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The Anthon Account

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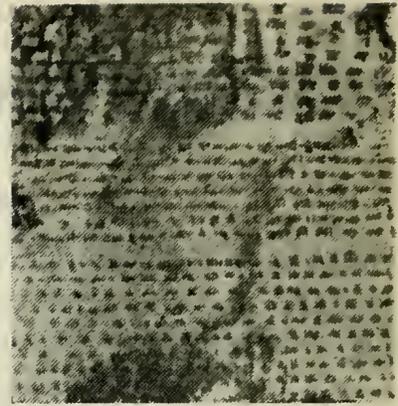
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Abstract: Isaiah saw the great work of the Book of Mormon and prophesied concerning Martin Harris's visit with Professor Anthon (Isaiah 29:11-12). The article contains Martin Harris's account of this visit. Edward Stevenson wrote that Martin Harris saw his visit as a fulfillment to Isaiah's prophecy. Metallic sheets discovered in Iran buried in the palace of Darius verify the statements made by Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon about metal records.

THE ANTHON ACCOUNT



“. . . the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.”

The great Old Testament Prophet Isaiah was privileged to know through direct revelation what would befall the earth and its inhabitants during the remaining dispensations of the gospel. He saw that through perversion the divine authority and consequently the true church would be taken from the hypocritical people of the earth. He also saw that the Lord would do a mighty work among the people by revealing the Book of Mormon and restoring the gospel again in the latter days.

In the eleventh and twelfth verses of the twenty-ninth chapter of his book, as quoted above, he told of an event that would take place during that restoration; the fulfillment of which was contained in a testimony of Martin Harris printed in the Forty-ninth Number, Vol. LV, of the *Millennial Star*: “Why, when I handed the seven lines of characters to Professor Anthon, who received me so kindly, he pronounced the characters to be a true language, and gave me a certificate to that effect. I proudly started for the door, and while holding the door knob the professor called to me, asking, ‘Where did you find the book?’ ‘Near Palmyra, sir, in a hill.’ ‘Then bring me the book and I will translate it for you.’ ‘No, I cannot do so, for a part of it is sealed.’ Then said Professor Anthon, ‘I cannot read a sealed book.’”

Joseph Smith had himself copied the seven lines of characters (photograph on page 224) from the plates and had given them to his associate, Martin Harris; it is recorded in the Documentary History of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 19.

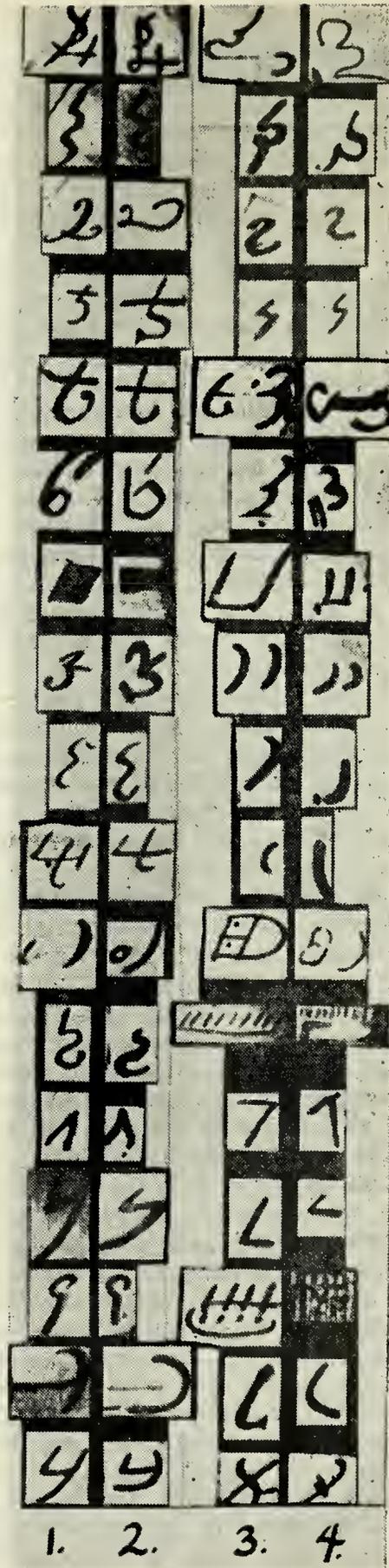
Elder Edward Stevenson, in an early copy of the *Deseret News*, wrote, “In our conversations while journeying over the plains, Martin Harris said to me, ‘I did not know until after we read more fully the sacred scriptures that I really had to take these seven lines as the words of the book which Isaiah so plainly spoke of . . . If Professor Anthon had not called me back, Isaiah’s words would not have been fulfilled. (but) . . . I saw his words were fulfilled by my taking the words of a book to the Professor, although I did not know it at the time.’”

Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled to the letter of the law. Martin Harris, in taking a copy of certain characters from the ancient records that had come “out of the dust” took merely the words, not the book, just as had been told hundreds of years before, to one who was learned — Professor Charles Anthon, Greek and Latin Professor at Columbia University, New York City. The book itself was delivered to the youth Joseph Smith, as yet unlearned as evidenced by the incorrect spelling of “caractors” on the

transcript given to Martin Harris.

Those seven lines of ancient figures did more than fulfill scripture, they provide an indisputable testimony to the fact that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and had the sheaf of records in his possession. For at the time he wrote them down there was no other source to have received them from. No dictionary or knowledge of demonic Egyptian existed. It wasn't until several years later that the first simple works on it appeared, and not until the present century was a fourth over that the first comprehensive grammar was written. Yet we find today that the characters on the original paper given to Harris are authentic ones that can be translated.

Over two hundred characters appear on the transcript, some variants of each other, but leaving approximately a hundred original letters. Ariel L. Crowley, LL.B., in the *Improvement Eras* of January, February, and March of 1942 and September of 1944, presented the results of his excellent research on the transcript, and, among other things, showed the similarity existing between those characters and those photographed from recognized Egyptian works. Columns one and three on the accompanying illustration show thirty-four of the characters from ancient Egyptian texts written about a hundred years ago and across the globe from the historians who were writing the records from which the Book of Mormon was translated. Columns two and four show remarkably similar ones from the Transcript. Mr. Crowley writes, "The precision and weight of the parallels set forth is infinitely increased by these circumstances," and quotes "Individual hieratic hands differ as all handwriting is apt to differ," and "The writings of one period were but half intelligible to the learned scribes of another." (Gardiner, A. H., *Egyptian Grammar*) In the thirty-second verse of chapter nine of Mormon we can read, "We have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which



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LET'S GO TO MUTUAL

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pletely organised M.I.A. in mind. Since there are none in this mission, we have the Tintinnabulator to help us. Physically it is a humble looking pamphlet—this is for a number of reasons, mainly the difficulty in getting paper; but nevertheless a lot of sincere thought and many hours of work go into its production. We hope that it is not being regarded as a second-best, or a substitute for the manual programme. It is something quite apart—planned with the realisation that the M.I.A.'s in the British Mission have, at the moment, limitations and difficulties. However, no matter how small one's M.I.A. might be, the correct standards, objectives, and spirit can still be there.

Let's go to Mutual then, because it places one in companionship with

some of the best elements in the community, it gives unusual social advantages and provides wholesome recreation, it affords opportunity to express oneself before the public—which in itself is a valuable training for the duties of life, it enables one to discover one's possibilities and to render actual service to others, it gives one something good to do, it keeps alive the ideals of noble ancestors, and holds one in harmony with the spirit of the gospel. It also offers the opportunity for the study of religious, ethical, social, and industrial questions of the day from a Latter-day Saint point of view under the influence of the spirit of the Gospel.

Remember the M.I.A. provides us with what Izaak Walton called the very sinews of life—good discourse and good company.

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are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech." A thousand years of progress and change had taken place; how many of us today can read the English of a thousand years ago? Most of us find it surprisingly difficult to read or comprehend Caedmon or even the works of Chaucer. And even when we make allowances for copyists' errors, the Anthon Transcript remains an undisputable witness for the existence of the plates.

The photograph of a gold plate, engraved in cuneiform characters, and buried in the audience palace of

Darius the Great at Persepolis in Iran about 517 B.C. and recently uncovered, also proves that metallic sheets were used for such purposes; people in Joseph Smith's time often doubted that fact. Many other such finds coming forth daily establish the truth of statements made in the Book of Mormon, and by Joseph Smith, that antagonists have used against us for years, and support the claims of the Anthon transcript.

A.E.

(Further material on the subject, other than the already quoted sources, can be found in "A New Witness for Christ in America" by Francis W. Kirkham, "The Pearl of Great Price," "Our Book of Mormon" by Sidney B. Sperry, and innumerable others.)

