



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

FARMS Paper

The following paper represents the views of the author and not the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH AND MORMON STUDIES

Joseph Smith's Translation of the Book of Mormon

Stephen D. Ricks

The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information

John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone

Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History

Dean Jessee

Summary:

In the first two papers Stephen Ricks, John Welch, and Tim Rathbone discuss what Joseph Smith and his companions said about translating the Book of Mormon. They document the intense period of activity from April to June 1829, during which nearly all the translation took place. In the third paper, Dean Jessee presents and supplements Joseph Knight's firsthand account of early church history events involving Joseph Smith and others.

Papers
Reprint
Church History

FARMS
Brigham Young University
P.O. Box 7113
University Station
Provo, UT 84602
1-800-327-6715
(801) 373-5111
www.farmsresearch.com

\$6.00
WRR-86



"Joseph Smith's Translation of the Book of Mormon" may be reproduced and used, without alteration, addition, or deletion, for any nonpecuniary or nonpublishing purpose without permission.

"The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Preliminary Report on the Basic Historical Information" reflects substantial research but is not ready for final publication. It is made available to be critiqued and improved and to stimulate further research.

"Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History" is reprinted by permission from *BYU Studies* (autumn 1976): 32–39. Reproduction of this paper is prohibited.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE BOOK OF MORMON:
PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE
BASIC HISTORICAL INFORMATION

John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone

This report summarizes basic historical information pertaining to the translation of the Book of Mormon by Joseph Smith. Section I gives an annotated chronology of events from 1827 through 1830, with the supporting primary source materials cited in the footnotes and copies of some of these documents being attached at the end of this paper. Despite a few inconsistencies and uncertainties in this historical data, most of the information is reconcilable into a single logical sequence of events.

In addition to providing ready access to this historical data, this report examines two other areas of interest. Section II examines two theories about the order in which the texts of the Book of Mormon were translated, and concludes that the Large Plates of Nephi (from Mosiah to Moroni and the Title Page) were most likely translated in Harmony (now Oakland), Pennsylvania, from April 7 to the end of May, 1829, and that the Small Plates of Nephi (from 1 Nephi to Omni) were translated afterwards in Fayette, New York, from the first part of June to the end of June, 1829. The order of translation may have a bearing on one's appreciation and analysis of certain portions of the Book of Mormon.

Section III shows that the 590 pages printed in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon were translated, dictated, and written all within an extremely short and intensely busy period of time. Virtually no time existed for Joseph Smith to plan, to ponder about,

to research around, to draft, to revise, or to correct the pages of this book during those three months. The Book of Mormon was dictated one time through, essentially in final form. This was done despite several significant interruptions and distractions. Such a feat, in and of itself, constitutes a considerable achievement.

Section IV is a bibliography of primary documents and secondary sources.

Tim Rathbone and others have provided significant research assistance particularly for Sections I and IV of this report. While we have attempted to be thorough and believe that we have made reference to all of the main documents, we recognize that further research may yet discover additional information to clarify the individual points or expand the number of sections in this report. Dates listed in the chronology are, for the most part, historically verifiable, but some have been approximated and remain in need of further documentation. We are grateful for the comments several have made clarifying or correcting earlier drafts of this report. Further comments are welcome.

I. Chronology of Events from September 1827 to April 1830 Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon

21-22 September 1827: This was the appointed time when Joseph Smith received the plates from Moroni, with a charge that Joseph "should be responsible for them," and that he would be "cut off" if he should let them go carelessly.¹ This charge was strict, for there were reasons to know that "strenuous exertions" would soon be made to try to get the plates from Joseph.² Some time before 1847, but possibly as early as 1835, Joseph Knight wrote:

. . . [T]oward fall the forepart of September [1827]. I went to Rochester on Buisness and returnd By Palmyra to be there about the 22nt of September. I was there several Days. I will say there [was] a man near By By the name of Samuel Lawrance. He was a Seear and he had Bin to the hill and knew about the things in the hill and he was trying to obtain them. . . . Now Joseph was some affraid of him [Samuel Lawrence] that he might be a trouble to him. He therefore sint his father up to Sams as he Called him near night to see if there was any signs of his going away that night. He told his father to stay till near Dark and if he saw any signs of his going you till him if I find him there I will thrash the stumps with³him. So the old man came a way and saw no thing like it.

Joseph (leaving Emma⁴ with Joseph Knight's carriage) then went after midnight to the top of the hill, which was 2 to 3 miles southeast of the Smith home, and received the plates from Moroni.⁵ He then hid

¹ JS-H 2:59.

² JS-H 2:60.

³ Dean Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," BYU Studies 17:1 (Autumn 1976), pp. 32-33.

⁴ Joseph had married Emma Hale on January 18, 1827. JS-H 2:57.

⁵ JS-H 2:59; HC 1:18; Jessee, Personal Writings, pp. 6-7; Oliver Cowdery, "Letter VII," LDS Messenger and Advocate (July (Footnote 5 Continued on Next Page

the plates in an "old black oak tree top which was hollow."⁶

Shortly thereafter, he retrieved the plates and brought them home wrapped in a linen smock.⁷

A few days later a mob (consisting of Samuel Lawrence, Luman Walters, Willard Chase and others) attempted to get the plates from Joseph. According to Lucy Mack Smith's preliminary manuscript (transcribed from Lucy's dictation by Martha Jane Coray around 1845-47) and according to Brigham Young in 1855, during this time the conjuror Luman Walters (of Sodus, Pultneyville, New York), and

(Footnote 5 Continued from Previous Page)

1835), pp. 158-59. The 22nd began at midnight. Along with the plates, Joseph also received spectacles, a rod, and a breastplate; Jessee, "Knight," pp. 33-35; Lucy Mack Smith, Preliminary Manuscript #1, dictated to Martha Jane Coray around 1845-47, pp. [66-68, 71, 74-75] (further edited by Howard Coray [Ms #2], and finally published in 1853 as Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet); William Smith, according to J. W. Peterson, in Rod of Iron, 1:3 (Feb. 1924), pp. 6-7.

⁶ As reported by Martin Harris to Joel Tiffany in Tiffany's Monthly 5:3 (July 1859), p. 165. In "a birch log" according to Lucy Mack Smith, Prelim. Ms #1, p. [72]. B. H. Roberts, Comprehensive History, I:86, 90-91.

⁷ Joseph Smith's sister Catherine was at home "when he came in running and burst through the door carrying the plates; his hand was injured from striking one of the villains [who had chased him]. He told her that he had jumped over a rail fence; when one of the villains grabbed for the plates, he knocked him down with his right fist while carrying the plates under his left arm clasped to his body. Then he ran the gauntlet with several more, and when he came in the house she said he was completely out of breath. She took the plates from him and laid them on the table temporarily, and helped revive him until he got breathing properly and also examined his hand, and treated it for the bruises on his knuckles, where he had struck the villain and thus defended himself and the plates." Interview by I. B. Ball of H. S. Salisbury, grandson of Catherine Smith Salisbury, August 31, 1954, p. 2 (original in LDS Archives). Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [72-73]. On the weight of the plates, see F.A.R.M.S. Update, "The 'Golden' Plates," (October 1984).

others, attempted to get the plates from Joseph which were hidden at his father's home in Manchester Township.⁸

October 1827: Joseph "commenced working with his father and brothers on the farm."⁹ Several attempts were made to get the plates from Joseph, such as the one by Willard Chase's sister, Sally, who used a green glass to see the precise place where Joseph had hidden the plates,¹⁰ and one by a mob of fifty.¹¹

⁸ Jessee, "Knight," pp. 29-39; HC 1:18-19; Lucy Mack Smith, Preliminary Manuscript #1, pp. [68-69]; Lucy, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and his Progenitors for Many Generations, (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), pp. 102-110; Journal of Discourses, Brigham Young, February 18, 1855, 2:180-81, and July 19, 1857, 5:55 (cited in Jessee, "Knight," p. 33, note 12).

⁹ Lucy, 1853, p. 107; Prelim. Ms #1, p. [74].

¹⁰ Lucy, 1853, p. 109; Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [75-76].

¹¹ Lucy, 1853, p. 113; Prelim. Ms #1, p. [79]. Note also the Joseph Bates Noble reminiscence of Joseph Smith and the Plates: "My first introduction to this young Mormon [Mary A. Beman] was at McMillians my place of boarding, She was a teaching school in the neighbor hood. her ~~parents~~ Father Alvah Beman lived a bout two miles distance a man well off as to houses and land and goods of this world and verry highly esteemed among men for his word this men was well acquainted with the Smith family before the coming forth of the book of Mormon. and was with Joseph at one time assisted him in hiding the Plates, from a mob he was permitted to handle the Plates with a thin cloth covering over them. This Mary A. Beman Brought the Book of Mormon into the Neighbour, the first I had ever heard of." Journal of Joseph B. Noble, Autobiographical Sketch, 1810-1836, LDS Archives, Ms d 1031, fd 1.

Likewise Mary A. [Beman] Noble speaks of her father Alvah Beman, the mob, and the Plates:

"Father sold his place in Livonia and removed with his family to Avon Livingston County some years previous my Father became acquainted with Father Joseph Smith the Father of the Prophet he frequently would go to Palmyra to see Father Smiths and his family during this time Brother Joseph Smith come in possession of the plates that contained the Book of Mormon as soon as it was noised around that there was a golden Bible found (for that was what it was called at that time) the minds of the people become so excited and it arose at such a pitch that a mob

(Footnote 11 Continued on Next Page

Joseph "began to make arrangements to accomplish the translation of the Record. The first step that he was instructed to take in regard to this work was to make a fac-simile of some of the characters."¹²

November 1827: "[The Smiths] had to garde the house until some time in November. He [Joseph] obtaind fifty Dollars in money and hired a man to move him and his wife to Pennsylvany to hir Fathers,"¹³ namely Isaac Hale.

December 1827: Joseph moved from his parents' frame house in the Manchester township, New York, to Emma's parents' house in Harmony, Pennsylvania, while hiding the plates in a barrel of beans.¹⁴

Isaac Hale recalled Joseph's arrival at this time as follows:

In a short time they returned bringing with them a Peter Ingersol, and subsequently came to the conclusion they would move out and reside upon a place near my residence.¹⁵

(Footnote 11 Continued from Previous Page)

collected together to search the house of Father Joseph Smith to find the records my Father was there at the time and assisted in -- concealing the plates in a boxe in a secluded place where no one could find them although he did not see them my Father soon returned." Autobiography of Mary Adeline Beman Noble, 1810-1834, LDS Archives, Ms d 1031, fd 1.

12 Lucy, 1853, p. 109 (Prelim. Ms #1, p. [76]), gives the impression that this was done at the Smith home. Joseph and Emma may have begun this work, however, after arriving in Pennsylvania. Jessee, "Knight," p. 34.

13 Jessee, "Knight," p. 34.

14 Lucy, 1853, p. 113; Prelim. Ms #1, p. [79].

15 F. W. Kirkham, A New Witness for Christ in America, 1st ed. (Independence, Mo: Zion's Printing and Publishing, 1942), p. 135, noting that a copy of the 1833 deed for that land is in the LDS Archives. Joseph & Emma may have moved into a nearby house owned by Jesse Hale, one of Isaac Hale's sons.

In Harmony, Joseph with Emma "Drew of[f] the Caricters exactley like the ancient."¹⁶ Before his departure from Manchester Township, Joseph had made arrangements with Martin Harris to join him in Harmony for a specific purpose:

When Joseph had had sufficient time to accomplish the journey [to Harmony], and transcribe some of the Egyptian Characters, it was agreed that Martin Harris should follow him--and that he [Martin] should take the characters to the East, and, on his way, he was to call on all the professed linguists, in order to give them the opportunity to display their talents in giving a translation of the characters.¹⁷

December 1827 - February 1828: Joseph translated some characters.¹⁸

Emma and Reuben Hale acted as scribes: "Now when he Began to translate he was poor and was put to it for provisions and had no one to write for him But his wife, and his wifes Brother would sometimes write a little for him through the winter."¹⁹ David Hale substantiated the idea that his brother played some role when he said that Reuben "assisted Joe Smith to fix up some characters such as Smith pretended were engraven on his book of plates."²⁰ Also, Joseph McKune boarded in the neighborhood and attended school at

¹⁶ Jesse, "Knight," p. 34. "I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them," JS-H 62. As noted below, Reuben Hale may have helped prepare a transcript of the characters.

¹⁷ Lucy, 1853, pp. 113-114; Prelim. Ms #1, p. [80]. Lucy Harris obtained a copy of the transcript surreptitiously through the services of her prospective son-in-law, a Mr. Dikes (Prelim. Ms #1, p. [81]).

¹⁸ JS-H 62; HC 1:19.

¹⁹ Jesse, "Knight," p. 35.

²⁰ Statement of David Hale, cited in Emily C. Blackman, History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Hafflinger, 1873), p. 104.

Hickory Grove during the time Joseph Smith was translating at Harmony. He was "quite often in Smith's house," and stated that "Reuben Hale acted as scribe a part of the time."²¹

Apparently during this time, when the Book of Lehi was being translated and Emma was acting as scribe, Joseph translated a passage describing Jerusalem as a walled city (cf. 1 Nephi 4:4) and stopped to ask Emma if Jerusalem indeed had walls. In 1856, Emma Smith recalled the following:

When my husband was translating the Book of Mormon, I wrote a part of it, as he dictated each sentence, word for word, and when he came to proper names he could not pronounce, or long words, he spelled them out, and while I was writing them, if I made a mistake in spelling, he would stop me and correct my spelling, although it was impossible for him to see how I was writing them down at the time. Even the word Sarah he could not pronounce at first, but had to spell it, and I would pronounce it for him.

When he stopped for any purpose at any time he would, when he commenced again, begin where he left off without any hesitation, and one time while he was translating he stopped suddenly, pale as a sheet, and said, "Emma, did Jerusalem have walls around it?" When I answered, "Yes," he replied "Oh! I was afraid I had been deceived." He had such a limited knowledge of history at the time that he did not even know that Jerusalem was surrounded by walls.²²

²¹ Statement of Joseph Fowler Mckune, cited in Rhamanthus M. Stocker, Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: R.T. Peck & Co., 1887), p. 556. Michael Morse, brother-in-law of Emma, recalled seeing Joseph translate in Harmony, with Emma and others acting as scribes, 1879 Blair interview in Saints' Herald, 26 (June 15, 1879), pp. 190-91; but this recollection may also be of events in 1829.

²² Edmund C. Briggs, "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," Journal of History, 9 (Jan. 1916), p. 454. See also Edmund C. Briggs, "Interview with David Whitmer," Saint's Herald, 31 (June 21, 1884) p. 5 (Letter dated June 4, 1884): "This brings to my mind a statement of the Elect Lady, Emma in the winter of 1856 She said to me, 'When you see David Whitmer you will see an honest man.' And in the same conversation, she remarked of her husband Joseph's limited education while he was translating the Book of Mormon, and she was scribe at the time, 'He could not pronounce the word Sariah.' And one time while translating, where it

(Footnote 22 Continued on Next Page

Several further accounts similarly focus on the point that Joseph Smith was poorly equipped educationally to produce the Book of Mormon. M. J. Hubble reported the following interview with David Whitmer:

Smith was indeed ignorant of the Bible that when in translating he first came where Jerusalem was spoken of as a "Walled City" he stopped until they got a Bible & showed him where the fact was recorded--Smith not believing it was a walled city.

Mr. W[hitmer] said that when Jerusalem was captured by the Babalonians that many of the Jewish histories were missing & believed that the book of Lehigh & Book of Mormon were safely secured by their proper owners & brought to this continent & under the guidance of Almighty God buried untill future generations should be ripe for the truth & he expressed himself in good language & he believes what he says.²³

In 1875, David Whitmer held a similar view:

So illiterate was Joseph at the time, said Mr. Whitmer, that he didn't even know that Jerusalem was a walled city and he was utterly unable to pronounce many of the names which the magic power of the Urim and Thummim revealed, and therefore spelled them out in²⁴ syllables and the more erudite scribe put them together.

February 1828: Martin Harris arrived in Harmony as Joseph and Martin had planned. Martin then left for Palmyra, Utica, Albany, New York City and Philadelphia, visiting with Professor Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill (the head of Rutgers Medical School, who happened to

(Footnote 22 Continued from Previous Page)

speaks of the walls of Jerusalem, he stopped and said, 'Emma, did Jerusalem have walls surrounding it.' When I informed him it had, he replied, 'O, I thought I was deceived.'"

²³ M. J. Hubble Interview, November 13, 1886, original in University of Missouri Library, Columbia, Missouri (R. L. Anderson typescript); corrected version published by Stanley Kimball in BYU Studies, 14 (Summer 1974), 483-486.

²⁴ David Whitmer Interview, Chicago Times, August 7, 1875. So also Michael Morse statement, cited above.

be in New York) and with Professor Charles Anthon at Columbia College and others concerning the characters copied from some part of the unsealed plates of Mormon, perhaps even calling upon Lt. Governor Luther Brandish for consultation.²⁵ Joseph wrote in 1832 that the Lord told Joseph to speak unto Martin that he should go to New York City "with some of the characters so we proceeded to copy some of them"²⁶ Martin took with him the transcript of the characters and a translation.²⁷ That Philadelphia was possibly among the "Eastern Cittys" mentioned by Joseph is contained in Joseph Knight Sr.'s recollection that Emma and Joseph drew off some of the characters exactly like the ancient and sent Harris to Albany, Philadelphia, and New York City to get them translated.²⁸

12 April 1828: Martin Harris returned from New York to Joseph's home in Harmony and consulted with Joseph.²⁹ Harris then returned to his farm in Palmyra township where he arranged his affairs for an

²⁵ See HC 1:19; F.A.R.M.S. Staff, Martin Harris' Visit With Charles Anthon: Collected Documents on Short-Hand Egyptian, FARMS Preliminary Report 85a; F.A.R.M.S. Update "What Did Charles Anthon Really Say?" (May 1985); and S. Kimball, "The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems," BYU Studies, 10 (Spring, 1970), pp. 328-330 (FARMS Reprint KIM-70). W. Gunnell, "Martin Harris--Witness and Benefactor to the Book of Mormon" (BYU, unpublished MA Thesis, 1955), p. 114, and R. James, The Man Who Knew (Cache Valley: Martin Harris Pageant Committee, 1983), pp. 56-62, note that Martin left Palmyra by wagon with Hyrum, since the Erie Canal was closed for the winter; Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [80-81].

²⁶ Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Part I, p. 5 (LDS Archives); Jessee, Personal Writings, pp. 7-8.

²⁷ JS-H 1:64.

²⁸ Jessee, "Knight," p. 34. See above at December 1827 for this and related statements.

²⁹ HC 1:20.

extended absence. Afterward he and his wife Lucy returned to Pennsylvania where Martin joined Joseph as his scribe for the translation of the plates of the Book of Mormon beginning with the Book of Lehi.³⁰ Lucy Harris wanted to see the plates:

As soon as she [Lucy Harris] arrived there, she informed him [Joseph] that her object in coming was to see the plates, and that she would never leave until she had accomplished it. Accordingly, without delay, she commenced ransacking every nook and corner about the house--chests, trunks, cupboards, & c; consequently, Joseph was under the necessity of removing both the breast-plate and the Record from the house, and secreting them elsewhere. Not finding them in the house she concluded that Joseph Had buried them, and the next day she commenced searching out of doors, which she continued to do until two o'clock P.M.

The woman was so perplexed and disappointed in all her undertakings, that she left the house and took her lodgings during her stay in Pennsylvania with a near neighbor.³¹

Issac Hale also wrote of this time: "About this time, Martin Harris made his appearance upon the stage; and Smith began to interpret the characters or hieroglyphics which he said were engraven upon the plates, while Harris wrote down the interpretation. It was said that Harris wrote down one hundred sixteen pages."³² Although usually in the house, apparently the plates were placed in a box and sometimes secreted in the woods or "in the Mountain" (according to Joseph Knight), or elsewhere, when not being employed.³³

12 April - 14 June, 1828: The book of Lehi was translated.

According to Martin Harris's account, "The prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim

³⁰ Lucy, 1853, p. 115; Prelim. Ms #1, p. [81].

³¹ Lucy, 1853, pp. 115-16; Prelim. Ms #1, p. [82].

³² Susquehanna Register [Montrose], May 1, 1834.

³³ Lucy, 1853, pp. 115-116; Jessee, "Knight," p. 34.

and Thummim and for convenience he then used the seer stone."³⁴

Harris tested Joseph with the seer stone by replacing the stone with one of a similar shape and color, but Joseph immediately apprehended the difference, thus satisfying Martin.³⁵

15 June 1828: Joseph and Emma's first son, Alvin (Alva?), was born and died shortly thereafter.³⁶

Late June 1828, or Early July: The 116 pages of the Book of Lehi were borrowed from Joseph by Martin Harris who took them to Palmyra to show them to his wife and family and they were lost. Lucy Smith and others suspected that Martin Harris' wife Lucy stole the 116 pages.³⁷

1 July 1828: Joseph remained with Emma for two weeks after the death of their child.³⁸ He then left for his father's farm in Manchester, New York, and asked Martin to come to his father's house to tell him what happened to the 116 pages. The 116 pages were

³⁴ HC 1:20; Millennial Star 44:86-87, from lecture of Martin Harris recorded by Edward Stevenson, 30 Nov. 1881, reprinted with slight differences in A. Jenson, "The Three Witnesses," Historical Record, 6 (May 1887), 216-17.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Dates and the words "infant son," but no name, appear on the tombstone in Harmony; see Larry C. Porter, "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816-1831" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, BYU, 1971), pp. 146-47. Richard L. Anderson reports to us that that Smith family Bible clearly reads "Alvin."

³⁷ Lucy, 1853, pp. 120-123; Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [86, 90-93].

³⁸ Lucy, 1853, p. 118; Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [87, 89].

lost. The interpreters and the plates were then taken from Joseph by an angel.³⁹

July 1828: Joseph returned to Harmony and stayed "for nearly two months."⁴⁰ There the spectacles were returned to him long enough to receive a revelation from the Lord chastizing him for allowing "the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon," and assuring him that, "nevertheless, my work shall go forth." D&C 3:15,16.⁴¹ The spectacles may have been taken at some earlier time also, according to interviews with David Whitmer.⁴² Portions of D&C 10 may have

³⁹ HC 1:21. William E. McLellan mentions this period in a letter to Joseph Smith III (from Independence, Mo, July & Sept 8, 1872):

When Joseph delivered the 116 pages of the translation to Martin Harris, his Plates, his Interpreters, and his gift were taken from him for some two months. The Plates and gift of translation were returned to him, but not the Interpreters. He translated the entire book of Mormon by the use of a little stone he had in his possession before he obtained the plates.

RLDS Archives P13 f213. Elsewhere in his letter, McLellan cites certificates he has from Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery (Oliver's widow), Martin Harris, and Emma Smith, as well as testimony from John and David Whitmer, and refers to "The Directors, or Interpreters," and differentiates them from the Urim & Thummim (the "spectacles"). For discussions of the possible meanings of such terminology, see Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing'," Dialogue, 15:2 (Summer, 1982), 48-68; R. F. Smith, "'Translation of Languages' (hermeneia glosson, 1 Cor. 12:10)," unpublished paper (Independence, MO, 1980); and Lyndon W. Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Provo: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), pp. 122-23.

⁴⁰ See Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, p. [93].

⁴¹ Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, p. [95].

⁴² Whitmer interviews: December 15, 1885, in Chicago Times (December 17, 1885), p. 3; Chicago Times 20 (August 7, 1875), p. 1; Chicago Times (January 24, 1888), p. 8; Chicago Tribune (January 24, 1888), p. 8. Cf. Millennial Star 48:36.

been received around this time, although it took its final form essentially in 1829, as discussed at 15 May - 25 May 1829 below.

22 September 1828: It was promised that Moroni would return the plates to Joseph on this familiar date.⁴³

1828-1829 in general: A February 1879 interview with Emma Smith discloses the following account of the translation during this time period:

Q. Who were scribes for father when translating the Book of Mormon?

A. Myself [Emma Smith], Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and my brother Reuben Hale.

Q. Was Alva Hale one?

A. I think not. He may have written some; but if he did, I do not remember it

Q. What is 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 or book to read from.

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

A. If he 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 table cloth, 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.

⁴³ Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [94, 96], speaks only of the "plates" or "record," with "Urim and Thummim" added above the line later by a different hand on p. [96]; compare Lucy, 1853, p. 125. Joseph did not use the spectacles for translation after this time according to Emma's letter to Mrs. Pilgrim, March 27, 1870.

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-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, it is marvelous⁴⁴ to me, "a marvel and a wonder," as much so as to any one else.

A generally reliable non-Mormon journalist states that "the little low chamber in Smith's house was used as a translating-room," naming the scribes as Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery and Reuben Hale.⁴⁵
Winter 1828: Joseph and Emma visited Joseph Knight: "He and his wife came to see me [Joseph Knight] the first of the winter 1828 and told me his case."⁴⁶ Probably during this season, David Whitmer made a business trip to Palmyra, where he met Oliver Cowdery for the first time and learned of Joseph and the golden plates.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," Saints' Advocate, vol. 2, no. 4 (Plano, Illinois, October 1879), pp. 50-52, and Saints' Herald, vol. 26, no. 19 (Plano, Illinois, October 1, 1879), p. 290.

⁴⁵ Frederick G. Mather, "The Early Days of Mormonism," Lippincott's Magazine 36 (1880), 198-211, esp. p. 201.

⁴⁶ Jessee, "Knight," pp. 35-36.

⁴⁷ In Kansas City Daily Journal, June 5, 1881, reprinted in Millennial Star 43:421-23, 437-39, David Whitmer states that he made this trip "in the year 1828." The trip was probably late in 1828, because Oliver probably first arrived at the district school in Palmyra in the fall of 1828. Lucy says Oliver was there "a short time" before March 1829 (see Lucy, 1853, p. 128), and David Whitmer says in his June 5, 1881 statement that it was only a matter of "several months" after this visit that Oliver went to Harmony in April 1829 to "see [Joseph] about the matter." It also appears that David would have been in Palmyra at a time when Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy were away (as they were in the first part of the winter 1828) or else David would likely have met them at the same time he met Oliver. Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [96-98], seems to indicate that Oliver taught the full term of fall and winter at school while boarding with the Smiths, and was able to leave Palmyra at the close of school.

February 1829: Joseph's parents came from New York and visited him in Harmony.⁴⁸ Joseph received D&C 4 for his father. Joseph Sr. and Lucy return to Palmyra. Oliver, who is boarding with Joseph Sr. and Lucy at this time, "importunes Mr. Smith" for information concerning the plates and after "a considerable length of time" succeeds in receiving information.⁴⁹ About this time, Joseph Smith wrote in 1832, "[the] Lord appeared unto a young man by the name of Oliver Cowdry and shewed unto him the plates in a vision and also the truth of the work and what the Lord was about to do through me his unworthy servant therefore he was desirous to come and write for me and translate."⁵⁰

March 1829: A few pages were translated. Apparently Emma acted as scribe.⁵¹ During this month, Martin Harris visited Joseph from Palmyra, "seemingly for the prime purpose of being permitted to see the plates According to other testimonies, Martin had not seen the plates during the time he was writing for the Prophet, and he wanted to know of their existence."⁵² This visit was the catalyst for D&C 5. Joseph was told "to translate a few more pages" and then to "stop for a season." D&C 5:30.

48 Lucy, 1853, p. 124; Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [96-97]; HC 1:28.

49 Lucy, 1853, p. 128.

50 Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Part I, p. 6 (LDS Archives) = Jessee, Personal Writings, p. 8.

51 Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Part I, p. 6 (LDS Archives) = Jessee, Personal Writings, p. 8, "also my Brother Samuel H Smith."

52 W. Gunnell, pp. 29-30.

5 April 1829: Oliver Cowdery arrived in Harmony to assist Joseph with the translation of the Book of Mormon.⁵³ Oliver was given assurances that "the words or the work which thou hast been writing is true." D&C 6:17 (1833 ed.). Joseph and Oliver probably started writing at or shortly after Mosiah 1.⁵⁴ Oliver and Joseph met for the first time in person on 5 April 1829. Joseph Knight reports this event: "Next Spring Oliver Cowdry a young man from palmyra Came to see old Mr Smith, Josephs father, about this work and he sent him Down to pensylveny to see Joseph and satisfy him self. So he Came Down and was soon Convinced of the truth of the work."⁵⁵ A few paragraphs later, Knight expressly places this event in "the spring of 1829."⁵⁶ Lucy Smith's published reminiscences indicate that Oliver had only second-hand information about Joseph before April 1829, stating that after Oliver "had been in the school but a short time, . . he began to hear from all quarters concerning the plates, and as soon began to importune Mr. Smith upon the subject, but for a considerable length of time did not succeed in eliciting any information."⁵⁷ David Whitmer, who was first to hear of Joseph

⁵³ HC 1:32; *LDS Messenger and Advocate*, 1 (September 1834), p. 14; Lucy, 1853, pp. 128-31. Lucy, Preliminary Ms #1, p. [101], states that Joseph had been praying for assistance and had been assured by the angel of the Lord that a scribe "should be forthcoming in a few days."

⁵⁴ See discussion in Section II below.

⁵⁵ Jessee, "Knight," p. 35.

⁵⁶ Jessee, "Knight," p. 36.

⁵⁷ Lucy, 1853, p. 128; her Prelim. Ms #1, p. [97] says "He had not been in the place long till he began to hear about the plates from all quarters and immediately Commenced importuning Mr. Smith upon the subject but he did not succeed in eliciting any information from him for a long time."

Jr. among the Whitmers, recalled speaking with Oliver about the matter in 1828.⁵⁸ Oliver was then a teacher in Palmyra, and boarded with the Joseph Smith Sr. family for a time until the school term ended in March 1829.⁵⁹ During this time, Joseph Jr. was in Harmony.

Oliver explicitly dates his first meeting with Joseph Smith Jr. as April 5, 1829: "Near the time of the setting of the Sun, Sabbath evening, April 5th, 1829, my natural eyes, for the first time beheld this brother."⁶⁰ On the same page printed in 1834, Oliver said he had endured many "fateagues and privations . . . for the gospel's sake, since 1828, with this brother." Apparently Oliver had begun suffering criticism as early as 1828 for his interest in Joseph and the plates. In 1835 he said he had known Joseph intimately for "almost seven years."⁶¹ From 1829 to 1835 is six years; it thus appears that Oliver counted his knowledge of Joseph Smith beginning with his initial inquiries and vision. Clear evidence thus supports the 5 April 1829 date for the first meeting of Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith.

58 See above at Winter 1828.

59 David Whitmer claimed that Oliver began boarding with Joseph Sr. in 1828. Larry C. Porter, "The Prophet's New York Years: Restoration, Publication, and Organization, 1829-1830," 18 Oct 1984 BYU lecture (forthcoming in BYU Religious Studies Center Monograph Series).

60 LDS Messenger and Advocate 1 (September 1834), p. 14. Oliver apparently mentions his "natural eyes" because he had seen the plates and perhaps Joseph before in a vision; see the entry under February 1829 above.

61 LDS Messenger and Advocate 1 (Letter VIII), p. 196.

6 April 1829: Oliver recorded: "On Monday the 6th, I assisted [Joseph] in arranging some business of a temporal nature."⁶²

7 April 1829: Oliver began writing as scribe to Joseph Smith, as he remained for the greater part of the translation. Oliver later remembered, "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 . . . the Book of Mormon."⁶³ Sometime during April, 1829, D&C 6, 7, 8 and 9 were received.

About 10 May 1829: Around this time, Joseph and Oliver ran out of provisions. They went to Colesville (Coleville) to see if Joseph Knight would help them with some provisions, but he was in Cattskill.⁶⁴ An account attributed to Joseph Smith might relate to this same trip to Colesville, although an occasion in 1830 is equally possible:

When I first commenced this work, and had got two or three individuals to believe, I went about thirty miles with Oliver Cowdery, to see them. We had only one horse between us. When we arrived, a mob of about one hundred men came upon us before we had time to eat, and chased us all night; and we arrived back again [in Harmony] a little after daylight, having traveled about sixty miles in all, and without food.⁶⁵

⁶² LDS Messenger and Advocate 1 (October 1834 Letter I), p. 14.

⁶³ LDS Messenger and Advocate 1 (October 1834 Letter I), p. 14.

⁶⁴ Jessee, "Knight," p. 36.

⁶⁵ HC 5:219, taken from Willard Richards' Journal. It is possible, however, that this trip to Colesville occurred after May 25, but this would allow little time for Joseph Knight to have made "several" visits, HC 1:47, before Joseph and Oliver left for Fayette on June 1. HC 1:97, as Richard L. Anderson kindly informs us, has most of the same elements, making an 1830

(Footnote 65 Continued on Next Page

Joseph and Oliver returned to Harmony and looked to see "if they Could find a place to work for provisions, But found none. They returned home and found me [Joseph Knight] there with provisions, and they ware glad for they ware out."⁶⁶ Joseph Knight brought writing paper (foolscap) and other provisions for the translation and visited "several times" during May, travelling the distance of at least 30 miles each way (from his farm in Broome County).⁶⁷

10-15 May 1829: The work progressed steadily until Joseph and Oliver reached the account of the ministry of the resurrected Christ to the inhabitants of ancient America in 3 Nephi. "After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent,"⁶⁸ The question arose in the minds of the Prophet and his scribe concerning the mode and authority of baptism.

15 May 1829: The Aaronic Priesthood was restored. Oliver and Joseph baptized each other as commanded by God.⁶⁹ See D&C 13. A

(Footnote 65 Continued from Previous Page)

date equally likely, although then the reference to only "two or three" believers seems odd (see below at 15 May - 31 May 1829).

⁶⁶ Jesse, "Knight," p. 36.

⁶⁷ HC 1:47.

⁶⁸ Oliver Cowdery, LDS Messenger and Advocate 1 (September 1834 Letter I), p. 15.

⁶⁹ "[O]ne morning however they sat down to their usual work when the first thing that presented itself to Joseph was a commandment from God that he and Oliver should repair to the water each of them be baptized they immediately went down to the susquehana river and obeyed the mandate given them through the urim and Thummim" (Lucy, Prelim. Ms. #1, p. [101]).

document entitled "Articles of the Church of Christ" may have been written around this time or later in 1829.⁷⁰

15 May - 25 May 1829: Apparently after the completion of 3 Nephi, the final form of D&C 10 (particularly 10:38-70) was essentially dictated.⁷¹ D&C 10:41 appears to instruct Joseph to translate the

70 An early "copy" of the Articles of the Church of Christ initialed by O.(?) C., bearing the date 1829 and discussed by Woodford, pp. 287-91, is held in the LDS Archives. It is unclear of what, if anything, it is a copy, or when the copy or its original was written. It quotes the sacrament prayers in Moroni 4-5 and the sacramental instructions in 3 Ne. 18:29-32 which were translated late in May 1829, and in other ways resembles D&C 20. D&C 20 took its basic present form in June 1830.

71 The dating of D&C 10 has been discussed by several scholars. Stanley R. Larson, "A Study of Some Textual Variations in the Book of Mormon comparing the Original and the Printer's Manuscripts, and the 1830, the 1837, and the 1840 Editions," (BYU: unpublished MA Thesis, 1974), pp. 17-18, stated: "The date of section 10 has become a problem. When the original manuscript of the 'History of Joseph Smith' was written, the discussion about this section was accidentally omitted. This omission was soon noticed and two additional sheets with the text of the revelation and the correct date of May 1829 were inserted into the history; but unfortunately it was placed in the wrong context. This incongruity caused later editors to attempt to rectify the situation by altering the date of the revelation to 'the summer of 1828.' During the lifetime of Joseph Smith the date was consistently reported as May 1829. The Book of Commandments in 1833 first printed this revelation in its proper chronological order and with the correct date." See also Stephen Snow in MHA Newsletter, 44:15 (June 1980); Max Parkin in MHA Newsletter, 45:2-4 (Nov 1980); Max Parkin, "A Preliminary Analysis of the Dating of Section 10", Sidney B. Sperry Symposium January 27, 1979 (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1979), pp. 68-84; Lyndon W. Cook, Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 17-19, 122; Robert Woodford, doctoral dissertation, at D&C 10. Lyndon Cook and Max Parkin argue for an 1828 date for the first part of D&C 10, with additional material being added in 1829. E.g., Parkin points out several clear similarities between D&C 10:49-70 and 3 Nephi which support their concurrent dating. If references to receiving the "gospel" in D&C 10:62 and 11:16, 19 refer to the impending translation of "which was ministered unto" the Nephites in 3 Nephi, and if, similarly, the statement in 18:17 was made at a time after Joseph, Oliver and David had received 3 Nephi, then

(Footnote 71 Continued on Next Page

Small Plates of Nephi at a time when he had already translated the account of the reign of King Benjamin: "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." This would bring him to the portion he still "retained" from his translation of the first pages of the book of Mosiah which he had not given to Martin (10:41).⁷²

25 May 1829: Samuel Smith was baptized,⁷³ having possibly arrived in Harmony with Oliver Cowdery in April.⁷⁴ The translation continued after Samuel's baptism.⁷⁵ Hyrum visited a few days later.⁷⁶ D&C 11 was then received; D&C 11:19 told Hyrum to be patient: "You may assist in bringing to light those things of which has been spoken--yea the translation of my work."

15 May - 31 May 1829: During this time, Joseph and Oliver may have gone to Colesville again.⁷⁷ This may have been the time when the

(Footnote 71 Continued from Previous Page)

those sections bracket the translation of 3 Nephi, as Monte Nyman points out. On the other hand, it is possible that 10:62, which speaks of "that which you have received," is already speaking of the account of the ministry of Christ among the Nephites in 3 Nephi.

72 See Jessee, "Original," pp. 260, 277-278, citing also D&C 5:30.

73 HC 1:44. Lucy, Preliminary Ms #1, p. [101], however, gives the impression that Samuel was baptized on the same day as were Joseph and Oliver.

74 Lucy, 1853, p. 130. HC 1:44, however, reports that Samuel did not come to visit until a few days after May 15.

75 Lucy, 1853, p. 131.

76 HC 1:44-45.

77 It is possible, but not likely, that Joseph had to appear in
(Footnote 77 Continued on Next Page

Melchizedek priesthood was restored as Joseph and Oliver were returning from Colesville, but the dating of that event is uncertain.⁷⁸ It would take about a day to travel from Harmony to Colesville.

1-4 June 1829: Joseph, Emma (?), and Oliver moved with David Whitmer from Harmony to Fayette, Seneca County, New York, to the home of Peter Whitmer. The journey from Harmony to Fayette (98 miles direct) would have taken about four days.⁷⁹

5 June - end of June 1829: The translation of the Book of Mormon was finished in the upstairs room of Peter Whitmer's home. Some of

(Footnote 77. Continued from Previous Page)

court in Colesville at this time, as remembered by Addison Everett in his letter of 17 February 1881 to Oliver B. Huntington, recorded in the Oliver Boardman Huntington Journal #14, 31 Jan. 1881, and discussed in Porter, Ensign 9:6 (June 1979), p. 9. See also Lucy, 1853, p. 135, but the reference is vague ("After Samuel left them, they still continued the work as before, until about the time of the trial that took place in New York"). No records for such a trial are known. The sources seem to be confusing various events with an inconclusive hearing in Lyons, Wayne County, N.Y. (Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, pp. [102-104]), or with a Bainbridge, N.Y. trial in 1830.

⁷⁸ See sources discussed in Porter, Ensign 9:6 (June 1979), p. 8-9. See also B. H. Roberts, CHC 1:183. Richard Bushman places this event in 1830; Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 163 and note 55.

⁷⁹ As reported by Joseph F. Smith, David Whitmer told him and Orson Pratt that Joseph prophesied to Oliver a "perfect description of what David did on the way" before David arrived. Joseph F. Smith, Memorandum of a Conversation with David Whitmer in Los Angeles, written April 25, 1918 (original in LDS Archives), p. 2. They travelled on "an ordinary wagon with two long poles in it at each end across the end gates of the wagon box, and then two boards laid across that for seats on those hickory poles. Joseph and Emma were on the hind seat and Oliver and David on the front seat." Ibid. The plates were carried to Fayette by Moroni in a bundle on his back. Ibid. p. 3. Lucy, Prelim. Ms #1, p. [107], does not include Emma on this trip to Fayette (Waterloo).

the Whitmers helped as scribes: "They continued so, boarded and lodged us according to arrangements; and John Whitmer, in particular, assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work."⁸⁰ Oliver B. Huntington records in his journal a conversation with Sarah (Sally) Heller Conrad who may have been a cousin of the Whitmers and who was at the Whitmer home during the translation:

I conversed with one old lady 88 years old who lived with David Whitmer when Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were translating the Book of Mormon in the upper room of the house, and she, only a girl, saw them come down from translating room several times when they looked so exceedingly white and strange that she inquired of Mrs. Whitmer the cause of their unusual appearance, but Mr. Whitmer was unwilling to tell the hired girl, the true cause as it was a sacred holy event connected with a holy sacred work which was opposed and persecuted by nearly every one who heard of it. The girl felt so strange and unusual appearance, she finally told Mrs. Whitmer that she would not stay with her until she knew the cause of the strange looks of these men. Sister Whitmer then told her what the men were doing in the room above and that the power of God was so great in the room that they could hardly endure it; at times angels were in the room in their glory which nearly consumed them. This⁸¹ satisfied the girl and opened the way to embrace the gospel.

An affidavit of Elizabeth Anne Whitmer Cowdery Johnson also pertains to this period:

⁸⁰ HC 1:49. John Whitmer later said that he wrote "sixty pages," Z. Gurley interview with J. Whitmer, reported in Saints' Herald, 26 (15 Dec 1879), 370b.

⁸¹ She married David Edwin Bunnell in the Peter Whitmer home on April 15, 1830, and was the mother of Stephen Bunnell of Provo, Utah. See "History of the Life of Oliver B. Huntington," (typescript in BYU Special Collections), pp. 49-50; Carma deJonge Anderson interview with Pearl Bunnell Newell, January 1970, provides a similar reminiscence of Sally Conrad (BYU Special Collections MS 011 239); marriage date of Sally Conrad courtesy of Helen Bunnell Weeks of Orem, Utah. See article by R. L. Anderson, "The House Where the Church was Organized," Era, (Footnote 81 Continued on Next Page

Richmond, Ray Co., Mo. Feb 15th 1870

I cheerfully certify that I was familiar with the manner of Joseph Smith's translating the book of Mormon. He translated the most of it at my Father's house. And I often sat by and saw and heard them translate and write for hours together. Joseph never had a curtain drawn between him and his scribe while he was translating. He would place the director in his hat, and then place in his ^{face} in his hat, so as to exclude the light, and then [i to his scribe the words (he said) as they appeared before him.]⁸²

Concerning the translation in Fayette, David Whitmer reported the following event:

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 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 all⁸³ right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful.

(Footnote 81 Continued from Previous Page)

73:4 (April 1970), 16-25, for full discussion of the 1 1/2 story log house with attic and of the Whitmers and their relatives.

⁸² Copy contained on obverse of letter of W. E. McLellan to "My Dear Friends," Independence, Mo, February 1870, RLDS Archives P13 f191; the bottom third of the letter is missing and conjectural restorations are placed in brackets; disposition of the original certificate unknown; another copy of this certificate (along with others) is probably contained in the J. L. Traughber Jr. Collection, now up for sale (see Salt Lake Tribune, July 26, 1986, Section B, pp. 1-2).

⁸³ David Whitmer statement of September 15, 1882 to William Keeley and G. A. Blakeslee, in Braden and Kelly Debate February 12 to March 8, 1884 (St. Louis: Christian Publ. Co., n.d.; and Independence, Mo: Herald House, 1913), also cited in B. H. Roberts, CHC 1:131.

11 June 1829: Before this date, Joseph and Oliver had translated all the Plates of Mormon and the Title Page inscribed by Moroni. On this day, the copyright for the Book of Mormon was secured at the office of the Federal District Court Clerk, Richard R. Lansing. The application contains the Title Page of the forthcoming book.⁸⁴

5-14 June 1829: D&C 14, 15, 16 (revelations for David Whitmer, John Whitmer and Peter Whitmer) were received around this time; D&C 18 was then also received by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer.⁸⁵

14 June 1829: Oliver wrote a letter to Hyrum from Fayette, stating, among other things: "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God" (cf. D&C 18:10); "behold the Lord your god . . . suffered the pains of all men that all men might repent and come unto him . . . behold he commandeth all men . . . every where to repent" (cf. 2 Nephi 9:21-23); "that there they may be willing to take upon them the name of Christ for that is the name by which they shall be called at the Last day and if we know not the name by which we are called I fear . . ." (cf. Mos. 5:9-10), and instructing Hyrum to baptize all men and women, and children over the age of accountability (cf. Moro. 8).⁸⁶

Mid-June 1829: The translation continued. John Whitmer "assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work," and

⁸⁴ Copies of the two originals prepared by Lansing are found in the LDS Archives and in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., respectively.

⁸⁵ HC 1:48-51.

⁸⁶ Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Part II, Letter 3 (transcribed in 1832), pp. 6-7.

previous to that David Whitmer "had offered his services when convenient."⁸⁷ Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer and Peter Whitmer Jr. were baptized sometime in the middle of June 1829 in Seneca Lake, Fayette township, Seneca County, New York.⁸⁸ Meetings were also held:

We met with many from time to time who were willing to hear us, and who desired to find out the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and apparently willing to obey the Gospel, when once fairly convinced and satisfied in their own minds; and in the same month of June, my brother Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer and Peter Whitmer, Jun., were baptized in Seneca lake, the two former by myself [Joseph Smith] the latter by Oliver Cowdery. From this time forth many became believers, and some were baptized whilst we continued to⁸⁹ instruct and persuade as many as applied for information.

Around 20 June 1829: In Fayette, the Three Witnesses were shown the plates (D&C 17:1-4). It appears that this manifestation was prompted by the translation of 2 Nephi 27:12,⁹⁰ which reads, "the

⁸⁷ HC 1:49. Z. Gurley's interview with J. Whitmer, reported by Gurley in Saints' Herald, 26 (Dec 15, 1879), 370b; John stated "that he had written" [as scribe] "sixty pages" of the Book of Mormon [about thirty pages of manuscript?].

⁸⁸ HC 1:51; D&C 27:12. In 1885 David Whitmer stated: "Sometime in June 1829 Joseph ordained Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder, and Oliver ordained Joseph to be an Elder in the Church of Christ and during that year Joseph both baptized and ordained me an elder in the Church of Christ." Interview by Z. H. Gurley, January 14, 1885, p. 4 (original in LDS Archives). Brigham Young later stated that the first apostles of this dispensation were Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer. See discussion of Larry C. Porter, "The Prophet's New York Years: Restoration, Publication, and Organization, 1829-1830," BYU lecture 18 Oct 1984, citing a Smith family prayer and B. Young. David Whitmer later maintained that he continued to hold that apostleship--Chicago Tribune, Dec 17, 1885, p. 3, col. 5.

⁸⁹ HC 1:51.

⁹⁰ The other possibility is Ether 5:2-4. Ether 5, however, only expressly states that "unto three," i.e. a total of three, "shall they be shown." 2 Nephi 27, on the other hand, provides that "three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God,

(Footnote 90 Continued on Next Page

eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein." A few days later in Manchester, New York, the Eight Witnesses were shown the plates.

26 June 1829: The Wayne Sentinel published the Book of Mormon Title Page, perhaps obtaining the text from the federal copyright application. Probably around this time, Martin Harris approached E. B. Grandin to see if he would publish the book, but Grandin declined, considering it financially a "losing speculation."⁹¹

1 July 1829: The translation was completed. David Whitmer later stated "that the translation at my father's house occupied about one month, that is from June 1 to July 1, 1829."⁹²

July 1829: Thurlow Weed, owner-editor of the Rochester Telegraph, was approached twice, but he likewise declined to print the book.⁹³

(Footnote 90 Continued from Previous Page)

besides him to whom the book shall be delivered," and 27:13-14 refers to the eight witnesses. Since 2 Nephi 27 authorizes more precisely what in fact eventually happened regarding the witnesses, it appears that it was not until that passage was translated that the manifestations to the witnesses ensued. This comports further with the earliest notes on the manuscript history of the Church, discussed further in Section II below.

⁹¹ Pomeroy Tucker, "Preface" to Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism (N.Y.: D. Appleton & Co., 1867), quoted in Francis W. Kirkham, A New Witness for Christ in America (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), p. 109. Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, September 8, 1892, later remembered that Martin Harris approached Grandin twice "in the forepart of June, 1829," although this seems a little too early. See generally HC 1:71.

⁹² Kansas City Daily Journal, June 5, 1881, reprinted in Millennial Star 43:421-23, 437-39.

⁹³ Larry Porter, dissertation, pp. 86-87, citing Weed's Life of Thurlow Weed, Including His Autobiography and a Memoir, 2 vols., (Footnote 93 Continued on Next Page

Sometime during July, 1829, the Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon was begun by Oliver Cowdery.

25 August 1829: Martin Harris mortgaged his farm.⁹⁴ Around this same time the contract with Grandin for the printing of the Book of Mormon was possibly signed.⁹⁵ It was agreed that 5000 copies would be printed, which was an unusually large press run for that day.⁹⁶ Martin Harris agreed to pay the sum of \$3,000 to Egbert G. Grandin within eighteen months. If Harris defaulted, his land was to be sold at public auction to satisfy the demand.⁹⁷ Typesetting commenced "in August."⁹⁸

(Footnote 93 Continued from Previous Page)

ed. H. A. Weed (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1884), I:358-359. One Rochester publisher did agree to print it. See Richard Bushman, Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism, p. 107, citing Tucker, Origin, pp. 51-53.

94 The mortgage is dated 25 August 1829, signed 26 August 1829, and was recorded on 11 September 1829. See Miner T. Patton, "The Gold that Paid for the Printing of the First Book of Mormon," (unpublished manuscript with copies of documents; Sun City, AZ, August, 1983)--we are indebted to Ken Godfrey for this item.

95 Peter Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," BYU Studies, 12 (Summer 1972), p. 471. Authenticity of contract document, however, is uncertain.

96 Gayle G. Ord, "From Golden Plates to Printing Press," ch. 2: "A cross sampling of 'first editions for 138 books published between 1880 and 1882 (still) show that only 28 per cent of these exceeded 1,500 copies. About 15 per cent were 2,500 or more, and the maximum printing' . . . 6,000 copies was reserved for one particularly successful book."

97 Book 3 of Mortgages, p. 325, located in the Wayne County Courthouse, Lyons, New York, cited in L. Porter, dissertation, p. 88.

98 Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, p. 4. Letter of John H. Gilbert to F. M. Lyman, October 23, 1887, cited in Kirkham, p. 225.

Fall 1829: The original typesetter was John H. Gilbert and proofs were printed by J. H. Bortles until December. Grandin then hired Thomas McAuley, a journeyman pressman. McAuley and Bortles did the balance of the press work until March 1830.⁹⁹ Martin Harris, Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery were frequent visitors to Grandin's office during the printing; Joseph apparently soon returning to Harmony came only once for a short visit to Grandin's office.¹⁰⁰

Manuscript pages were hand delivered and retrieved frequently.

Oliver held and looked over the manuscript when most of the proofs were read.¹⁰¹

6 November 1829: Oliver wrote a letter to Joseph in Harmony: "The printing goes rather slow yet as the type founder has been sick but we expect that the type will be in and Mr. Grandin still thinks he will finish printing by the first of february [sic]." In a postscript Cowdery noted his progress in preparing the Printer Manuscript: "P.S. I have just got to Alma commandment to his son in copying the manuscrip," that is, to Alma 36.¹⁰²

January 1830: Abner Cole (alias Obediah Dogberry), in his Palmyra Reflector, Jan. 2, 13 and 22, printed several extracts of the Book

⁹⁹ Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, September 8, 1892, p. 4; see generally Gayle G. Ord, "From Golden Plates to Printing Press," (unpublished manuscript in LDS Archives, 1972); Richard Anderson, "Gold Plates and Printer's Ink," Ensign 6:9 (September 1976), pp. 71-76; Wilford C. Wood, compiler, Joseph Smith Begins His Work, I (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1958), introductory pages.

¹⁰⁰ Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, p. 4.

¹⁰² Letter located in the L.D.S. Church archives.

of Mormon from sheets he pilfered at Grandin's printing office (where his own newspaper was printed).¹⁰³ This made it necessary for Joseph to return to Palmyra from Harmony and to assert his copyright privileges in order to stop this unauthorized publication of sections of the Book of Mormon.¹⁰⁴ During that winter,¹⁰⁵ Joseph apparently sent Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page to Kingston, Ontario, Canada, to try to sell the Book of Mormon copyright.¹⁰⁶

16 January 1830: Joseph Smith Sr. entered into an agreement with Martin Harris which reads:

I hereby agree that Martin Harris shall have an equal privilege with me and my friends of selling the Book of Mormon of the Edition now printing by Egbert B. Grandin until enough of them shall be sold to pay for the printing of the same or until such times as the said Grandin shall be paid for the printing the aforesaid Books or copies. Manchester January the 16th 1830.¹⁰⁷/s/ Joseph Smith Sr. Witness /s/ Oliver H.P. Cowdery.

12 February 1830: Lucius Fenn of Covert, Seneca County, N.Y., wrote to Birdseye Bronson in Winchester, Connecticut, that the publication of the Book of Mormon was widely awaited; it was expected to tell when "the Millennium day . . . is a goeing to take place."

¹⁰³ 1 Ne. 1:1 - 2:3, 2:4-15, and Alma 43:22-40, respectively.

¹⁰⁴ Russell Rich, "The Dogberry Papers and the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies, 10 (Spring 1970), 315-20; F. W. Kirkham, A New Witness for Christ in America, p. 271, confuses the dates and contents.

¹⁰⁵ They went "over on the ice." Letter of Mr. J. L. Traughber, in Wyl, Mormon Portraits, p. 311.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. See generally, B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1930), vol. 1, pp. 162-66.

¹⁰⁷ Original in possession of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, according to documentation in the LDS Archives.

26 March 1830: The printing and binding were finished and the book was offered for sale to the public on March 26, 1830.¹⁰⁸ After printing the complete title page of the Book of Mormon, the newspaper notice continued: "The above work containing 600 pages of large duo-decimos is now for sale, wholesale and retail, at the Palmyra Book Store by Howard & Grandin." Prices at Grandin's Bookstore seem to have ranged from \$1.25 to \$1.75 per book.¹⁰⁹

6 April 1830: Church of Christ organized.

¹⁰⁸ Wayne Sentinel (Palmyra, New York), March 26, 1830.

¹⁰⁹ Larry C. Porter, "The Prophet's New York Years: Restoration, Publication, and Organization, 1829-1830," 18 October 1984 lecture at BYU. Hyrum sold copies to missionaries for \$1.25, who sold them for about \$2.50; Hyrum Smith, Diary and Account Book, in the LDS Archives.

II. In What Order Were the Texts of the Book of Mormon Translated?

Two theories exist about the order in which the texts of the Book of Mormon were translated in 1829. As shown above, the Book of Lehi was translated and lost in 1828. In March 1829, the translation resumed with Emma acting as scribe for a few pages, and in April, 1829, Oliver Cowdery arrived and the pace of the work accelerated. Where in the text did Joseph begin at this time? Did he pick up where the 116 pages had left off (presumably around the time of King Benjamin near Mosiah 1), or did he start at the beginning of the Small Plates (1 Nephi 1)? Under the "1 Nephi First" theory, Joseph began in March 1829 with 1 Nephi 1; under the "Mosiah First" theory, he began around Mosiah 1. Most of the following considerations make the "Mosiah first" theory seem considerably more plausible than the "1 Nephi first" theory:

1. Which scripture triggered the experience of the Three Witnesses in June, 1829, toward the end of the translation? Was it Ether 5:2-4 or 2 Nephi 27:12, 22? If they were translating 2 Nephi in June, this would indicate that they had begun with Mosiah in April and had returned after finishing Moroni in May to translate the Small Plates of Nephi in June. On the other hand, if they were translating the Book of Ether in June, this would support the "1 Nephi First" theory, since in the few days remaining in June after the experience of the Three Witnesses there would only have been enough time left to finish Ether and Moroni.

The History of the Church first appeared in print as a serial in the Times and Seasons in 1842.¹¹⁰ There is a blank in the sentence was to tell which passage in the Book of Mormon inspired the manifestation to the Three Witnesses.¹¹¹ Page 23 of one of the manuscripts of the History of the Church, however, contains a note that the relevant scripture was found "on p. 110 [2 Nephi 27] of the first edition."¹¹² This information, however, was added by a later scribe some time after 1852, as is evident since that scribe also refers to a European edition of the D&C of that date. Therefore, the earliest recorded understanding held that 2 Nephi 27 was the scripture involved. B. H. Roberts chose to refer principally to Ether 5 in the published edition of History of the Church 1:52, but he also mentions 2 Nephi 11:3 in this context. Possibly he presumed that Joseph needed to be closer to the end of the book by the end of June and thus assumed that the relevant scripture was the one in Ether. In addition, the scripture in 2 Nephi 27 authorizes more precisely what in fact transpired with the witnesses (as discussed above in Section I under the date "Around 20 June 1829"), making it more likely that 2 Nephi 27 was the relevant scripture than Ether 5.

2. The "Mosiah first" theory allows 5 weeks (from April 7 to May 15) for the translation of Mosiah 1 through the account of the

¹¹⁰ Times & Seasons 3:10 (15 March 1842), 726ff. = HC 1:1ff.

¹¹¹ Times & Seasons 3:897a. Book A1 of the "Manuscript History of the Church" likewise has a blank at this point (see Joseph Smith Collection Microfilm Reel 6, LDS Archives).

¹¹² "Manuscript History of the Church," Book A2, in the LDS Archives (Joseph Smith Collection Microfilm Reel 8).

ministry of Christ among the Nephites in 3 Nephi. The book was finished at about the same rate in June. Under the "1 Nephi first" theory, even more material, from 1 Nephi 1 through the ~~account~~ account in 3 Nephi, would have to have been translated within that short time.

3. Only the "Mosiah first" theory leaves a significant amount of material to be translated after May 15. This is necessary to accommodate the fact that the translation continued at Harmony from May 15 to May 31 and that "many pages" were translated at the Whitmer house in Fayette. One report indicates that John Whitmer acted as scribe for as many as "sixty pages,"¹¹³ and several other sources attest that much was translated in Fayette.

4. The Title Page of the Book of Mormon was translated before June 11, 1829, the date on which this text appears on the copyright application. Since the Title Page was written by Moroni and was found at the end of the Plates of Mormon,¹¹⁴ it would appear that books up to and including the Title Page, i.e. 4 Nephi, Mormon, Ether, Moroni and the Title Page, were translated after May 15 but before June 11. This strongly supports the "Mosiah first" theory.

5. The handwriting on the Original Manuscript for 1 Nephi is neither Oliver Cowdery's nor Emma Smith's. It may be Reuben Hale's, which would support the "1 Nephi first" theory, but it seems more likely that it is one of the Whitmers', which would establish the "Mosiah first" theory.

¹¹³ Saints' Herald, 26 (15 Dec 1879), 370b.

¹¹⁴ "I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated," HC 1:71.

6. The Words of Mormon, which were appended to the end of the Small Plates (W of M 5-7), are inconclusive in this inquiry. If the Small Plates were inserted into the Plates of Mormon between the Book of Lehi and the Book of Mosiah, and assuming that the 116 pages did not include as translation of those Small Plates, did Joseph skip over these plates to begin with "Mosiah first"? On the other hand, if the Small Plates were placed at the end of the writings of Mormon, did they precede the writings of Moroni (Ether and Moroni) or did Moroni insert his writings at the end of the book of Mormon but before the Small Plates which his father had "put with the remainder" of his record (W of M 6)? It seems impossible to tell. Little is known about the Words of Mormon beyond the fact that they were written to make a transition from the Small Plates to Mosiah 1:1. For example, the description of the contentions in Words of Mormon 1:12-18 leads into the statement in Mosiah 1:1 that there was "no more contention . . . all the remainder of [Benjamin's] days." While the Words of Mormon make good sense standing immediately before Mosiah 1, they could just as well have stood elsewhere making reference to Mosiah 1. Thus, since it is unclear when the Words of Mormon were translated, that transitional book tells us little about whether Mosiah or 1 Nephi were translated first.

7. When Oliver wrote to Hyrum on June 14, 1829 (see Part I, above), he used material which he could have learned from Mosiah 5:9-10, Moroni 8 and 2 Nephi 9:21-23, indicating that the translation at that time had progressed through the Large Plates and into 2 Nephi on the Small Plates. The "Mosiah first" theory would allow for the translation of those passages before June 14, but the "1 Nephi first" theory would not.

8. If it is correct that portions of D&C 10, particularly 10:38-70, were received in May 1829, as discussed above in Section I under 15 May-25 May 1829, then it would appear that the account of the reign of King Benjamin and probably 3 Nephi had already been translated before Joseph returned to "translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till . . . the reign of king Benjamin" (D&C 10:41). The "Mosiah first" theory is most readily consistent with this understanding of D&C 10, although it is impossible to be certain about its dating.

In light of the foregoing, the "Mosiah first" theory seems far more likely than the "1 Nephi first" theory. The "Mosiah first" theory has been accepted by George Reynolds,¹¹⁵ by Stanley R. Larson,¹¹⁶ by Max Parkin,¹¹⁷ by Richard Bushman,¹¹⁸ and by most other scholars of early Mormonism. The "1 Nephi first" theory does not appear to have been adopted by any writer who has considered the issue explicitly.

¹¹⁵ "History of the Book of Mormon," Contributor, 5 (1883-84) pp. 41-47; 161-168; 321-327; 361-367.

¹¹⁶ "A Most Sacred Possession: The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon," Ensign 7:9 (September 1977), pp. 87-88.

¹¹⁷ "A Preliminary Analysis of the Dating of Section 10," p. 76.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism, p. 105.

III. How Long Did It Take for Joseph Smith to Translate the Book of Mormon?

A. Under the "Mosiah first theory," Mosiah 1 to Moroni 10 (390 present 1981 edition pages, with the exception of "a few pages" translated in March) took from April 7 to the end of May. Subtracting time to eat, to sleep, to seek employment to earn money for supplies, to restore the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods, to make at least one (and possibly two) trips to Colesville, to baptize Hyrum and Samuel, and to receive D&C Sections 6-13, there would seem to be about 45 possible translating days here. This would mean Joseph translated and Oliver took down on the average 8 present pages per day.

1 Nephi to 2 Nephi 27 (100 pages) appears to have taken about 12 days in June, since we must allow most of the first week of June for the move from Harmony to Fayette, some time to acquire the copyright on June 11, several days for preaching and baptizing near Fayette, and we must get at least to 2 Nephi 11:3 and probably to 27:12 before the Three Witnesses see the plates around 20 June. This again would be about 8 pages per day. During this time, D&C Sections 14-18 were also received and written.

The last 33 pages would have taken about 4 days if they continued at the regular translating pace, or it is possible that the translation of these last few pages was spread out over the last 10 days of June. Assuming the last 33 pages took about 6 days time, whenever in the end of June those days may have been finished, the total approximate maximum time involved in translating the entire text can be estimated at 63 days (45 plus 12 plus 6), averaging about 8 pages per day overall.

B. Under the "1 Nephi first theory", 1 Nephi 1 through the account of Jesus' ministry among the Nephites in 3 Nephi (with the exception of the "few pages" translated in March) were translated in about 33 working days (April 7 to May 15, subtracting a few days for the activities mentioned above). This is some 460 pages in about 33 days, or an average of almost 14 pages per day.

The last 71 pages from the later part of 3 Nephi to the end of the book would then have been translated from the middle of May and the end of June, in which there would have been about 30 translating days. Here they would have been averaging only 2.3 pages per day.

Thus, the "1 Nephi first" theory puts about 85% of the translation into a very short time (33 days, April to May 15). The "Mosiah first" theory still has the entire work completed in around 63 working days. Either way, the pace was blistering. Consider producing all of King Benjamin's Speech--final copy, from start to finish--(some 13 pages, Mosiah 1-6)--in less than a day and a half (at the "Mosiah first" rate). This is staggering. On top of all else that was going on during these weeks, this must have been quite a time. As Oliver Cowdery says: "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 . . . the Book of Mormon."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ LDS Messenger and Advocate, 1 (October 1834), p. 14.

IV. Bibliography: Documents and Sources

- Anderson, Richard L., "By the Gift and Power of God," Ensign 7:9 (September 1977), pp. 79-85.
- Anderson, Richard L., "Gold Plates and Printer's Ink," Ensign 6:9 (September 1976), pp. 71-76.
- Anderson, Richard L., Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1981).
- Anderson, Richard L., "New Evidence from Modern Witnesses," Improvement Era vol. 72: "The Scribe as Witness," 72:1 (January 1969), pp. 53-59; "Martin Harris: The Honorable New York Farmer," 72:2 (February 1969), pp. 18-21; "The Certainty of the Skeptical Witness," 72:3 (March, 1969), pp. 62-67; "David Whitmer, The Independent Missouri Businessman," 72:4 (April 1969), pp. 74-81; "The Most Interviewed Witness," 72:5 (May 1969), pp. 76-83; "Five Who Handled the Plates," 72:7 (July 1969), pp. 38-47; "The Smiths Who Handled the Plates," 72:8 (August 1969), pp. 28-34; "The House Where the Church Was Organized," 73:4 (April 1970), pp. 16-25.
- Anderson, Richard L., "The Whitmers," Ensign 9:8 (August 1979), pp. 35-40.
- Anonymous, Letter to the Editor, "Birthplace and Family Residence of Joseph Smith Jr.," Historical Magazine (November 1870), pp. 315-16.
- Backman, Milton V., Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration (Provo: Grandin Book, 1983/ SLC: Deseret Book, 1986).
- Ball, I. B., "The Prophet's Sister Testifies She Lifted the B. of M. Plates" (interview of H. S. Salisbury, grandson of Catherine Smith Salisbury, sister of Joseph Smith Jr., on August 31, 1954, in LDS Archives).
- Barrett, Ivan J., Joseph Smith and the Restoration: A History of the LDS Church to 1846, rev. ed. (Provo: BYU Press, 1973), ch. 5.
- Blackman, Emily C., History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Hafflinger, 1873).
- Blair, W. W., "Letter of W. W. Blair about Mr. Michael Morse" Saints' Herald 28:11 (June 1, 1881), pp. 166-169.
- Briggs, E. C., "Interview with David Whitmer," Saints' Herald 31:5 (June 21, 1884).
- Briggs, E. C., "A Visit to Nauvoo in 1856," Journal of History 9 (January 1916), p. 454.
- Bushman, Richard L., Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), pp. 79-114.

CHC See Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church.

Cook, Lyndon W., The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Provo: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981).

Copyright Certificate for the Book of Mormon, 11 June 1829, Northern District of New York (Original in LDS Archive, Salt Lake City; microfilm of another draft of this certificate is in 117:107, Federal Copyright Records for N.D.N.Y., Sept. 1826-May 1831; Microfilm Reel No. 27, Room LM-459, Copyright Office, James Madison Bldg., Washington D.C.).

Cowdery, Oliver, "Letter to Hyrum," (June 14, 1829)--LDS Archives.

Cowdery, Oliver, "Letters I-VIII," Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate, 1 (1834-35), pp. 13-16, 40-43, 77-80, 83-84, 94-95, 109-12, 155-59, and 195-202, reprinted as Letters of Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps (Liverpool, 1844); also in Kirkham, New Witness, pp. 77-105, 393-406.

Cowdery, Oliver, W. W. Phelps ed., Letters by Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps on the origin of the Book of Mormon and the Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Liverpool: Thomas Ward & John Cairns, 1844).

Crawley, Peter, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," BYU Studies 12:4 (Summer 1972), 465-537.

Ensign Staff "The Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," Ensign 13:12 (December 1983), pp. 31-51.

F.A.R.M.S. Update, "The 'Golden' Plates," (October, 1984).

F.A.R.M.S. Update, "Joseph Smith: Author and Proprietor," (August, 1985).

F.A.R.M.S. Update, "How Long Did It Take Joseph Smith to Translate the Book of Mormon?" (February, 1986).

Fenn, Lucius, "Letter to Birdseye Bronson, February 12, 1830," (original in LDS Archives).

Gilbert, John H., "Memorandum made September 8, 1892," (original in LDS Archives).

Godfrey, Kenneth W., "'By the Gift and Power of God': The Remarkable Story of the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon," A Symposium on the Book of Mormon, BYU, 13-15 August 1986, Tenth Annual CES Symposium (SLC: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986), pp. 57-65.

Gunnell, Wayne C., "Martin Harris--Witness and Benefactor to the Book of Mormon," (unpublished MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955).

Gurley, Zenas, H., "Synopsis of a Discourse Delivered at Lamoni, Iowa,"

reported by S. F. Walker in Saints' Herald, 26 (15 Dec 1879), pp. 360-371.

HC See Roberts, ed., History of the Church.

History of Seneca County New York (Philadelphia: Everets, Ensign & Everts, 1876).

Hubble, M. J., "Interview with David Whitmer," Richmond, Mo, 13 November 1886, Western Historical Manuscripts Library, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo. Published in BYU Studies, 14:483-486.

James, Rhett, The Man Who Knew (Cache Valley: Martin Harris Pageant Committee, 1983).

Jenson, Andrew, "The Three Witnesses," Historical Record (May 1887), 6:195-219, from Millennial Star 44:86-87, lecture of Martin Harris, recorded by Edward Stevenson in Salt Lake City, September 4, 1870, published in Deseret News (November 30, 1881).

Jessee, Dean C., "The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript," BYU Studies 10:3 (Spring 1970), pp. 259-278.

Jessee, Dean C., "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," BYU Studies 17:1 (Autumn 1976), pp. 29-39.

Jessee, Dean C., The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1984).

Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Part I (1832 History) and Part II (Letters) in LDS Archives, Joseph Smith Collection.

Kelley, W. H., "The Hill Cumorah," Saints' Herald, 26:2, No. 420 (June, 15, 1879), pp. 190-91.

Kennedy, J. H., "The Three Witness of the Book of Mormon," Magazine of Western History Illustrated 9:5 (March 1890), pp. 464-478.

Kimball, Stanley B., "The Anthon Transcript: People, Primary Sources, and Problems," BYU Studies, 10:3 (Spring 1970), pp. 325-352.

Kimball, Stanley B., "Missouri Mormon Manuscripts: Sources In Selected Societies," BYU Studies, 14:4 (Summer 1974), pp. 483-486.

Kirkham, Francis W., A New Witness for Christ in America, 1st ed. (Independence, Mo: Press of Zion's Printing and Pub. Co., 1942).

Larson, Stanley R., "Changes in Early Texts of the Book of Mormon," Ensign 6:9 (September 1976), pp. 77-82.

Larson, Stanley R., "A Most Sacred Possession: The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon," Ensign 7:9 (September 1977), pp. 87-91.

Larson, Stanley R., "A Study of Some Textual Variations in the Book

- of Mormon comparing the Original and the Printer's Manuscripts, and the 1830, the 1837, and the 1840 Editions," (unpublished MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974).
- Laub, Norman D., "He Knew David Whitmer," Ensign 11:9 (September 1981), p. 63.
- Mather, Frederick G., "The Early Days of Mormonism," Lippincott's Magazine 36 (1880), pp. 198-211.
- McLellan, William E., "Letter" (February, 1870) in RLDS Archives P13 f191.
- "Modern Superstition--The Mormonites," Visitor or Monthly Instructor (1841), pp. 61-64, 153-156, 237-239.
- Noble, Joseph B., "Autobiographical Sketch 1810-1836," LDS Archives.
- Noble, Mary Adeline Beman, "Autobiography 1810-1834," LDS Archives.
- Nyman, Monte, "The Translation--A Marvelous Work and a Wonder" (n.p., n.d.), 2 pp.
- Ord, Gayle Goble, "From Golden Plates to Printing Press," (1972 Manuscript; in LDS Archives), pp. 1-60. Cf. Ord, "The Book of Mormon Goes to Press," Ensign, 2:12 (Dec 1972), pp. 68-69.
- Parkin, Max H., "A Preliminary Analysis of the Dating of Section 10," Sidney B. Sperry Symposium January 27, 1979 (Provo: Brigham Young University, 1979), pp. 68-84.
- Parkin, Max H., in Mormon History Association Newsletter, 45 (Nov 1980), pp. 2-4.
- Peterson, J. W., in Rod of Iron 1:3 (Feb. 1924).
- Porter, Larry C., "A Study of the Origins of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania, 1816-1831" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, BYU, 1971).
- Porter, Larry C., "Dating the Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood," Ensign 9:6 (June 1979), pp. 5-10.
- Porter, Larry C., "The Prophet's New York Years: Restoration, Publication, and Organization, 1829-1830," 18 October 1984 BYU Lecture (forthcoming in BYU Religious Studies Center Monograph Series).
- Reynolds, George, "History of the Book of Mormon," Contributor 5:2 (November, 1883), pp. 41-47; 5:5 (February, 1884), pp. 161-168; 5:9 (June, 1884), pp. 321-327; 5:10 (July, 1884), pp. 361-367.
- Rich, Russell R., "The Dogberry Papers and the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies 10:3 (Spring 1970), pp. 315-320.

- Richards, Samuel Whitney, "Memorandum dated May 21, 1907 reporting conversations in 1848 with Oliver Cowdery," (original in LDS Archives).
- Ricks, Stephen D., Joseph Smith's Means and Methods of Translating the Book of Mormon, FARMS Preliminary Report RIC-84 (Provo: FARMS, 1984).
- Roberts, Brigham H., A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1930).
- Roberts, Brigham H., ed., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 7 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 1:18-80; cf. Times and Seasons 3 (May 2, 1842), pp. 772ff.
- Saunders, Lorenzo, Unpublished Interview at Reading, Michigan, recorded by William H. Kelly (17 Sept. 1884); in RLDS Archives.
- Smith, Emma, "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," February 1879 Saints' Advocate, 2:4 (Plano Illinois, October 1879), pp. 49-52, reprinted in Saints' Herald, 26:19 (Plano, Illinois, October 1, 1879), p. 290.
- Smith, Emma Hale, "Emma Bidamon Letter to Mrs. George W. [Emma] Pilgrim," (Nauvoo, March 27, 1870), in RLDS Archives, P4 f20.
- Smith, Joseph F., "Memorandum of April 25, 1918, reporting comments made by David Whitmer to Joseph F. Smith and Orson Pratt," (original in LDS Archives).
- Smith, Lucy Mack, dictation to Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, Preliminary Manuscript #1 (1845-1847) of Lucy Mack Smith's History of Joseph Smith, later edited by Howard Coray (Manuscript #2), and finally published by Orson Pratt as Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet in 1853. Both manuscripts in LDS Archives.
- Smith, Lucy Mack, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and his Progenitors for Many Generations, 1st ed. (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853).
- Smith, Lucy Mack, "Letter to Solomon Mack, January 6, 1831," (original in LDS Archives).
- Smith, Robert F., "'Translation of Languages' (hermeneia glosson, 1 Cor. 12:10)," (unpublished manuscript, 1980).
- Snow, Stephen R., in Mormon History Association Newsletter 44 (June 1980), p. 15.
- Stocker, Rhamanthus M., Centennial History of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: R.T. Peck & Co., 1887).
- Tiffany, Joel, "Among The Mormons," Tiffany's Monthly 5:1-3 (May-July, 1859), pp. 46-51, 119-21, 163-70 (interview with Martin Harris).

- Tucker, Pomeroy, Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1867).
- United States Statutes at Large, vols. 2-4 (Boston: Little & Brown, 1850, 1861, 1860, respectively)--selected sections concerning the Northern District Circuit of New York.
- Van Wagoner, Richard and Steven C. Walker, "Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing'," Dialogue, 15:2 (Summer, 1982), pp. 48-68.
- Weed, Edward Thurlow, Life of Thurlow Weed, Including His Autobiography and a Memoir, 2 vols., ed. Harriet A. Wood (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1884).
- Whitmer, David, "Interview," Chicago Times (August 7, 1875), p. 1.
- Whitmer, David, "The Last Man of the Men Who Attested to the Truth of the Book of Mormon," interview and article in Chicago Times (October 17, 1881), reprinted in the Chicago Tribune (December 17, 1885), p. 3, and reprinted but introducing typographical errors in Deseret News (November 10, 1881).
- Whitmer, David, An Address to All Believers in Christ (Richmond, Mo: David Whitmer, 1887).
- Whitmer, David, interview by J. L. Traughber, Jr. (October 13, 1879), published portions in Saints' Herald 26 (November 15, 1879), p. 341.
- Whitmer, David, statement of September 15, 1882, in Braden and Kelly Debate February 12 to March 8, 1884 (St. Louis: Christian Publ. Co., n.d.; and Independence, Mo: Herald House, 1913), p. 186.
- Whitmer, David, "Questions asked of David Whitmer at his home in Richmond, Ray County, Mo., Jan. 14, 1885 by Z. H. Gurley," (original in LDS Archives).
- Wood, Wilford, compiler, Joseph Smith Begins His Work, 2 vols. (SLC: Deseret News Press, 1958).
- Woodford, Robert J., The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants 2 vols. (Ph.D. Dissertation: B.Y.U., April 1974), 1:200-217.
- Wyl, Wilhelm (von Wymetal), Mormon Portraits, I, Joseph Smith the Prophet (SLC: Tribune Printing and Publishing Co., 1886).
- Young, Brigham in Journal of Discourses (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1854-1857), 2:179-81, 248-51; 3:230-31; 5:52-55; 19:36-39.
- Zobell, Albert L., Jr., "Writing Paper for the Book of Mormon Manuscript," Improvement Era 72:2 (February, 1969), 54-55.
- (c) F.A.R.M.S. revised 3-OCT-86; 1st edition, 4 September 1986.

Eastern District of
New York

Go with:

Be it remembered, That on the 11th day of June in the 57th year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1829. Joseph Smith Clerk.

of the said District, has ~~the~~ ^{been} deposited in this Office the
title of a ~~book~~ the right whereof ~~he~~ ^{he} claims
as ~~author~~ in the words following, to wit: ~~The Book~~

[illegible]

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also, to the act entitled "An act supplementary to an act entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching historical and other prints."

A. Lansing - Clerk of
the United States Dist. Court for the
Southern Dist. of New York.

Letters of Oliver Cowdery,
I, IV, VII, VIII

[L] The following communication was designed to have been published in the last No. of the Star; but owing to a press of other matter it was laid over for this No. of the Messenger and Advocate. Since it was written, upon further reflection, we have thought that a full history of the rise of the church of the Latter Day Saints, and the most interesting parts of its progress, to the present time, would be worthy the perusal of the Saints.— If circumstances admit, an article on this subject will appear in each subsequent No. of the Messenger and Advocate, until the time when the church was driven from Jackson Co. Mo. by a lawless banditti; & such other remarks as may be thought appropriate and interesting.

That our narrative may be correct, and particularly the introduction, it is proper to inform our patrons, that our brother J. Barron jr. has offered to assist us. Indeed, there are many items connected with the fore part of this subject that render his labor indispensable. With his labor and with authentic documents now in our possession, we hope to render this a pleasing and agreeable narrative, well worth the examination and perusal of the Saints.— To do justice to this subject will require time and space: we therefore ask the forbearance of our readers, assuring them that it shall be founded upon facts.

Norton, Medina co. Ohio, Sabbath evening, September 7, 1834.

DEAR BROTHER,—

Before leaving home, I promised, if I tarried long, to write; and while a few moments are now allowed me for reflection, aside from the cares and common conversation of my friends in this place, I have thought that were I to communicate them to you, might, perhaps, if they should not prove *especially* beneficial to yourself, by confirming you in the faith of the

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 decreed in the mind of its Author, till nature shall have ceased her work, and time its accustomed revolutions—when its Lord shall have completed the gathering 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 appointed. 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 frequently 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 heated to desperation by the insinuations of those who professed to be "guides and way-marks" to the kingdom of glory, 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 endearing." Not only have I been graciously preserved from wicked and unreasonable 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 manner not to be forgotten while heaven gives my common intellect. And what serves to render the reflection past expression on this point is, that from his hand I received baptism, by the direction of the angel of God—the first received 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 beheld this brother. He then resided in Harmony, Susquehanna county Penna. On Monday the 6th, I assisted him in arranging some business of a temporal nature, and on Tuesday the 7th, commenced to write 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."

To notice, in even few words, the interesting account given by Mormon, and his faithful son Moroni, of a people once beloved and favored of heaven, would supercede my present design: I shall therefore defer this to a future period, and as I said in the introduction, pass more directly to some few incidents immediately connected with the rise of this church, which may be entertaining to some thousands who have stepped forward, amid the frowns of bigots and the calumny of hypocrites, and embraced the gospel of Christ.

No men in their sober senses, could translate and write the directions given to the Nephites, from the mouth of the Savior, of the precise manner in which men should build up his church, and especially, when corruption had spread an uncertainty over all forms and systems practiced among men, without desiring a privilege of showing the willingness of the heart by being buried in the liquid grave, to answer a "good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

After writing the account given of the Savior's ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent, it was easily to be seen, as the prophet said would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. On reflecting further, it was as easily to be seen, that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of the gospel. For, the question might be asked, have men authority to administer in the name of Christ, who deny revelations? when his testimony is no less than the spirit of prophecy? and his religion based, built, and sustained by immediate revelations in all ages of the world, when he has had a people on earth? If these facts were buried, and carefully concealed by men

whose craft would have been in danger, if once permitted to shine in the faces of men, they were no longer to us; and we only waited for the commandment to be given, "Arise and be baptized."

This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called upon him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us his will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the gospel of repentance!—What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world were racked and distracted—while millions were grouping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld—our ears heard. As in the "blaze of day;" yes, more—above the glitter of the May Sun beam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, "I am thy fellow-servant," dispelled every fear. We listened—we gazed—we admired! 'Twas the voice of the angel from glory—'twas a message from the Most High! and as we heard we rejoiced, while his love enkindled upon our souls, and we were rapt in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? No where: uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk, no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever!

But, dear brother think, further think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts and with what surprise we must have bowed, (for who would not have bowed

the knee for such a blessing!) when we received under his hand the holy priesthood, as he said, "upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer this priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness."

I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit! Man may deceive his fellow man; deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till nought but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave; but one touch with the finger of his love, yea, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all into insignificance, and blots it so rever from the mind! The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel; the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me, past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior's goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry, and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that DAY which shall never cease!

To-day the church in this place assembled, and were addressed on the great and important subject of salvation by brother JARED CARTER, followed by brother SIDNEY RISON. The cheering truths ably and eloquently advanced by these brethren were like "apples of gold in baskets of silver."—The saints listened with attention, after which bread was broken, and we offered another memorial to our Lord that we remembered him.

I must close for the present: my candle is quite extinguished, and all nature seems locked in silence, shrouded in darkness, and enjoying that repose so necessary to this life. But the period is rolling on when night will close, and those who are found worthy will inherit that city where neither the light of the sun nor moon will be necessary! "for the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb will be the light thereof."

O. COWDERY.

To W. W. PHELPS, Esq.

P. S. I shall write you again on the subject of the Conference. O. C.

* I will hereafter give you a full history of the rise of this church, up to the time stated in my introduction; which will necessarily embrace the life and character of this brother. I shall therefore leave the history of baptism, &c. till its proper place.

To W. W. Phelps, Esq.

DEAR BROTHER:—

In my last, published in the 3d No. of the Advocate I apologized for the brief manner in which I should be obliged to give, in many instances, the history of this church. Since then yours of Christmas has been received. It was not my

wish to be understood that I could not give the leading items of every important occurrence, at least so far as would effect my duty to my fellowmen, in such as contained important information upon the subject of doctrine, and as would render it intelligibly plain; but as there are, in a great house, many vessels, so in the history of a work of this magnitude, many items which would be interesting to those who follow, are forgotten. In fact, I deem every manifestation of the Holy Spirit, dictating the hearts of the saints in the way of righteousness, to be of importance, and this is one reason why I plead an apology.

You will recollect that I mentioned the time of a religious excitement, in Palmyra and vicinity to have been in the 15th year of our brother J. Smith Jr's age—that was an error in the type—it should have been in the 17th.—You will please remember this correction, as it will be necessary for the full understanding of what will follow in time. This would bring the date down to the year 1823.

I do not deem it to be necessary to write further on the subject of this excitement. It is doubted by many whether any real or essential good ever resulted from such excitements, while others advocate their propriety with warmth.

The mind is easily called up to reflection upon a matter of such deep importance, and it is just that it should be; but there is a regret occupying the heart when we consider the deep anxiety of thousands, who are lead away with a vain imagination, or a groundless hope, no better than the idle wind or the spider's web.

But if others were not benefited, our brother was urged forward and strengthened in the determination to know for himself of the certainty and reality of pure and holy religion.—And it is only necessary for me to say, that while this excitement continued, he continued to call upon the Lord in secret for a full manifestation of divine approbation, and for, to him, the all important information, if a Supreme being did exist, to have an assurance that he was accepted of him. This, most assuredly, was correct—it was right. The Lord has said, long since, and his word remains steadfast, that to him who knocks it shall

ND ADVOCATE

78

be opened, & whosoever will, may come and partake of the waters of life freely.

To deny a humble penitent sinner a refreshing draught from this most pure of all fountains, and most desirable of all refreshments, to a thirsty soul, is a matter for the full performance of which the sacred record stands pledged. The Lord never said—"Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," to turn a deaf ear to those who were weary, when they call upon him. He never said, by the mouth of the prophet—"Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters," without passing it as a firm decree, at the same time, that he that should after come, should be filled with a joy unspeakable. Neither did he manifest by the Spirit to John upon the isle—"Let him that is athirst, come," and command him to send the same abroad, under any other consideration, than that "whosoever would, might take the water of life freely," to the remotest ages of time, or while there was a sinner upon his footstool.

These sacred and important promises are looked upon in our day as being given, either to another people, or in a figuratively form, and consequently require spiritualizing, notwithstanding they are as conspicuously plain, and are meant to be understood according to their *literal* reading, as those passages which teach us of the creation of the world, and of the decree of its Maker to bring its inhabitants to judgment. But to proceed with my narrative.—

On the evening of the 21st of September, 1823, previous to retiring to rest, our brother's mind was unusually wrought up on the subject which had so long agitated his mind—his heart was drawn out in fervent prayer, and his whole soul was so lost to every thing of a temporal nature, that earth, to him, had lost its claims, and all he desired was to be prepared in heart to commune with some kind messenger who could communicate to him the desired information of his acceptance with God.

At length the family retired, and he, as usual, bent his way, though in silence, where others might have rested their weary frames "locked fast in sleep's embrace;" but repose had fled,

and accustomed slumber had spread her refreshing hand over others beside him—he continued still to pray—his heart, though once hard and obdurate, was softened, and that mind which had often fitted, like the “wild bird of passage,” had settled upon a determined basis not to be decoyed or driven from its purpose.

In this situation hours passed unnumbered—how many or how few I know not, neither is he able to inform me; but supposes it must have been eleven or twelve, and perhaps later, as the noise and bustle of the family, in retiring, had long since ceased.—While continuing in prayer for a manifestation in some way that his sins were forgiven; endeavoring to exercise faith in the scriptures, on a sudden a light like that of day, only of a purer and far more glorious appearance and brightness, burst into the room.—Indeed, to use his own description, the first sight was as though the house was filled with consuming and unquenchable fire. This sudden appearance of a light so bright, as must naturally be expected, occasioned a shock or sensation, visible to the extremities of the body. It was, however, followed with a calmness and serenity of mind, and an overwhelming rapture of joy that surpassed understanding, and in a moment a personage stood before him.

Notwithstanding the room was previously filled with light above the brightness of the sun, as I have before described, yet there seemed to be an additional glory surrounding or accompanying this personage, which shone with an increased degree of brilliancy, of which he was in the midst; and though his countenance was as lightening, yet it was of a pleasing, innocent and glorious appearance, so much so, that every fear was banished from the heart, and nothing but calmness pervaded the soul.

It is no easy task to describe the appearance of a messenger from the skies—indeed, I doubt there being an individual clothed with perishable clay, who is capable to do this work. To be sure, the Lord appeared to his apostles after his resurrection, and we do not learn as they were in the least difficult to look upon him; but from John's description upon Patmos, we learn that he is there represented as

most glorious in appearance; and from other items in the sacred scriptures we have the fact recorded where angels appeared and conversed with men, and there was no difficulty on the part of the individuals, to endure their presence; and others where their glory was so conspicuous that they could not endure. The last description or appearance is the one to which I refer, when I say that it is no easy task to describe their glory.

But it may be well to relate the particulars as far as given.—The stature of this personage was a little above the common size of men in this age; his garment was perfectly white, and had the appearance of being without seam.

Though fear was banished from his heart, yet his surprise was no less when he heard him declare himself to be a messenger sent by commandment of the Lord, to deliver a special message, and to witness to him that his sins were forgiven, and that his prayers were heard; and that the scriptures might be fulfilled, which say—“God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things which are, that no flesh should glory in his presence. Therefore, says the Lord, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder; the wisdom of their wise shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid; for according to his covenant which he made with his ancient saints, his people, the house of Israel, must come to a knowledge of the gospel, and own that Messiah whom their fathers rejected, and with them the fulness of the Gentiles be gathered in, to rejoice in one fold under one Shepherd.”

“This cannot be brought about until first certain preparatory things are accomplished, for so has the Lord purposed in his own mind. He has therefore chosen you as an instrument in his hand to bring to light that which shall perform his act, his strange act; and bring to pass a marvelous work and a wonder. Wherever the sound shall go it shall cause the ears of men to tingle, and wherever it shall be proclaimed, the pure in heart shall rejoice.”

while those who draw near to God with their mouths, and honor him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him, will seek its overthrow, and the destruction of those by whose hands it is carried. Therefore, marvel not if your name is made a derision, and had as a by-word among such, if you are the instrument in bringing it, by the gift of God, to the knowledge of the people."

He then proceeded and gave a general account of the promises made to the fathers, and also gave a history of the aborigines of this country, and said they were literal descendants of Abraham. He represented them as once being an enlightened and intelligent people, possessing a correct knowledge of the gospel, and the plan of restoration and redemption. He said this history was written and deposited not far from that place, and that it was our brother's privilege, if obedient to the commandments of the Lord, to obtain, and translate the same by the means of the Urim and Thummim, which were deposited for that purpose with the record.

"Yet," said he, "the scripture must be fulfilled before it is translated, which says that the words of a book, which were sealed, were presented to the learned; for thus has God determined to leave men without excuse, and show to the meek that his arm is not shortened that it cannot save."

A part of the book was sealed, and was not to be opened yet. The sealed part, said he, contains the same revelation which was given to John upon the isle of Patmos, and when the people of the Lord are prepared, and found worthy, then it will be unfolded unto them.

On the subject of bringing to light the unsealed part of this record, it may be proper to say, that our brother was expressly informed, that it must be done with an eye single to the glory of God; if this consideration did not wholly characterize all his proceedings in relation to it, the adversary of truth would overcome him, or at least prevent his making that proficiency in this glorious work which he otherwise would.

While describing the place where the record was deposited, he gave a minute relation of it, and the vision of his mind being opened at the same

time, he was permitted to view it critically; and previously being acquainted with the place, he was able to follow the direction of the vision, afterward, according to the voice of the angel, and obtain the book.

I close for the present by subscribing myself as ever, your brother in Christ.

OLIVER COWDERY.

part, of a disposition to prosecute a subject so dear to me and so important to every saint, living as we do in the day when the Lord has begun to fulfil his covenants to his long-dispersed and afflicted people.

Since my last yours of May and June have been received. It will not be expected that I shall digress so far from my object, as to go into particular explanations on different items contained in yours; but as all men are deeply interested on the great matter of revelation, I indulge a hope that you will present such facts as are plain and uncontrovertible, both from our former scriptures and the book of Mormon, to show that such is not only consistent with the character of the Lord, but absolutely necessary to the fulfillment of that sacred volume, so tenaciously admired by professors of religion—I mean that called the bible.

You have, no doubt, as well as myself, frequently heard those who do not pretend to an "*experimental*" belief in the Lord Jesus, say, with those who do that, (to use a familiar phrase,) "any tune can be played upon the bible."—What is here meant to be conveyed, I suppose, is, that proof can be adduced from that volume, to support as many different systems as men please to choose: one saying this is the way, and the other, this is the way, while the third says, that it is all *false*, and that he can "play this tune upon it." If this is so, alas for our condition: admit this to be the case, and either wicked and designing men have taken from it those plain and easy items, or it never came from Deity, if that Being is perfect and consistent in his ways.

But although I am ready to admit that men, in previous generations, have, with polluted hands and corrupt hearts, taken from the sacred oracles many precious items which were plain of comprehension, for the main purpose of building themselves up in the trifling things of this world, yet, when it is carefully examined, a straight forward consistency will be found, sufficient to check the vicious heart of man and teach him to revere a word so precious, handed down to us from our fathers, teaching us that by faith we can approach the same benevolent Being, and receive for ourselves a sure word of prophecy, which will serve as a light in a dark place, to lead to those

Letter VII.

TO W. W. PHELPS, ESQ.

DEAR BROTHER:—Circumstances having heretofore intervened to prevent my addressing you previously upon the history of this church, you will not attribute the neglect to any want on my

things within the veil, where peace, righteousness and harmony, in one uninterrupted round, feast the inhabitants of those blissful regions in endless day.

Scarcely can the reflecting mind be brought to contemplate those scenes, without asking, for whom are they held in reserve, and by whom are they to be enjoyed? Have we an interest therein? Do our fathers, who have waded through affliction and adversity, who have been cast out from the society of this world, whose tears have, times without number, watered their furrowed face, while mourning over the corruption of their fellow-men, an inheritance in those mansions? If so, can they without us be made perfect? Will their joy be full till we rest with them? And is their efficacy and virtue sufficient, in the blood of a Savior, who groined upon Calvary's summit, to expiate our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness? I trust, that as individuals acquainted with the gospel, through repentance, baptism and keeping the commandments of that same Lord, we shall eventually, be brought to partake in the fulness of that which we now only participate—the full enjoyment of the presence of our Lord. Happy indeed, will be that hour to all the saints, and above all to be desired, (for it never ends,) when men will again mingle praise with those who do always behold the face of our Father who is in heaven.

You will remember that in my last I brought my subject down to the evening, or night of the 21st of September, 1823, and gave an outline of the conversation of the angel upon the important fact of the blessings, promises and covenants to Israel, and the great manifestations of favor to the world, in the ushering in of the fulness of the gospel, to prepare the way for the second advent of the Messiah, when he comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels.

A remarkable fact is to be noticed with regard to this vision. In ancient times the Lord warned some of his servants in dreams: for instance, Joseph, the husband of Mary, was warned in a dream to take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt: also, the wrore men were warned of the Lord in a dream not to return to Herod; and when "out of Egypt the Son was called," the angel of the Lord appeared in

a dream to Joseph again: also he was warned in a dream to turn aside into the parts of Galilee. Such were the manifestations to Joseph, the favored descendant of the father of the faithful in dreams, and in them the Lord fulfilled his purposes: But the one of which I have been speaking is what would have been called an open vision. And though it was in the night, yet it was not a dream. There is no room for conjecture in this matter, and to talk of deception would be to sport with the common sense of every man who knows when he is awake, when he sees and when he does not see.

He could not have been deceived in the fact that a being of some kind appeared to him; and that it was an heavenly one, the fulfillment of his words, so minutely, up to this time, in addition to the truth and word of salvation which has been developed to this generation, in the book of Mormon, ought to be conclusive evidence to the mind of every man who is privileged to hear of the same. He was awake, and in solemn prayer, as you will bear in mind, when the angel made his appearance; from that glory which surrounded him the room was lit up to a perfect brilliancy, so that darkness wholly disappeared: he heard his words with his ears, and received a joy and happiness indescribable by hearing that his own sins were forgiven, and his former transgressions to be remembered against him no more, if he then continued to walk before the Lord according to his holy commandments. He also saw him depart, the light and glory withdraw, leaving a calmness and peace of soul past the language of man to paint—Was he deceived?

Far from this; for the vision was renewed twice before morning, unfolding farther and still farther the mysteries of godliness and those things to come. In the morning he went to his labor as usual, but soon the vision of the heavenly messenger was renewed, instructing him to go immediately and view those things of which he had been informed, with a promise that he should obtain them if he followed the directions and went with an eye single to the glory of God.

Accordingly he repaired to the place which had thus been described. But it is necessary to give you more fully the express instructions of the angel, with

regard to the object of this work in which our brother had now engaged—He was to remember that it was the work of the Lord, to fulfil certain promises previously made to a branch of the house of Israel, of the tribe of Joseph, and when it should be brought forth must be done expressly with an eye, as I said before, single to the glory of God, and the welfare and restoration of the house of Israel.

You will understand, then, that no motive of a pecuniary, or earthly nature, was to be suffered to take the lead of the heart of the man thus favored. The allurements of vice, the contaminating influence of wealth, without the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, must have no place in the heart nor be suffered to take from it that warm desire for the glory and kingdom of the Lord, or, instead of obtaining, disappointment and reproof would most assuredly follow. Such was the instruction and this the caution.

Alternately, as we could naturally expect, the thought of the previous vision was ruminating in his mind, with a reflection of the brightness and glory of the heavenly messenger; but again a thought would start across the mind on the prospects of obtaining so desirable a treasure—one in all human probability sufficient to raise him above a level with the common earthly fortunes of his fellow men, and relieve his family from want, in which, by misfortune and sickness they were placed.

It is very natural to suppose that the mind would revolve upon those scenes which had passed, when those who had acquired a little of this world's goods, by industry and economy, with the blessings of health or friends, or by art and intrigue, from the pockets of the day-laborer, or the widow and the fatherless, had passed by with a stiff neck and a cold heart, scorning the virtuous because they were poor, and lordling over those who were subjected to suffer the miseries of this life.

Alternately did these, with a swift reflection of the words of the holy messenger,—“Remember, that he who does this work, who is thus favored of the Lord, must do it with his eye single to the glory of the same, and the welfare and restoration of the scattered remnants of the house of Israel!”—rush upon his mind with the quickness of electricity. Here was a struggle indeed;

for when he calmly reflected upon his errand, he knew that if God did not give, he could not obtain; and again, with the thought or hope of obtaining, his mind would be carried back to his former reflection of poverty, abuse, wealth, grandeur and ease, until before arriving at the place described, this wholly occupied his desire; and when he thought upon the fact of what was previously shown him, it was only with an assurance that he should obtain, and accomplish his desire in relieving himself and friends from want.

A history of the inhabitants who peopled this continent, previous to its being discovered to Europeans by Columbus, must be interesting to every man; and as it would develop the important fact, that the present race were descendants of Abraham, and were to be remembered in the immutable covenant of the Most High to that man, and be restored to a knowledge of the gospel, that they, with all nations might rejoice, seemed to inspire further thoughts of gain and income from such a valuable history. Surely, thought he, every man will agree with eagerness, this knowledge, and this incalculable income will be mine. Enough to raise the expectations of any one of like inexperience, placed in similar circumstances. But the important point in this matter is, that man does not see as the Lord, neither are his purposes like his. The small things of this life are but dust in comparison with salvation and eternal life.

It is sufficient to say that such were his reflections during his walk of from two to three miles: the distance from his father's house to the place pointed out. And to use his own words it seemed as though two invisible powers were influencing, or striving to influence his mind—one with the reflection that if he obtained the object of his pursuit, it would be through the mercy and condescension of the Lord, and that every act or performance in relation to it, must be in strict accordance with the instruction of that personage who communicated the intelligence to him first; and the other with the thoughts and reflections like those previously mentioned—contrasting his former and present circumstances in life with those to come. That precious instruction recorded on the sacred page—pray always—which was expressly impressed

upon him, was at length entirely forgotten, and as I previously remarked, a fixed determination to obtain and aggrandize himself, occupied his mind when he arrived at the place where the record was found.

I must now give you some description of the place where, and the manner in which these records were deposited.

You are acquainted with the mail road from Palmyra, Wayne Co. to Canandaigua, Ontario Co. N. Y. and also, as you pass from the former to the latter place, before arriving at the little village of Manchester, say from three to four, or about four miles from Palmyra, you pass a large hill on the east side of the road. Why I say large, is, because it is as large perhaps, as any in that country. To a person acquainted with this road, a description would be unnecessary, as it is the largest and rises the highest of any on that route. The north end rises quite sudden until it assumes a level with the more southerly extremity, and I think I may say an elevation higher than at the south a short distance, say half or three fourths of a mile. As you pass toward Canandaigua it lessens gradually until the surface assumes its common level, or is broken by other smaller hills or ridges, water courses and ravines. I think I am justified in saying that this is the highest hill for some distance round, and I am certain that its appearance, as it rises so suddenly from a plain on the north, must attract the notice of the traveller as he passes by.

At about one mile west rises another ridge of less height, running parallel with the former, leaving a beautiful vale between. The soil is of the first quality for the country, and under a state of cultivation, which gives a prospect at once imposing, when one reflects on the fact, that here, between these hills, the entire power and national strength of both the Jaredites and Nephites were destroyed.

By turning to the 529th and 530th pages of the book of Mormon you will read Mormon's account of the last great struggle of his people, as they were encamped round this hill Cumorah. [It is printed Cumorah, which is an error.] In this valley, with the remaining strength and pride of a once powerful people, the Nephites—once

so highly favored of the Lord, but at that time in darkness, doomed to suffer extermination by the hand of their barbarous and uncivilized brethren. From the top of this hill, Mormon, with a few others, after the battle, gazed with horror upon the mangled remains of those who, the day before, were filled with anxiety, hope, or doubt. A few had fled to the South, who were hunted down by the victorious party, and all who would not deny the Savior and his religion, were put to death. Mormon himself, according to the record of his son Moroni, was also slain.

But a long time previous to this national disaster it appears from his own account, he foresaw approaching destruction. In fact, if he perused the records of his fathers, which were in his possession, he could have learned that such would be the case. Alma, who lived before the coming of the Messiah, prophesies this. He however, by divine appointment, abridged from those records, in his own style and language, a short account of the more important and prominent items, from the days of Lehi to his own time, after which he deposited, as he says, on the 529th page, all the records in this same hill, Cumorah, and after gave his small record to his son Moroni, who, as appears from the same, finished, after witnessing the extinction of his people as a nation.

It was not the wicked who overcame the righteous; far from this: it was the wicked against the wicked, and by the wicked the wicked were punished.—The Nephites who were once enlightened, had fallen from a more elevated standing as to favor and privilege before the Lord, in consequence of the righteousness of their fathers, and now falling below, for such was actually the case, were suffered to be overcome, and the land was left to the possession of the red men, who were without intelligence, only in the affairs of their wars; and having no records, only preserving their history by tradition from father to son, lost the account of their true origin, and wandered from river to river, from hill to hill, from mountain to mountain, and from sea to sea, till the land was again peopled, in a measure, by a rude, wild, revengeful, warlike and barbarous race.—Such are our Indians.

This hill, by the Jaredites, was called

ed Ramah: by it, or around it, pitched the famous army of Coriantumr their tents. Coriantumr was the last king of the Jaredites. The opposing army were to the west, and in this same valley, and near by, from day to day, did that mighty race spill their blood, in wrath, contending, as it were, brother against brother, and father, against son. In this same spot, in full view from the top of this same hill, one may gaze with astonishment upon the ground which was twice covered with the dead and dying of our fellow-men. Here may be seen where once sunk to nought the pride and strength of two mighty nations; and here may be contemplated, in solitude, while nothing but the faithful record of Mormon and Moroni is now extant to inform us of the fact, scenes of misery and distress—the aged, whose silver locks in other places and at other times would command reverence; the mother, who in other circumstances would be spared from violence; the infant, whose tender cries would be regarded and listened to with a feeling of compassion and tenderness; and the virgin, whose grace, beauty and modesty, would be esteemed and held inviolate by all good men and enlightened and civilized nations, alike disregarded and treated with scorn!—In vain did the hoary head and man of gray hairs ask for mercy; in vain did the mother plead for compassion; in vain did the helpless and harmless infant weep for very anguish, and in vain did the virgin seek to escape the ruthless hand of revengeful foes and demons in human form—all alike were trampled down by the feet of the strong, and crushed beneath the rage of battle and war! Alas, who can reflect upon the last struggles of great and populous nations, sinking to dust beneath the hand of justice and retribution, without weeping over the corruption of the human heart, and sighing for the hour when the clangor of arms shall no more be heard, nor the calamities of contending armies no more experienced for a thousand years! Alas, the calamity of war, the extinction of nations, the ruin of kingdoms, the fall of empires and the dissolution of governments! O the misery, distress and evil attendant on these! Who can contemplate like scenes without sorrowing, and who so destitute of commiseration as not to be

pained that man has fallen so low, so far beneath the station in which he was created?

In this vale lie commingled, in one mass of ruin, the ashes of thousands, and in this vale was destined to consume the fair forms and vigorous systems of tens of thousands of the human race—blood mixed with blood, flesh with flesh, bones with bones, and dust with dust! When the vital spark which animated their clay had fled, each lifeless lump lay on one common level—cold and inanimate. Those bosoms which had burned with rage against each other for real or supposed injury, had now ceased to heave with malice; those arms which were, a few moments before nerved with strength, had alike become paralyzed, and those hearts which had been fired with revenge, had now ceased to beat, and the head to think—in silence, in solitude, and in disgrace alike, they have long since turned to earth, to their mother dust, to await the august, and to millions, awful hour, when the trump of the Son of God shall echo and re-echo from the skies, and they come forth, quickened and immortalized, to not only stand in each other's presence, but before the bar of him who is Eternal!

With sentiments of pure respect, I conclude by subscribing myself your brother in the gospel.

OLIVER COWDERY.

LETTER VIII.

P. 195

DEAR BROTHER,—

In my last I said I should give, partially, a "description of the place where, and the manner in which these records were deposited:" the first promise I have fulfilled, and must proceed to the latter:

The hill of which I have been speaking, at the time mentioned, presented a varied appearance: the north end rose suddenly from the plain, forming a promontory without timber, but covered with grass. As you passed to the south you soon came to scattering timber, the surface having been cleared by art or by wind; and a short distance further left, you are surrounded with the common forest of the country. It is necessary to observe, that even the part cleared was only occupied for pas-

turage, its steep ascent and narrow summit not admitting the plow of the husbandman, with any degree of ease or profit. It was at the second mentioned place where the record was found to be deposited, on the west side of the hill, not far from the top down its side; and when myself visited the place, in the year 1820, there were several trees standing: enough to cause a shade in summer, but not so much as to prevent the surface being covered with grass—which was also the case when the record was first found.

Whatever may be the feeling of men on the reflection of past acts which have been performed on certain portions or spots of this earth, I know not, neither does it add or diminish to nor from the reality of my subject. When Moses heard the voice of God, at the foot of Horeb, out of the burning bush, he was commanded to take his shoes off his feet, for the ground on which he stood was holy. The same may be observed when Joshua beheld the "Captain of the Lord's host" by Jerico.—And I confess that my mind was filled with many reflections; and though I did not then loose my shoe, yet with gratitude to God did I offer up the sacrifice of my heart.

How far below the surface these records were placed by Moroni, I am unable to say; but from the fact that they had been some fourteen hundred years buried, and that too on the side of a hill so steep, one is ready to conclude that they were some feet below, as the earth would naturally wear more or less in that length of time. But they being placed toward the top of the hill, the ground would not remove as much as at two-thirds, perhaps. Another circumstance would prevent a wearing of the earth: in all probability, as soon as timber had time to grow, the hill was covered, after the Nephites were destroyed, and the roots of the same would hold the surface. However, on this point I shall leave every man to draw his own conclusion, and form his own speculation, as I only promised to give a description of the place at the time the records were found in 1823.—It is sufficient for my present purpose, to know, that such is the fact: that in 1823, yes, 1823, a man with whom I have had the most intimate and personal acquaintance, for almost seven years, actually discovered by the visi-

on of God, the plates from which the book of Mormon, as much as it is disbelieved, was translated! Such is the case, though men rack their very brains to invent falsehoods, and then wust them upon every breeze, to the contrary notwithstanding.

I have now given sufficient on the subject of the hill Cumorah—it has a singular and imposing appearance for that country, and must excite the curious enquiry of every lover of the book of Mormon: though I hope never like Jerusalem, and the sepulchre of our Lord, the pilgrims. In my estimation, certain places are dearer to me for what they now contain than for what they have contained. For the satisfaction of such as believe I have been thus particular, and to avoid the question being a thousand times asked, more than any other cause, shall proceed and be as particular as heretofore. The manner in which the plates were deposited:

First, a hole of sufficient depth, (how deep I know not,) was dug. At the bottom of this was laid a stone of suitable size, the upper surface being smooth. At each edge was placed a large quantity of cement, and into this cement, at the four edges of this stone, were placed, erect, four others, *their* bottom edges resting in the cement at the outer edges of the first stone. The four last named, when placed erect, formed a box, the corners, or where the edges of the four came in contact, were also cemented so firmly that the moisture from without was prevented from entering. It is to be observed, also, that the inner surface of the four erect, or side stones was smooth. This box was sufficiently large to admit a breast-plate, such as was used by the ancients to defend the chest, &c. from the arrows and weapons of their enemy. From the bottom of the box, or from the breast-plate, arose three small pillars composed of the same description of cement used on the edges; and upon these three pillars was placed the record of the children of Joseph, and of a people who led the tower far, far before the days of Joseph, or a sketch of each, which had it not been for this, and the never failing goodness of God, we might have perished in our sins, having been left to bow down before the altars of the Gentiles and to have paid homage to the priests of Baal. I must

not forget to say that this box, containing the record was covered with another stone, the bottom surface being flat and the upper, crowning. But these three pillars were not so lengthy as to cross the plates and the crowning stone to come in contact. I have now given you, according to my promise, the manner in which this record was deposited; through when it was first visited by our brother, in 1823, a part of the crowning stone was visible above the surface while the edges were concealed by the soil and grass, from which circumstance you will see, that however deep this box might have been placed by Moroni at first, the time had been sufficient to wear the earth so that it was easily discovered, when once directed, and yet not enough to make a *perceivable* difference to the passer by. So wonderful are the works of the Almighty, and so far from our finding out all his ways, that one who trembles to take his holy name into his lips, is left to wonder at his exact providences, and the fulfilment of his purposes in the event of time and seasons. A few years sooner might have found even the top stone concealed, and discouraged our brother from attempting to make a further trial to obtain this rich treasure, for fear of discovery; and a few later might have left the small box uncovered, and exposed its valuable contents to the rude calculations and vain speculations of those who neither understand common language nor fear God. But such would have been contrary to the words of the ancients and the promises made to them: and this is why I am left to admire the works and see the wisdom in the designs of the Lord in all things manifested to the eyes of the world: they show that all human inventions are like the vapors, while his word endures forever and his promises to the last generation.

Having thus digressed from my main subject to give a few items for the special benefit of all, it will be necessary to return, and proceed as formerly.— And if any suppose I have indulged too freely in reflection, I will only say, that it is my opinion, were one to have a view of the glory of God which is to cover Israel in the last days, and know that these, though they may be thought small things, were the beginning to effect the same, they would be at a

loss where to close, should they give a moment's vent to the imaginations of the heart.

You will have wondered, perhaps, that the mind of our brother should be so occupied with the thoughts of the goods of this world, at the time of arriving at Cumorah, on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1823, after having been rapt in the visions of heaven during the night, and also seeing and hearing in open day; but the mind of man is easily turned, if it is not held by the power of God through the prayer of faith, and you will remember that I have said that two invisible powers were operating upon his mind during his walk from his residence to Cumorah, and that the one urging the certainty of wealth and ease in this life, had so powerfully wrought upon him, that the great object so carefully and impressively named by the angel, had entirely gone from his recollection that only a fixed determination to obtain now urged him forward. In this, which occasioned a failure to obtain, at that time, the record, do not understand me to attach blame to our brother: he was young, and his mind easily turned from correct principles, unless he could be favored with a certain round of experience. And yet, while young, untraditionated and untaught in the systems of the world, he was in a situation to be lead into the great work of God, and be qualified to perform it in due time.

After arriving at the repository, a little exertion in removing the soil from the edges of the top of the box, and a light pry, brought to his natural vision its contents. No sooner did he behold this sacred treasure than his hopes were renewed, and he supposed his success certain; and without first attempting to take it from its long place of deposit, he thought, perhaps, there might be something more equally as valuable, and to take only the plates, might give others an opportunity of obtaining the remainder, which could be secure, would still add to his store of wealth. These, in short, were his reflections, without once thinking of the solemn instruction of the heavenly messenger, that all must be done with an express view of glorifying God.

On attempting to take possession of the record a shock was produced upon his system, by an invisible power,

which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength. He desisted for an instant, and then made another attempt, but was more sensibly shocked than before. What was the occasion of this he knew not—there was the pure unsullied record, as had been described—he had heard of the power of enchantment, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth, and supposed that physical exertion and personal strength was only necessary to enable him to yet obtain the object of his wish. He therefore made the third attempt with an increased exertion, when his strength failed him more than at either of the former times, and without premeditating he exclaimed, “Why can I not obtain this book?”—“Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord,” answered a voice, within a seeming short distance. He looked, and to his astonishment, there stood the angel who had previously given him the directions concerning this matter. In an instant, all the former instructions, the great intelligence concerning Israel and the last days, were brought to his mind: he thought of the time when his heart was fervently engaged in prayer to the Lord, when his spirit was contrite, and when his holy messenger, from the skies unfolded the wonderful things connected with this record. He had come, to be sure, and found the word of the angel fulfilled concerning the reality of the record, but he had failed to remember the great end for which they had been kept, and in consequence could not have power to take them into his possession and bear them away.

At that instant he looked to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and again did the Lord manifest his condescension and mercy: the heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone round about and rested upon him. While he thus stood gazing and admiring, the angel said, “Look!” and as he thus spake he beheld the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, “All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the

power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: It is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You now see why you could not obtain this record; that the commandment was strict, and that if over these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world: they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land, and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who kept the commandments of the Lord on this land, desired this at his hand, and through the prayer of faith obtained the promise, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, that a record might be kept and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them, must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands the knowledge could not come to the world, because they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation; consequently, they would be considered of no worth, only as precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as nought, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall trans-

ble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted. You have now beheld the power of God manifested and the power of Satan: you see that there is nothing that is desirable in the works of darkness; that they cannot bring happiness; that those who are overcome therewith are miserable, while on the other hand the righteous are blessed with a place in the kingdom of God where joy unspeakable surrounds them. There they rest beyond the power of the enemy of truth, where no evil can disturb them. The glory of God crowns them, and they continually feast upon his goodness and enjoy his smiles. Behold, notwithstanding you have seen this great display of power, by which you may ever be able to detect the evil one, yet I give unto you another sign, and when it comes to pass then know that the Lord is God and that he will fulfil his purposes, and that the knowledge which this record contains will go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people under the whole heaven.—This is the sign: When these things begin to be known, that is, when it is known that the Lord has shown you these things, the workers of iniquity will seek your overthrow: they will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will again give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after that they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the Rock will seek to overthrow this church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God will rest upon them; and when this takes place, and all things are prepared, the ten tribes

of Israel will be revealed in the north country, whither they have been for a long season; and when this is fulfilled will be brought to pass that saying of the prophet—'And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord'—But, notwithstanding the workers of iniquity shall seek your destruction the arm of the Lord will be extended, and you will be borne off conqueror, if you keep all his commandments. Your name shall be known among the nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage: with the one it shall be had in honor, and with the other in reproach; yet, with these it shall be a terror because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fulness of the gospel. Now, go thy way, remembering what the Lord has done for thee, and be diligent in keeping his commandments, and he will deliver thee from temptations and all the arts and devices of the wicked one.—Forget not to pray, that thy mind may become strong, that when he shall manifest unto thee, thou mayest have power to escape the evil, and obtain those precious things."

Though I am unable to paint before the mind, a perfect description of the scenery which passed before our brother, I think I have said enough to give you a field for reflection which may not be unprofitable. You see the great wisdom in God in leading him thus far, that his mind might begin to be more matured, and thereby be able to judge correctly, the spirits. I do not say that he would not have obtained the record had he went according to the direction of the angel—I say that he would; but God knowing all things from the beginning, began thus to instruct his servant. And in this it is plainly to be seen that the adversary of truth is not sufficient to overthrow the work of God. You will remember that I said, two invisible powers were operating upon the mind of our brother while going to Cumorah. In this, then, I discover wisdom in the dealings of the Lord: it was impossible for any man to translate the book of Mormon by the gift of God, and endure the afflictions, and temptations, and devices of Satan, without being overthrown, unless he had been previously benefited

ted with a certain round of experience; and had our brother obtained the record the first time, not knowing how to detect the works of darkness, he might have been deprived of the blessing of sending forth the word of truth to this generation. Therefore, God knowing that satan would thus lead his mind astray, began at that early hour, that when the full time should arrive, he might have a servant prepared to fulfil his purpose. So, however afflictive to his feelings this repulse might have been, he had reason to rejoice before the Lord and be thankful for the favors and mercies shown; that whatever other instruction was necessary to the accomplishing this great work, he had learned, by experience, how to discern between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the devil.

From this time to September, 1827, few occurrences worthy of note, transpired. As a fact to be expected, nothing of importance could be recorded concerning a generation in darkness.—In the mean time our brother of whom I have been speaking, passed the time as others, in laboring for his support. But in consequence of certain false and slanderous reports which have been circulated, justice would require me to say something upon the private life of one whose character has been so shamefully traduced. By some he is said to have been a lazy, idle, vicious, profligate fellow. Thence I am prepared to contradict, and that too by the testimony of many persons with whom I have been intimately acquainted, and know to be individuals of the strictest veracity, and unquestionable integrity. All these strictly and virtually agree in saying, that he was an honest, upright, virtuous, and faithfully industrious young man. And those who say to the contrary, can be influenced by no other motive than to destroy the reputation of one who never injured any man in either property or person.

While young, I have been informed he was afflicted with sickness; but I have been told by those for whom he has labored, that he was a young man of truth and industrious habits. And I will add further that it is my conviction, if he never had been called to the exalted station in which he now occupies, he might have passed down the stream of time, without end in respectability, without the foul and bellying tongue of

slander ever being employed against him. It is no more than to be expected, I admit, that men of corrupt hearts will try to traduce his character and put a spot upon his name: indeed, this is according to the word of the angel; but this does not prohibit me from speaking freely of his merits, and contradicting those falsehoods—I feel myself bound so to do, and I know that my testimony, on this matter, will be received and believed while those who testify to the contrary are crumbled to dust, and their words swept away in the general mass of lies which God shall purify the earth!

Connected with this, is the character of the family: and on this I say as I said concerning the character of our brother—I feel myself bound to defend the innocent always when opportunity offers. Had not those who are notorious for lies and dishonesty, also assailed the character of the family I should pass over them here in silence; but now I shall not forbear. It has been industriously circulated that they were dishonest, deceitful and vile. On this I have the testimony of responsible persons, who have said and will say, that this is barely false; and besides, a personal acquaintance for seven years, has demonstrated that all the difficulty is, they were once poor, (yet industrious,) and have now, by the help of God, arisen to note, and their names are like to, (indeed, in my will,) be handed down to posterity, and had among the righteous.—They are industrious, honest, virtuous and liberal to all. This is their character; and though many take advantage of their liberality, God will reward them; but this is the fact, and this testimony shall shine upon the records of the saints, and be recorded on the archives of heaven to be read in the day of eternity, when the wicked and perverse, who have vilely slandered them without cause or provocation, reap their reward with the unjust, where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth!—if they do not repent.

Soon after this visit to Cumorah, a gentleman from the south part of the State, (Chenango County,) employed our brother as a common laborer, and accordingly he visited that section of the country; and had he not been accused of digging down all, or nearly so, the mountains of Susquehanna, or

causing others to do it by some art of micromancy, I should leave this, for the present, unnoticed. You will remember, in the mean time, that those who seek to vilify his character, say that he has always been notorious for his idleness. This gentleman, whose name is Stowel, resided in the town of Bainbridge, on or near the head waters of the Susquehanna river. Some forty miles south, or down the river, in the town of Harroway, Susquehanna county, Pa. is said to be a cave or subterraneous recess, whether entirely formed by art or not I am uninformed, neither does this matter; but such is said to be the cave,—where a company of Spaniards, a long time since, when the country was uninhabited by white settlers, excavated from the bowels of the earth ore, and coined a large quantity of money; after which they secured the cavity and evacuated, leaving a part still in the cave, purposing to return at some distant period. A long time elapsed and this account came from one of the individuals who was first engaged in this mining business. The cavity was pointed out and the spot minutely described. This, I believe, is the substance, so far as my memory serves, though I shall not pledge my veracity for the correctness of the account as I have given.—Enough however, was credited of the Spaniards' story, to excite the belief of many that there was a fine sum of the precious metal lying coined in this subterraneous vault, among whom was our employer; and accordingly our brother was required to spend a few months with some others in excavating the earth, in pursuit of this treasure.

While employed here he became acquainted with the family of Isaac Hale, of whom you read in several of the productions of those who have sought to destroy the validity of the book of Mormon. It may be necessary hereafter to refer you more particularly to the conduct of this family, as their influence has been considerably exerted to destroy the reputation of our brother, probably because he married a daughter of the same. Contrary to some of their wishes, and in connection with this, to certain statements of some others of the inhabitants of that section of country. But in saying this I do not wish to be understood as uttering anything against Mrs. Smith, (formerly Emma

Hale.) She has most certainly evinced a decidedly correct mind and uncommon ability of talent and judgment, in a manifest willingness to fulfill, on her part, that passage in sacred writ,—“and they twain shall be one flesh.”—by accompanying her husband, against the wishes and advice of her relatives, to a land of strangers and however I may deprecate their actions, can say in justice, her character stands as fair for morality, piety and virtue, as any in the world. Though you may say, this is a digression from the subject proposed, I trust I shall be indulged, for the purpose of satisfying many, who have heard so many slanderous reports that they are led to believe them true because they are not contradicted; and besides, this generation are determined to oppose every item in the form or under the pretence of revelation, unless it comes through a man who has always been more pure than Michael the great prince; and as this is the fact, and my opposers have put me to the necessity, I shall be more prompt, and have no doubt, before I give up the point, shall prove to your satisfaction, and to that of every man, that the translator of the book of Mormon is worthy the appellation of a seer and a prophet of the Lord. In this I do not pretend that he is not a man subject to passion like other men, beset with infirmities and oppressed with weaknesses; but if he is, all men were so before him, and a pretence to the contrary would argue a more than mortal, which would at once destroy the whole system of the religion of the Lord Jesus; for he anciently chose the weak to overcome the strong, the foolish to confound the wise, (I mean considered so by this world,) and by the foolishness of preaching to save those who believe.

On the private character of our brother I need add nothing further, at present, previous to his obtaining the records of the Nephites, only that while in that country, some very officious person complained of him as a disorderly person, and brought him before the authorities of the country; but there being no cause of action he was honorably acquitted. From this time forward he continued to receive instructions concerning the coming forth of the fulness of the gospel, from the mouth of the heavenly messenger, un-

til he was directed to visit again the place where the records was deposited.

For the present I close, with a thankful heart that I am permitted to see thousands rejoicing in the assurance of the promises of the Lord, confirmed unto them through the obedience of the everlasting covenant.

As ever your brother in the Lord
Jesus.

OLIVER COWDERY.

To W. W. PHELPS.

Messenger and Advocate.

KIRTLAND, OHIO, OCTOBER, 1831.

No. 1. Vol. 2.

As man is not always heard for his much speaking, we shall only say in this article, that our intentions are to labor faithfully in the great cause of our blessed Savior, that many souls may be brought to the knowledge of the truth and saved in the celestial kingdom; that the saints may have a portion of meat in due season, and be enabled to overcome the world, and its vanities, and prepare themselves for the blessings which shall come after much tribulation.

It is very desirable that the official members of the churches abroad, should forward all the information they may have, relative to the spread of the truth; the number of members in each branch; the additions from time to time; their growth in grace; their daily walk, and standing, and whatever else that may be of service to the cause: that we may all be edified of all, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

SECRET PRAYER.

We have long looked upon this subject with feelings of pleasure, while in secret musing upon the things of God, and contemplating upon his marvelous works. When the influences of his Spirit were shed forth and quicken-

ed our understanding and enlightened our minds, like the dew drops of the morning quickens and enlivens the herb of the field; or as the rays of the sun when he appears at the approach of the day spreads his lucid rays over the creation of God.

We read Matthew VI chap. 6 verse, which says: "Thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

When we take into consideration this subject, it brings many ideas to our minds that cannot be penned. We look at the teachings of the Savior of mankind, and find that he gave very interesting instructions; when speaking of secret prayer he says: "When thou prayest enter thou into thy closet," &c. This passage gives us an idea that we should go to some secluded place, and pray to our Father who seeth in secret, and he will reward us openly. We understand by this that God seeth in secret, and what we ask in secret, if we ask according to his will, we shall realize openly.

We are at a loss to conjecture how the idea got into the hearts of men, and more especially those who call themselves saints; to suppose that they were in secret, and prayed in secret, when the hills and vallies, or woods and plains; were ringing with the reverberation of their voices. They would not need Elijah the prophet to tell them to call louder: for if their god had gone a journey; he could not help but hear them. In these matters we are not mistaken: for what we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears, that we know of a surety.

We would advise the saints to read and practice the sixth chapter of Matthew, it is so full of instruction, that we cannot pass over it without inviting