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The Twenty-Second Day of September

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Abstract: This article is an editorial commemorating Joseph Smith's receipt of the gold plates from the hand of the angel Moroni.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1937

EDITORIAL

THE TWENTY-SECOND DAY OF SEPTEMBER

Concerning the golden plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "On the 22nd day of September, One thousand Eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone, as usual, at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me."

This was the fifth time the heavenly messenger had met the Prophet on the sacred spot where the golden plates were deposited. These visits had all been made on the 22nd day of September during a period of four years.

From these plates was translated the Book of Mormon "which has baffled the literary critics for a hundred years and which to-day is more widely read than any other volume save the Bible."

Many thoughtful, scholarly, scientific men have been asked to offer a solution for Joseph Smith and the work that he accomplished. His critics have ridiculed him, "they have emphasized the crudity of his youth, his lack of education, they have depreciated his intelligence. In so doing, have they helped find the explanation? Perhaps they have, without intent on their part, for the more inadequate by native endowment and training they make the Prophet, the more certainly do they lead the way to the inevitable conclusion that the explanation he makes of himself and his work is the only explanation.

"If he had been proved to be a person of unusual brilliance and education, there might have been some warrant for the presumption that out of his own mind he had conceived and executed all; but those who have sought to destroy him have robbed the argument of that premise. Perhaps God willed it so. Even the inimical and abusive type-setter who printed the Book of Mormon unwittingly laid a stone in the foundation of evidence establishing the truth of the Prophet's account of the translation when he ridiculed the punctuation and composition of the manuscript—the sentences and words being run together as they naturally would be by the manner of dictation to the scribe described by the Prophet.

"There is only one explanation which is tenable. God chose the man. He spoke through him. The unsophisticated mind of the youth was a fertile field for the planting of spiritual seeds. They grew and matured into a perfect faith that brought Joseph into partnership with God. When that came to be, there was nothing unattainable, for as we are told of old, one man and God are always a majority."

Concerning the reality and genuineness of the plates from

which the Book of Mormon was translated: One man may be deceived; but can you deceive three or four together? The three witnesses said:

The Three Witnesses "Be it known unto all nations . . . 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. . . . We know that these plates have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us. . . . And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates. . . . And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; . . . And it is marvellous 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."

Is this not remarkable? Is it not odd, is it not strange—something new in the world? One man might be mistaken;

Were Not Deceived but can three or four? The Prophet and three witnesses further state:

"And we declare with words of soberness"—three sane men, mark you—"that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and it is marvellous in our eyes"—marvellous indeed to all the world for an angel in these days to come down from heaven.

"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."

In this sceptical age when the world doubts nearly everything, men might not be satisfied even with the testimony of

Eight More Witnesses the Prophet and these three witnesses; so there are eight more, twelve in all, who bear the same testimony also:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates . . . which have the appearance of gold."

Does anyone suppose that these witnesses were deceived in that respect? They say the plates had the appearance of gold. People may object: "All that glitters is not gold; the witnesses may have been in error." But their testimony is: "They have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands." Can eight men be deceived? Can they come along, one after another, and handle with their hands plates which have the appearance of gold and be deceived as to their reality?

"As many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship.

Have Seen and Hefted And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has . . . the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it."

Let someone who thinks these testimonies are not true account for them!

Read the book. Examine carefully for example the sixth Chapter of Jacob. A careful reading of this chapter and other portions of the book have brought into many hearts the conviction that this volume is scripture.

September twenty-second, the day of the delivery of these plates to the Prophet, is an important one and ought to be of interest to all the people in the world.—RICHARD R. LYMAN