



# Deseret Sunday School Union Leaflets.

## LESSON 41.—THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES.<sup>1</sup>

PLACE.—*Fayette, Seneca County, New York.* DATE.—*June, 1829.*

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record,

Which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken;

And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us;<sup>2</sup> wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true.

And we also testify that we have seen the engravings<sup>3</sup> which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man.

And we declare, with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven,<sup>4</sup> and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon;

And we know that it is by the grace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true;

And it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things

And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens.

And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,  
DAVID WHITMER,  
MARTIN HARRIS.

1. II. Nephi 11: 3; 27: 22; Ether 5: 3-4; Doc. and Cov. 5: 11-15; 17: 1-9. 2. Doc. and Cov. 5: 4; 17: 6; 20: 8. 3. II. Nephi 5: 32; Alma 63: 12; Mormon 1: 3, 4. 4. History of Joseph Smith, June, 1829.

### LESSON STATEMENT.

Our lesson today is the testimony of three men that the prophecy of the

coming forth and translation of the Book of Mormon had been fulfilled. When Moroni finished the record of the Nephites he closed with the prophetic words which formed our last lesson; we here have a solemn statement of the manner of their accomplishment. It appears, from this testimony, that these three witnesses saw the sacred plates and the engravings thereon, that an angel of God, who is generally understood to be Moroni himself, came down from heaven and showed them to the witnesses; also, that the voice of the Lord declared unto them that the engravings had been translated by the gift and power of God, and that He commanded them to bear record of these things. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 17.) And to be obedient to that commandment they send this testimony forth to all the world, that all men may know what great things God had done and was now doing for His children on this earth.

It is worthy of especial note that though these witnesses all left the Church, and for a time entertained very bitter feelings towards the Prophet Joseph Smith, yet they never denied this testimony nor faltered in their allegiance to the Book of Mormon; though often strongly urged by apostates and unbelievers to do so. But their unvarying reply was that they had seen and heard the angel and that

their testimony, as printed, was true in every particular.

#### NOTES.

**OLIVER COWDERY.**—Was born in October, 1805, at Wells, Rutland Co., Vermont. Was baptized by Joseph Smith, May 17, 1829. Married, in 1833, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer, a sister of David Whitmer. Died at Richmond, Missouri, March 3, 1850.

**DAVID WHITMER.**—Was born Jan 7, 1805, near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Was baptized in June, 1829. Was excommunicated from the Church April 13, 1838, and never returned. He died at Richmond, Ray Co., Missouri, Jan. 25, 1888. Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer were three of the six members who organized the Church, April 6, 1830.

**MARTIN HARRIS.**—Was born at Easttown, Saratoga Co., New York, on May 18, 1783. He formed the acquaintance of the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1827, but was not baptized until shortly after the organization of the Church, in 1830. When the body of the Church left Kirtland he remained there, and did not gather to Utah until August, 1870. He died July 10, 1875, at Clarkston, Cache Co.

**TIME AND PLACE OF THIS MANIFESTATION.**—This manifestation of the power and goodness of God occurred in a grove near the residence of the Whitmer family, in Fayette, Seneca Co., New York, in the latter part of June, or possibly the early part of July, 1829. The exact date cannot, at present, be obtained.

**OTHER SACRED THINGS SEEN.**—Besides the plates of gold the witnesses also saw the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared, when he talked with the Lord; the breast-plate of gold, the Liahona, or Compass given to Lehi, and the sword of Laban which Nephi brought from Jerusalem.

#### WHAT WE MAY LEARN FROM THIS LESSON.

1. That God fulfilled His promise to His ancient Nephite servants and brought forth their record at His appointed time. 2. That He raised up three witnesses as foretold in the Book of Mormon. 3. That an angel came down from heaven and showed these

three witnesses the plates and the engravings thereon. 4. That the voice of the Lord declared unto them that the plates were translated by the gift and power of God, and commanded them to bear testimony thereof. 5. That these three witnesses were Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris.

#### QUESTIONS ON THE LESSON.

1. What is the subject of our lesson? 2. What is our text? 3. Who were the three witnesses? 4. Which of them was the eldest? 5. Which the youngest? 6. When and where was Oliver Cowdery born? 7. When and where was David Whitmer born? 8. When and where was Martin Harris born? 9. Give the dates of the deaths of the three witnesses. 10. Which of them died out of the Church? 11. Where were the witnesses when the angel showed the plates to them? 12. Near whose house was it? 13. Who is the angel understood to have been? 14. Give some reasons for thinking so. 15. What did the angel show the witnesses? 16. What did the voice of the Lord declare? 17. By what power were the plates translated? 18. If faithful in Christ, of what shall we rid our garments? 19. And where shall we be found spotless? 20. Who was with the three witnesses when the angel appeared to them? 21. What other things did they see beside the plates? 22. Who was Laban?