since it has pleased our heavenly Father to call us both to rejoice in the same hope of eternal life. And by giving them publicity, some thousands who have embraced the same covenant, may learn something more particular upon the rise of this church, in this last time. And while the gray evening is fast changing into a settled darkness, my heart responds with the happy millions who are in the presence of the Lamb, and are past the power of temptation, in rendering thanks, though feebly, to the same Parent.

Another day has passed, into that, to us, boundless ocean, ETERNITY! where nearly six thousand years have gone before; and what flits across the mind like an electric shock is, that it will never return! Whether it has been well improved or not; whether the principles emanating from him who "hal- lowed" it, have been observed; or whether, like the common mass of time, it has been heedlessly spent, is not for me to say—one thing I can say—it can never be recalled!—it has rolled in to assist in filling up the grand space de- creed in the mind of its Author, till na- ture shall have ceased her work, and time its accustomed revolutions—when its Lord shall have completed the gath- ering of his elect, and with them enjoy that Sabbath which shall never end!

On Friday, the 5th, in company with our brother JOSEPH SMITH jr. I left Kirtland for this place (New Portage,) to attend the conference previously ap- pointed. To be permitted, once more, to travel with this brother, occasions reflections of no ordinary kind. Many have been the fatigues and privations which have fallen to my lot to endure, for the gospel's sake, since 1828, with this brother. Our road has frequent- ly been spread with the "fowler's snare," and our persons sought with

the eagerness, of the Savage's ferocity, for innocent blood, by men, either hea- ted to desperation by the insinuations of those who professed to be "guides and way-marks" to the kingdom of glo- ry, or the individuals themselves!— This, I confess, is a dark picture to spread before our patrons, but they will pardon my plainness when I assure them of the truth. In fact, God has so ordered, that the reflections which I am permitted to cast upon my past life, relative to a knowledge of the way of salvation, are rendered "doubly endear- ing." Not only have I been gracious- ly preserved from wicked and unrea- sonable men, with this our brother, but I have seen the fruit of perseverance in proclaiming the everlasting gospel, immediately after it was declared to the world in these last days, in a man- ner not to be forgotten while heaven gives my common intellect. And what serves to render the reflection past ex- pression on this point is, that from his hand I received baptism, by the direc- tion of the angel of God—the first re- ceived into this church, in this day.

Near the time of the setting of the Sun, Sabbath evening, April 5th, 1829, my natural eyes, for the first time be- held this brother. He then resided in Harmony, Susquehanna county Penn. On Monday the 6th, I assisted him in arranging some business of a temporal nature, and on Tuesday the 7th, com- menced to write the book of Mormon. These were days never to be forgot- ten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the *inspiration* of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated, with the *Urim* and *Thummim*, or, as the Nephites would have said, "Interpreters," the history, or record, called "The book of Mor- mon."

on the sacred tablet of many an honest heart, and his loving memory is etched

among the Saints of God in the rich spaces of honor and esteem

ONE OF THE THREE WITNESSES INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF MARTIN HARRIS

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 79]

On the following day, I baptized a sister to President Ballinger, in the Des Moines River. The Branch here contributed a new suit of clothes to brother Harris, for which he felt to bless them. On the 29th of August we landed in Ogden, and the Ogden

Martin Harris arrived, (with Elder Edward Stevenson) whose name is known almost throughout the world as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. They left Kirtland on the 19th of August.

August 31st, the Salt Lake Herald said:

"Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, arrived in Salt Lake City last night, accompanied by Elder Edward Stevenson. Two members of the Des Moines Branch of the Church accompanied them to our city."

The Des. of News of August 21, 1870, in over one column notices the arrival of Martin Harris last evening, at 7:30, "who is in his 86th year. He is remarkably vigorous for one of his years; his memory being very good, and his sight, though his eyes appear to have failed, being so acute that he can see to pick a pin off the ground. He has never failed to bear testimony to the Divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon and he says it is not a matter of belief on his part, but of knowledge. He with the other (two) witnesses declared, and their testimony has accompanied every copy of the book, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld, and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon. This declaration he has not varied from in 41 years. We are glad to see Martin Harris once more in the midst of the Saints."

The Salt Lake Herald, September 3rd, said:

"We had a call yesterday morning from Elder Edward Stevenson, who introduced Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Mr. Harris is now 86 years of age, and is remarkably lively and energetic for his years. He holds firmly to the testimony he has borne for over forty years, that an angel appeared before him and the other witnesses, and showed them the plates upon which the characters of the Book of Mormon were inscribed. After living many years separated from the body of the Church he has come to spend the evening of life among the believers in that book to which he is so prominent a witness. Mr. Harris, who has a number of relatives in the Territory, came from the East under the care of Elder Edward Stevenson."

Monday Evening News, September 5, 1870, contains the following: "SIXTY-SIX MARTINS.—The congregation in the morning was addressed by Elder Edward Stevenson, Martin Harris and President George A. Smith. In the afternoon the table was occupied by Elder John Taylor, the house was crowded to overflowing. The meeting related an incident that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the plates possessed a great mass by which he was enabled to translate as was in fact the Urim and Thummim, and that sometimes he then used the Urim and Thummim. Martin explained the translation as follows: By aid of the great stone, sentences would appear and were read by the

A
B

X
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Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place; but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used. Martin said, after continued translation they would become weary, and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translating, and on resuming their labor of translation, Martin put in place the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent, unusually and intently gazing in darkness, no traces of the usual sentences appearing. Much surprised, Joseph exclaimed, "Martin! What is the matter? All is as dark as Egypt!" Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the Prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, to stop the mouths of fools, who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them, etc.

Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only they were larger. Martin said there were not many pages translated while he wrote, after which Oliver Cowdery and others did the writing.

Brother Harris was taught the necessity of being rebaptized. He said that was new doctrine to him. Revelations, 2nd chapter, was explained, that those who had lost their first love, and had fallen into evils and snares, were called on to "repent and do their first works," and that rebaptism was a part of the Gospel. He claimed that he had not been cut off from the Church, but said if that was required of him it would be manifested to him by the Spirit. Soon after his arrival in Utah he applied for baptism, saying that the Spirit had made known to him, that it was his duty to renew his covenant before the Lord.

He was also taught a principle that was new to him—baptism for the dead, as taught and practiced by the ancient Saints, and especially taught by Paul the Apostle in the 16th chapter of 1st Corinthians: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead." After consideration he came and said it had been made known to him that baptism for the dead was a correct principle, for he had seen his father in vision at the foot of a ladder, and he was above, and had to go down and help him up. In a short time the baptismal font was prepared, and by his request I baptized him, and President Geo. A. Smith, and Apostles John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Jos. F. Smith and Orson Pratt confirmed him by the laying on of hands, Orson Pratt being mouth. As soon as he was confirmed he returned into the font and was baptized for several of his dead friends—fathers, grandfathers, etc. Then his sister also was baptized for the female relatives, and they were confirmed for and in behalf of those whom they were baptized for, by the same brethren, Jos. F. Smith being mouth. It was a time of rejoicing for all who were present.

Brother Martin visited many of the wards, continuing to bear his testimony both of what he had beheld with his own eyes, and verily knew to be true. He publicly said that many years ago, in Ohio, a number of persons combined and sought to get Martin to drink wine for the purpose of crossing him in his testimony. At the conclusion they asked him if he really believed the testimony that he had signed in the Book of Mormon to be true? He replied no, he did not believe it, but, much to their surprise, he said he knew it to be true!

Soon after receiving his blessings in the house of the Lord, he went to Smithfield, Cache Valley, and lived with his son until he left this mortal life. Just before he breathed his last he sat up in his bed holding the Book of Mormon in his hand, and bore his last testimony to those who were present.

EDWARD STEVENSON.

great and spacious building; and it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth; and it was filled with people, both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceeding fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those which had come at, and were partaking of the fruit. And after that they had tasted of the fruit, they were ashamed, because of those that were jeering at them; and they fell away into forbidden paths, and were lost.

And now I, Nephi, do not speak all the words of my Father. But, to be short in writing: Behold, he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down, and partook of the fruit of the tree. And he also saw other multitudes, feeling their way towards that great and spacious building.

And it came to pass that many were drowned in the depths of the fountain; and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads. And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building. And after that they did enter into that building, they did point the finger of scorn at me, and those who were partaking of the fruit also; but we hoodled them not.

Again, that perfid second man with the wisdom of God, after he had said, while manifesting himself to his people, in the flesh, at Jerusalem, Other sheep have I that are not of this fold, and they shall hear my voice; that he should minister to the Nephites, on this continent, is such heavenly evidence of the divinity & propriety of the book of Mormon, that all doubts, cavils, surmises, and even worldly reasonings, which have been brought against its purity, shrink into little nothings.— Says Jesus my sheep know my voice. Now read:—And now it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and said unto them, Behold, ye have heard the things which I have taught before I ascended to my Father; therefore whose remembrance these sayings of mine, and doeth them, him will I raise up at the last day. And it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words, he perceived that there were some among them which marvelled, and wondered what he would concerning the law of Moses; for they understood not the saying, That old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. And he said unto them, Marvel not that I said unto you, that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. Behold I say unto you, That the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he which covenanted with my people Israel; therefore, the law in me is fulfilled; for I have come to fulfil the law; therefore, it hath an end. Behold, I do not destroy the prophets; for as many as have not been fulfilled in me, verily, I say unto you, shall all be fulfilled. And because I said unto you, That old things had passed away, I do not destroy that which hath been spoken concerning things which is to come. For behold, the covenant which I have made with my people, is not all fulfilled; but the law which was given unto Moses, hath an end in me. Behold I am the law, and the light: Look unto me, and endure to the end and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end, will I give eternal life. Behold, I have given unto you the commandments; therefore keep my commandments. And this is the law and the prophets; for they truly testified of me.

And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he said unto those twelve whom he had chosen, Ye are my disciples; and ye are a light unto this people, which are a remnant of the house of Joseph. And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; and the Father hath given it unto you. And not at any time hath the Father given me commandment that I should tell it unto your brethren at Jerusalem; neither at any time hath the Father given me commandment, that I should tell unto them concerning the other tribes of the house of Israel, which the Father hath led away out of the land. This much did the Father command me, that I should tell unto them, that other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and these shall be one fold, and one Shepherd. And now because of stiffness of heart and unbelief, they understood not my word; therefore I was commanded to say no more of the Father concerning this thing unto them. But verily, I say unto you, that the Father hath commanded me, and I tell it unto you, that ye were separated from among them because of their iniquity. Therefore it is because of their iniquity, that they know not of you. And verily, I say unto you again, that the other tribes hath the Father appointed from them; and it is because of their iniquity, that they know not of them. And verily, I say unto you, that ye are they of which I said, other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd. And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching; and they understood me not that I said they shall hear my voice; and they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice; that I should not manifest myself unto them, save it were by the Holy Ghost. But behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among them which the Father hath given me. And verily, verily, I say unto you, That I have other sheep, which are not of this land; neither of the land of Jerusalem; neither in any parts of that land round about, whither I have been to minister. For they of which I speak, as they which have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifest myself unto them. But I have received a commandment of the Father, That I should go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold, and one Shepherd; therefore I go to show myself unto them. And I command you that ye shall write these sayings, after that I am gone, that if it so be that my people at Jerusalem, they which have been my, and been with me in my ministry, do not ask the Father in my name,

that they may receive a knowledge of you by the Holy Ghost, and also of the other tribes which they know not of, that these sayings which ye shall write, shall be kept, and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed which shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth, because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer. And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfil the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel. And behold, see the Gentiles because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witness unto them of me and of the Father. Behold, because of their belief in me, with the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, O house of Israel, in the latter day shall the truth come unto the Gentiles, that the fulness of these things shall be made known unto them. But Wo, with the Father, unto the unbelieving of the Gentiles; for notwithstanding that they have come forth upon the face of this land, and have scattered my people, which are of the house of Israel; and my people which are of the house of Israel, have been cast out from among them, & have been trodden under feet by them; and because of the mercies of the Father unto the Gentiles, and also the judgments of the Father upon my people, which are of the house of Israel, verily, verily, I say unto you, That after all this, and I have cursed my people which are of the house of Israel, to be smitten, and to be afflicted, and to be slain, and to be cast out from among them, and to become hated by them, and to become a hiss and a by-word among them. And thus commeth the Father that I should say unto you. At that day, when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold with the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them; and then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them; and I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you, but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fulness of my gospel. But if the Gentiles will repent, and turn unto me, with the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; and I will not suffer my people, which are of the house of Israel, to go through among them, and tread them down, saith the Father. But if they will not turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, I will suffer them, ye, I will suffer my people, O house of Israel, that they shall go through among them, and shall tread them down, and they shall be as salt that hath lost his savor, which is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, & to be trodden under foot of my people, O house of Israel. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Thus hath the Father commanded me, that I should give unto this people this land for their inheritance. And when the words of the prophet Isaiah shall be fulfilled, which saith, Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.

The word of the Lord carries its own evidence with it. It will have been attempted to counterfeit it. They may compass the earth with their knowledge, and hark through the regions of space by their inventions, but death teaches them their frailty, and thus covers their glory. The book of Mormon, as a revelation from God, possesses some advantage over the old scriptures; it has not been fractured by the wisdom of man, with here and there an Italian word to supply deficiencies.— It was translated by the gift and power of God, by an unlearned man, through the aid of a pair of Interpreters, or spectacles—(known, perhaps, in ancient days as Tophim, or Urim and Thummim) and while it unfolds the history of the first inhabitants that settled this continent, it, at the same time, brings a openness to scriptures, like the days of the apostles; and opens and explains the prophecies, that a child may understand the meaning of many of them; and shows how the Lord will gather his saints, even the children of Israel, that have been scattered over the face of the earth, more than two thousand years, in these last days, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.

It may be well to state, that the people of God, in ancient days, according to the accounts of man, kept their sacred records on plates of gold, and these of less consequence on plates of brass, copper, wood, &c. see John's biblical archaeology, Josephus, and others. These plates were generally made from the sixteenth to the forty second part of an inch thick (of metal) and something like six by eight inches square, and fastened at the back with three rings through which a rod was put to carry them, or hang them. The word of the Lord, the history of the doings of the children of God, and their genealogy was engraved in a nice workmanlike manner, upon them, in Hebrew, Chaldaean, Egyptian, &c. Such was the condition of the plates, from which came the book of Mormon. As may be seen by an allusion in the book of Ether, all that was on them is not translated; when, as they are sacred, when the book of Mormon was translated from them, they were again hid up to the Lord, to come forth again in his own due time. The Ark of the covenant containing the sacred stone tables, was hid up to the Lord, in the cave where Moses climbed up to view the heritage of God, and was not to come forth till God received his people again unto mercy, when all these things and the cloud shall return, and the glory of God shall rest upon his temple. The present generation is great with events.

The people of God ought to lift up their hearts and rejoice that they live in this

A

BOOK

OF

COMMANDMENTS,

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE

Church of Christ,

ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO LAW, ON THE

6th of April, 1830.

ZION:

PUBLISHED BY W. W. PHELPS & CO.

.....
1833.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *A Revelation given to Joseph, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, May, 1829, informing him of the alteration of the Manuscript of the fore part of the book of Mormon.*

NOW, behold I say unto you, that because you delivered up so many writings, which you had power to translate, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them, and you also lost your gift at the same time, nevertheless it has been restored unto you again: therefore, see that you are faithful and go on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work as you have begun. Do not run faster than you have strength and means provided to translate, but be diligent unto the end, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer satan, and those that do uphold his work.

2 Behold they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted, and for this cause I said, that he is a wicked man, for he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been intrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift, and because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold they have taken them from you: therefore, you have delivered them up; yea, that which was sacred unto wickedness. And behold, satan has put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands; and behold I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that which you translated and caused to be written; and **on this wise the devil has sought to lay a cunning**

plan, that he may destroy this work; for he has put it into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate.

3 Verily I say unto you, that I will not suffer that satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing, for behold he has put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God; for behold they say in their hearts, We will see if God has given him power to translate, if so, he will also give him power again; and if God giveth him power again, or if he translate again, or in other words, if he bringeth forth the same words, behold we have the same with us, and we have altered them: Therefore, they will not agree, and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power: therefore, we will destroy him, and also the work; and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world.

4 Verily, verily I say unto you, that satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to do iniquity against that which is good, that he may lead their souls to destruction, and thus he has laid a cunning plan to destroy the work of God; yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work; yea, he saith unto them, Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy: behold this is no harm, and thus he flattereth them and testeth them that it is no sin to lie, that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him, and thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare; and thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

5 Verily, verily I say unto you, w^o be unto him that lieth to deceive, because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

6 Now, behold they have altered those words, because satan saith unto them, He hath deceived you, and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to tempt the Lord their God.

7 Behold I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands; for behold, they shall not lie any more against those words; for behold, if you should bring forth the same words, they would say that you have lied; that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted your words; and behold they would publish this, and satan would harden the hearts of the people, to stir them up to anger against you, that they might not believe my words: thus satan would overpower this generation, that the work might not come forth in this generation: but behold here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work.

8 Marvel not that I said unto you, here is wisdom, show it not unto the world, for I said, show it not unto the world, that you may be preserved. Behold I do not say that you shall not show it unto the righteous; but as you cannot always judge the righteous, or as you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous: therefore, I say unto you, hold your peace until I shall see fit to make all things known unto the world concerning the matter.

9 And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have

gone out of your hands, are engraven upon the plates of Nephi; yea, and you remember, it was said in those writings, that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi.

10 And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi, is more particular concerning the things, which in my wisdom I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account: therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained; and behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi, and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.

11 Behold they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi. Behold there are many things engraven on the plates of Nephi, which do throw greater views upon my gospel: therefore, it is wisdom in me, that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work. And behold, all the remainder of this work, does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets; yea, and also my disciples desired in their prayers, should come forth unto this people. And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers; yea, and this was their faith, that my gospel which I gave unto them, that they might preach in their days, might come unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and also, all that had become Lamanites, because of their dissensions.

12 Now this is not all, their faith in their prayers were, that this gospel should be made known also; if it were possible that other nations should possess this land; and thus they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel, in this land, might have eternal life; yea, that it might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people, they may be.

13 And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers, will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people. Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.

14 And for this cause have I said, if this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them. Now I do not say this to destroy my church, but I say this to build up my church: therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven: but it is they who do not fear me, neither keep my commandments, but buildeth up churches unto themselves, to get gain; yea, and all those that do wickedly, and buildeth up the kingdom of the devil; yea, verily, verily I say unto you, that it is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the centre.

15 Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God: I came unto my own, and my own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. I am he who said: other sheep have I which are not of this fold, unto my disciples, and many there were that understood me not.

16 And I will show unto this people, that I had

other sheep, and that they were a branch of the house of Jacob; and I will bring to light their marvelous works, which they did in my name; yea, and I will also bring to light my gospel, which was ministered unto them; and behold they shall not deny that which you have received, but they shall build it up, and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine: Yea, and the only doctrine which is in me; and this I do, that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention: Yea, satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention, concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures, and do not understand them: therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery, for behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts: Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely.

17 Behold this is my doctrine: whosoever repenteth, and cometh unto me, the same is my church: whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me: therefore, he is not of my church.

18 And now, behold whosoever is of my church, and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my Rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

19 And now, remember the words of him who is the light and the light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God: Amen.

Read

THE BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS

which contains the first published revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was published in 1833 in Independence, Missouri.

Read

THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

This Book is the first Doctrine and Covenants which contains the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith for the Church. It also contains the Lectures on Faith which were used in the School of the Prophets held in the Kirtland Temple and was published in 1835 at Kirtland, Ohio.

This Book is prepared and published in memory of the Prophet Joseph Smith and in appreciation for his great work of the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the second of the publications of how and where the Church was made in picture and story in a series entitled Joseph Smith Begins His Work.

THE AUTHOR.

A F F I D A V I T

STATE OF UTAH)
County of Davis) ss

WILFORD C. WOOD, being first duly sworn upon his oath, deposes and bears testimony:

1. That he has in his possession and does own an original edition of the Book of Commandments published by the Prophet Joseph Smith at Independence, Missouri, in 1833.
2. That he has in his possession and does own a first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants which contains the lectures on Faith and the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith for the Church. This edition of the Doctrine and Covenants was published in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1835.
3. That the Book of Mormon published in 1830 which is contained within Volume 1 of this series titled "Joseph Smith Begins His Work", was the first printed publication for the Church.
4. That the Book of Commandments above referred to is an original edition published in 1833 at Independence, Missouri, and was the second printed publication for the Church.
5. That the Doctrine and Covenants above referred to is an original edition published in 1835 at Kirtland, Ohio, and was the third printed publication for the Church.
6. That the Book of Commandments of 1833 and the Doctrine and Covenants of 1835 have been reproduced in this Volume 2 from the original books by photo-offset method in their original unchanged condition.

Wilford C. Wood

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 21st day of February, 1962.

My commission expires:
October 4, 1963

Notary Public

We the undersigned of the Deseret News Publishing Company certify that the printing of these original books, A BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS—1833, and DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS—1835, as contained herein, were produced by photo-offset method from books in Wilford C. Wood's possession and owned by him.

According to Wilford C. Wood, A BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS is one of the only editions published in 1833. The DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, containing the Lectures on Faith, is the first edition of the book and was published in 1835. The page size of A BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS has been enlarged from a page size of 2 7/8 x 4 3/4 inches to 5 x 9 inches, and the page size of the DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS has been enlarged from 3 3/4 x 5 3/4 inches to 6 x 9 inches for easier reading.


Print Manager


Assistant Print Manager


Director of Sales

Joseph Smith
Begins His Work
Volume Two

The Book of Commandments
1833

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 21st day of February, 1962.


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Residing at Salt Lake City, Utah