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History of the Prophet Joseph by His Mother, Lucy Smith: Chapters XXIV-XXVIII

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Abstract: These chapters of Lucy Smith's history record that Joseph brought home the breast plate, the translation began, Mrs. Harris was opposed to the work, Martin Harris lost the 116-page manuscript, the Urim and Thummim was taken from Joseph Smith, and Oliver Cowdery wrote for Joseph as a scribe.

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HISTORY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH.

BY HIS MOTHER, LUCY SMITH.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JOSEPH BRINGS HOME THE BREAST-PLATE—MARTIN HARRIS AND HIS WIFE INTRODUCED—THE TRANSLATION COMMENCES—MRS. HARRIS BEGINS TO OPPOSE THE WORK.

After bringing home the plates, Joseph commenced working with his father and brothers on the farm, in order to be as near as possible to the treasure which was confided to his care.

Soon after this, he came in from work, one afternoon, and after remaining a short time, he put on his great coat, and left the house. I was engaged at the time, in an upper room, in preparing some oil-cloths for painting. When he returned, he requested me to come down stairs. I told him that I could not leave my work just then, yet, upon his urgent request, I finally concluded to go down and see what he wanted, upon which he handed me the breast-plate spoken of in his history.

It was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief, so thin that I could feel its proportions without any difficulty.

It was concave on one side, and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, as far as the center of the stomach of a man of extraordinary size. It had four straps of the

same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast, two of which ran back to go over the shoulders, and the other two were designed to fasten to the hips. They were just the width of two of my fingers, (for I measured them,) and they had holes in the end of them, to be convenient in fastening. After I had examined it, Joseph placed it in the chest with the Urim and Thummim.

Shortly after this circumstance, Joseph came to the house in great haste, and inquired, if there had been a company of men about. I told him, not a single individual had come to the house since he left. He then said, that a mob would be there that night, if they did not come before that time, to search for the Record, and that it must be removed immediately.

Soon afterwards, a man by the name of Braman came in from the village of Livonia, a man in whom we reposed much confidence, and who was well worthy of the same. Joseph told him his apprehensions of a mob being there that night, and that they must prepare themselves to drive them away; but that the first thing to be attended to, was to secure the Record and breast-plate.

In view of this, it was determined that a portion of the hearth should be taken up, and that the Record and breast-plate should be buried under the same, and then the hearth be relaid, to prevent suspicion.

This was done as speedily as possible, but the hearth was scarcely relaid when a large company of men well-armed came rushing up to the house. Joseph threw open the doors, and taking a hint from the stratagem of his grandfather Mack, hallooed as if he had a legion at hand, in the meanwhile, giving the word of command with great emphasis; while all the male portion of the family, from the father down to little Carlos, ran out of the house with such fury upon the mob, that it struck them with terror and dismay, and they fled before the little Spartan band into the woods, where they dispersed themselves to their several homes.

In a short time Joseph received another intimation of the approach of a mob, also of the necessity of removing the Record and breast-plate from the place wherein they were secreted, consequently he took them out of the box in which they were placed, and wrapping them in clothes, carried them across the road to a cooper's shop, and laid them in a quantity of flax which was stowed

in the shop loft. After which he nailed up the box again, then tore up the floor of the shop, and put it under the same.

As soon as night came, the mob came also, and commenced ransacking the place. They rummaged round the house, and all over the premises, but did not come into the house. After making satisfactory search, they went away.

The next morning we found the floor of the cooper's shop torn up, and the box which was laid under it shivered in pieces.

In a few days afterwards, we learned the cause of this last move—why their curiosity led them in the direction of the cooper's shop. A young woman by the name of Chase, sister to Willard Chase, found a green glass, through which she could see many very wonderful things, and among her great discoveries she said that she saw the precise place where "Joe Smith kept his gold Bible hid," and, obedient to her directions, the mob gathered their forces and laid siege to the cooper's shop.

Notwithstanding their disappointment in not finding the plates in the shop, their confidence was not in the least shaken in Miss Chase, for they still went from place to place by her direction, determined to get if possible, the much desired object of their search.

Not long after the circumstance of the mob's going into the cooper's shop, and splitting in pieces the box, 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 *facsimile* of some of the characters, which were called reformed Egyptian, and to send them to some of the most learned men of this generation, and ask them for the translation thereof.

The reader will here observe, that on a preceding page of this volume, I spoke of a confidential friend to whom my husband merely mentioned the existence of the plates, some two or three years prior to their coming forth. This was no other than Martin Harris, one of the witnesses to the book subsequent to its being translated.

With the view of commencing the work of translation, and carrying it forward as speedily as circumstances would permit, Joseph came to me one afternoon and requested me to go to this

Mr. Harris, and inform him that he had got the plates, and that he desired to see Mr. Harris concerning the matter. This, indeed, was an errand which I much disliked, as Mr. Harris's wife was a very peculiar woman, one that was naturally of a very jealous disposition; besides this, she was rather dull of hearing, and when anything was said that she did not hear distinctly, she suspected that it was some secret, which was designedly kept from her. So I told Joseph that I would rather not go, unless I could have the privilege of speaking to her first upon the subject. To this he consented, and I went according to his request.

On arriving at Mr. Harris's, I cautiously detailed the particulars with regard to Joseph's finding the plates, so far as wisdom dictated and necessity demanded, in order to satisfy Mrs. Harris's curiosity. However, she did not wait for me to get through with my story, before she commenced urging upon me a considerable amount of money, that she had at her command. Her husband always allowed her to keep a private purse, in order to satisfy her singular disposition, and it was this private money that she wished me to receive. She also had a sister living with her who desired me to receive an amount of money, I think some seventy-five dollars, to assist in getting the Record translated.

I told her that I came on no such business, that I did not want her money, and that Joseph would attend to his own affairs; but, that I would like to talk to Mr. Harris a moment, and then return home, as my family would soon be expecting me. Yet, notwithstanding all this, she was determined to assist in the business, for she said she knew that we should want money, and she could spare two hundred dollars as well as not.

After detaining me a few minutes, she went with me to her husband, and I told him that I wished to speak to him. He replied, that he was not going to stop his work, for he was just laying the last brick in his hearth.

"You see," said he, "this is the last work I have to do on the house, and it is the last work I shall do about the house, or on the farm, in one year. And when this is done, I am going to hire a hand to work a year for me, as I shall travel that length of time before I shall settle myself at home again."

After completing the work in which he was engaged, he left

the house, but was absent only a short time. On returning, he came to me and said, "Now I am a free man—my hands are altogether untied—I can come and go and do as I please."

I related, in short, the errand on which I had come. He said, that he would see Joseph in the course of a few days. At this his wife exclaimed, "Yes, and I am coming to see him, too, and I will be there on Tuesday afternoon, and will stop over night."

Accordingly, when Tuesday afternoon arrived, Mrs. Harris made her appearance, and as soon as she was well seated, she began to importune my son relative to the truth of what he had said concerning the Record, declaring that if he really had any plates, she would see them, and that she was determined to help him publish them.

He told her she was mistaken—that she could not see them, for he was not permitted to exhibit them to any one, except those whom the Lord should appoint to testify of them. "And, in relation to assistance," he observed, "I always prefer dealing with men, rather than their wives."

This highly displeased Mrs. Harris, for she considered herself altogether superior to her husband, and she continued her importunities. She would say, "Now, Joseph, are you not telling me a lie? Can you look full in my eye, and say before God, that you have in reality found a Record, as you pretend?"

To this, Joseph replied, rather indifferently, "Why, yes, Mrs. Harris, I would as soon look you in the face, and say so as not, if that will be any gratification to you."

Then, said she, "Joseph, I will tell you what I will do, if I can get a witness that you speak the truth, I will believe all you say about the matter, and I shall want to do something about the translation—I mean to help you any way."

This closed the evening's conversation. The next morning, soon after she arose, she related a very remarkable dream which she said she had had during the night. It ran about as follows: She said that a personage appeared to her, who told her, that as she had disputed the servant of the Lord, and said his word was not to be believed, and had also asked him many improper questions, she had done that which was not right in the sight of God.

After which he said to her, "Behold, here are the plates, look upon them, and believe."

After giving us an account of her dream, she described the Record very minutely, then told us that she had made up her mind in relation to the course which she intended to pursue; namely, that she had in her possession twenty-eight dollars which she received from her mother just before she died, while she was on her death bed, and that Joseph should accept of it. If he would, he might give his note, but he should certainly take it upon some terms.

The last proposal Joseph accepted, in order to get rid of further importunity upon the subject.

Soon afterwards, Alva Hale, Joseph's brother-in-law, came to our house, from Pennsylvania, for the purpose of moving Joseph to his father-in-law's, as word had been sent to them, that Joseph desired to move there as soon as he could settle up his business. During the short interval of Alva's stay with us, he and Joseph were one day in Palmyra, at a public-house, transacting some business. As they were thus engaged, Mr. Harris came in: he stepped immediately up to my son, and taking him by the hand, said, "How do you do, Mr. Smith." After which, he took a bag of silver from his pocket, and said again, "Here, Mr. Smith, is fifty dollars; I give this to you to do the Lord's work with; no, I give it to the Lord for his own work."

"No," said Joseph, "We will give you a note, Mr. Hale, I presume, will sign it with me."

"Yes," said Alva, "I will sign it."

Mr. Harris, however, insisted that he would give the money to the Lord, and called those present to witness the fact that he gave it freely, and did not demand any compensation, that it was for the purpose of helping Mr. Smith to do the Lord's work. And as I have been informed, many were present on that occasion, who witnessed the same circumstance.

Joseph, in a short time, arranged his affairs, and was ready for the journey. The Record and breast-plate, for security, he nailed up in a box and then put them into a strong cask; and after filling the cask with beans, headed it up again.

When it became generally known that Joseph was about moving to Pennsylvania, a mob of fifty men collected themselves to-

gether, and they went to Dr. McIntyre, and requested him to take the command of the company, stating, that they were resolved on following "Joe Smith," and taking his "gold Bible" from him. The doctor's ideas and feelings did not altogether harmonize with theirs, and he told them they were a pack of devilish fools, and to go home and mind their own business; that, if Joseph Smith had any business of that sort to attend to, he was capable of doing it, and that it would be better for them to busy themselves about that which more concerned them.

After this, a quarrel arose among them respecting who should be captain, and it ran so high that it broke up the expedition.

* * * * *

When Joseph had had a sufficient time to accomplish the journey, 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 an opportunity to display their talents in giving a translation of the characters.

When Mrs. Harris heard of what her husband had in contemplation, she resolved to accompany him; but he, concluding that it would be better to go without her, left quite suddenly without her knowledge, in company with my son Hyrum.

Mrs. Harris soon missed her husband, and came to me for the purpose of ascertaining if I knew where he was. I told her what he had said concerning his leaving, suppressing, however, his remarks pertaining to herself.

On hearing this, she became highly exasperated, and charged me with planning the whole affair. I protested against it, asserting that I had nothing to do with the plan, nor the execution of it. Furthermore, that the business of a house, which was the natural cares of a woman, was all that I attempted to dictate, or interfere with, unless it was by my husband's or son's request.

Mrs. Harris then observed that she had property, and knew how to take care of it, which she would convince me of.

"Now, stop" said I, "do you not know that we have never asked you for money or property? and that if we had been disposed to take advantage of your liberality, could we not have obtained

at least, two hundred and seventy dollars of your cash?" She answered in the affirmative, notwithstanding she went home in a great rage, determined to have satisfaction for the treatment which she had received.

In a short time Mr. Harris returned, and his wife's anger kindled afresh at his presence, insomuch that she prepared a separate bed and room for him, which room she refused to enter.

A young man by the name of Dikes, had been paying some attention to Miss Lucy, Martin Harris's oldest daughter. To this young man Mr. Harris was quite attached, and his daughter Lucy was by no means opposed to him; but Mrs. Harris, of course, was decidedly upon the negative. However, just at this crisis, a scheme entered her brain which materially changed her deportment to Mr. Dikes. She told him, if he would manage to get the Egyptian characters from Mr. Harris's possession, and procure a room in Palmyra for the purpose of transcribing them, and then bring her the transcript, that she would consent to his marriage with her daughter Lucy.

To this, Mr. Dikes cheerfully consented, and suffice it to say, he succeeded to her satisfaction, and thus received the promised reward.

When Mr. Harris began to make preparations to start for Pennsylvania the second time, with the view of writing for Joseph, his wife told him that she had fully decreed in her heart to accompany him. Mr. Harris, having no particular objections, informed her that she might do so; that she might go and stay one or two weeks, and then he would bring her home again, after which he would return, and resume his writing for Joseph. To this she cheerfully agreed. But Mr. Harris little suspected what he had to encounter by this move. The first time he exhibited the characters before named, she took out of her pocket an exact copy of the same; and told those present, that "Joe Smith" was not the only one who was in possession of this great curiosity, that she had the same characters, and, they were quite as genuine as those shown by Mr. Harris. This course she continued to pursue, until they arrived at Joseph's.

As soon as she arrived there, she informed him 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, etc.; 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 about two o'clock p. m. She then came in rather ill-natured; after warming herself a little, she asked Joseph's wife if there were snakes in that country in the winter. She replied in the negative. Mrs. Harris then said, "I have been walking round in the woods to look at the situation of your place, and as I turned round to come home, a tremendous black snake stuck up his head before me, and commenced hissing at me."

The woman was so perplexed and disappointed in all her undertakings, that she left the house and took lodgings during her stay in Pennsylvania with a near neighbor, to whom she stated that the day previous she had been hunting for the plates, and that, after a tedious search, she at length came to a spot where she judged, from the appearance of things, they must be buried; but upon stooping down to scrape away the snow and leaves, in order to ascertain the fact, she encountered a horrible black snake which gave her a terrible fright, and she ran with all possible speed to the house.

While this woman remained in the neighborhood, she did all that lay in her power to injure Joseph in the estimation of his neighbors—telling them that he was a grand impostor, and, that by his specious pretensions, he had seduced her husband into the belief that he (Joseph Smith) was some great one, merely through a design upon her husband's property.

When she returned home, being about two weeks after her arrival in Harmony, the place where Joseph resided, she endeavored to dissuade her husband from taking any further part in the publication of the Record; however, Mr. Harris paid no attention to her, but returned and continued writing.

Immediately after Martin Harris left home for Pennsylvania, his wife went from place to place, and from house to house, telling her grievances, and declaring that Joseph Smith was practic-

ing a deception upon the people, which was about to strip her of all that she possessed, and that she was compelled to deposit a few things away from home in order to secure them. So she carried away her furniture, linen, and bedding; also other moveable articles, until she nearly stripped the premises of everything that could conduce either to comfort or convenience, depositing them with those of her friends and acquaintances, in whom she reposed sufficient confidence to assure her of their future safety.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARTIN HARRIS IS PERMITTED TO TAKE THE MANUSCRIPT HOME WITH HIM—HE LOSES IT—THE SEASON OF MOURNING WHICH ENSUED.

Martin Harris, having written some one hundred and sixteen pages for Joseph, asked permission of my son to carry the manuscript home with him, in order to let his wife read it, as he hoped it might have a salutary effect upon her feelings.

Joseph was willing to gratify his friend as far as he could consistently, and he inquired of the Lord to know if he might do as Martin Harris had requested, but was refused. With this, Mr. Harris was not altogether satisfied, and, at his urgent request, Joseph inquired again, but received a second refusal. Still, Martin Harris persisted as before, and Joseph applied again, but the last answer was not like the two former ones. In this, the Lord permitted Martin Harris to take the manuscript home with him, on condition that he would exhibit it to none, save five individuals whom he had mentioned, and who belonged to his own family.

Mr. Harris was delighted with this, and bound himself in a written covenant of the most solemn nature, that he would strictly comply with the injunctions which he had received. Which being done, he took the manuscript and went home.

Joseph did not suspect but that his friend would keep his faith, consequently, he gave himself no uneasiness with regard to the matter.

Shortly after Mr. Harris left, Joseph's wife became the mother of a son, which, however, remained with her but a short time before it was snatched from her arms by the hand of death. And the mother seemed, for some time, more like sinking with her

infant into the mansion of the dead, than remaining with her husband among the living. Her situation was such for two weeks, that Joseph slept not an hour in undisturbed quiet. At the expiration of this time she began to recover, but as Joseph's anxiety about her began to subside, another cause of trouble forced itself upon his mind. Mr. Harris had been absent nearly three weeks, and Joseph had received no intelligence whatever from him, which was altogether aside of the arrangement when they separated. But Joseph kept his feelings from his wife, fearing that if she became acquainted with them it might agitate her too much.

In a few days, however, she mentioned the subject herself, and desired her husband to go and get her mother to stay with her, while he should repair to Palmyra, for the purpose of learning the cause of Mr. Harris's absence as well as silence. At first Joseph objected, but seeing her so cheerful, and so willing to have him leave home, he finally consented.

He set out in the first stage that passed for Palmyra, and, when he was left to himself, he began to contemplate the course which Martin had taken, and the risk which he (Joseph) had run in letting the manuscript go out of his own hands—for it could not be obtained again, in case Martin had lost it through transgression, except by the power of God, which was something Joseph could hardly hope for—and that, by persisting in his entreaties to the Lord, he had perhaps fallen into transgression, and thereby lost the manuscript. When, I say, he began to contemplate these things, they troubled his spirit, and his soul was moved with fearful apprehensions. And, although he was now nearly worn out, sleep fled from his eyes, neither had he any desire for food, for he felt that he had done wrong, and how great his condemnation was he did not know.

Only one passenger was in the stage besides himself: this man observing Joseph's gloomy appearance, inquired the cause of his affliction, and offered to assist him if his services would be acceptable. Joseph thanked him for his kindness, and mentioned that he had been watching some time with a sick wife and child, that the child had died, and that his wife was still very low; but refrained from giving any further explanation. Nothing more passed between them upon this subject, until Joseph was about leaving the stage;

at which time he remarked, that he still had twenty miles further to travel on foot that night, it being then about ten o'clock. To this the stranger objected, saying, "I have watched you since you first entered the stage, and I know that you have neither slept nor eaten since that time, and you shall not go on foot twenty miles alone this night; for, if you must go, I will be your company. Now tell me what can be the trouble that makes you thus dispirited?"

Joseph replied, about as before—that he had left his wife in so low a state of health, that he feared he should not find her alive when he returned; besides, he had buried his first and only child but a few days previous. This was true, though there was another trouble lying at his heart, which he dared not to mention.

The stranger then observed, "I feel to sympathize with you, and I fear that your constitution, which is evidently not strong, will be inadequate to support you. You will be in danger of falling asleep in the forest, and of meeting with some awful disaster."

Joseph again thanked the gentleman for his kindness, and, leaving the stage, they proceeded together. When they reached our house it was nearly daylight. The stranger said he was under the necessity of leading Joseph the last four miles by the arm; for nature was too much exhausted to support him any longer, and he would fall asleep as he was walking along, every few minutes, towards the last of this distance.

On entering our house, the stranger remarked that he had brought our son through the forest, because he had insisted on coming, that he was sick, and needed rest, as well as refreshment, and that he ought to have some pepper tea to warm his stomach. After thus directing us, relative to our son, he said, that when we had attended to Joseph he would thank us for a little breakfast for himself, as he was in haste to be on his journey again.

When Joseph had taken a little nourishment, according to the directions of the stranger, he requested us to send immediately for Mr. Harris. This we did without delay. And when we had given the stranger his breakfast, we commenced preparing breakfast for the family; and we supposed that Mr. Harris would be there, as soon as it was ready, to eat with us, for he generally came in such haste when he was sent for. At eight o'clock we

set the victuals on the table, as we were expecting him every moment. We waited till nine, and he came not—till ten, and he was not there—till eleven, still he did not make his appearance. But at half past twelve we saw him walking with a slow and measured tread towards the house, his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the ground. On coming to the gate, he stopped, instead of passing through, and got upon the fence, and sat there some time with his hat drawn over his eyes. At length he entered the house. Soon after which we sat down to the table, Mr. Harris with the rest. He took up his knife and fork as if he were going to use them but immediately dropped them. Hyrum, observing this, said "Martin, why do you not eat; are you sick?" Upon which, Mr. Harris pressed his hands upon his temples, and cried out in a tone of deep anguish, "Oh, I have lost my soul! I have lost my soul!"

Joseph who had not expressed his fears till now, sprang from the table, exclaiming, "Martin, have you lost that manuscript? have you broken your oath, and brought down condemnation upon my head as well as your own?"

"Yes; it is gone," replied Martin, "and I know not where."

"Oh, my God!" said Joseph, clinching his hands. "All is lost! all is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned—it is I who tempted the wrath of God. I should have been satisfied with the first answer which I received from the Lord; for he told me that it was not safe to let the writing go out of my possession." He wept and groaned, and walked the floor continually.

At length he told Martin to go back and search again.

"No," said Martin, "it is all in vain; for I have ripped open beds and pillows; and I know it is not there."

"Then must I," said Joseph, "return with such a tale as this? I dare not do it. And how shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?"

I besought him not to mourn so, for perhaps the Lord would forgive him, after a short season of humiliation and repentance. But what could I do to comfort him, when he saw all the family in the same situation of mind as himself; for sobs and groans, and the most bitter lamentations filled the house. However, Joseph was more distressed than the rest, as he better understood the consequences of disobedience. And he continued, pacing back and

forth, meantime weeping and grieving, until about sunset, when, by persuasion, he took a little nourishment.

The next morning, he set out for home. We parted with heavy hearts, for it now appeared that all which we had so fondly anticipated, and which had been the source of so much secret gratification, had in a moment fled, and fled forever.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MARTIN HARRIS'S PERFIDY.

I will now give a sketch of the proceedings of Martin Harris during the time he was absent from Joseph.

After leaving Joseph, he arrived at home with the manuscript in safety. Soon after, he exhibited the manuscript to his wife and family. His wife was so pleased with it, that she gave him the privilege of locking it up in her own set of drawers, which was a special favor, for she had never before this allowed him even the privilege of looking into them. After he had shown the manuscript to those who had a right, according to his oath, to see it, he went with his wife to visit one of her relatives, who lived some ten or fifteen miles distant.

After remaining with them a short time, he returned home, but his wife declined accompanying him back. Soon after his return, a very particular friend of his made him a visit, to whom he related all that he knew concerning the Record. The man's curiosity was much excited, and, as might be expected, he earnestly desired to see the manuscript. Martin was so anxious to gratify his friend, that, although it was contrary to his obligation, he went to the drawer to get the manuscript, but the key was gone. He sought for it some time, but could not find it. Resolved, however, to carry his purpose into execution, he picked the lock, and, in so doing, considerably injured his wife's bureau. He then took out the manuscript, and, after showing it to this friend, he removed it to his own set of drawers, where he could have it at his command. Passing by his oath, he showed it to any good friend that happened to call on him.

When Mrs. Harris returned, and discovered the marred state of her bureau, her irascible temper was excited to the utmost

pitch, and an intolerable storm ensued, which descended with the greatest violence upon the devoted head of her husband.

Having once made a sacrifice of his conscience, Mr. Harris no longer regarded its scruples; so he continued to exhibit the writings, until a short time before Joseph arrived, to any one whom he regarded as prudent enough to keep the secret, except our family, but we were not allowed to set our eyes upon them.

For a short time previous to Joseph's arrival, Mr. Harris had been otherwise engaged, and thought but little about the manuscript. When Joseph sent for him, he went immediately to the drawer where he had left it, but, behold it was gone! He asked his wife where it was. She solemnly averred that she did not know anything respecting it. He then made a faithful search throughout the house, as before related.

The manuscript has never been found; and there is no doubt but Mrs. Harris took it from the drawer, with the view of retaining it, until another translation should be given, then, to alter the original translation, for the purpose of showing a discrepancy between them, and thus make the whole appear to be a deception.

It seemed as though Martin Harris, for his transgression, suffered temporally as well as spiritually. The same day on which the foregoing circumstance took place, a dense fog spread itself over his fields, and blighted his wheat while in the blow, so that he lost about two-thirds of his crop, whilst those fields which lay only on the opposite side of the road, received no injury whatever.

I well remember that day of darkness, both within and without. To us, at least, the heavens seemed clothed with blackness, and the earth shrouded with gloom. I have often said within myself, that if a continual punishment, as severe as that which we experienced on that occasion, were to be inflicted upon the most wicked characters who ever stood upon the footstool of the Almighty—if even their punishment were no greater than that, I should feel to pity their condition.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE URIM AND THUMMIM ARE TAKEN FROM JOSEPH—HE RECEIVES THEM AGAIN.

For nearly two months after Joseph returned to his family,

in Pennsylvania, we heard nothing from him, and becoming anxious about him, Mr. Smith and myself set off to make him a visit. When we came within three-quarters of a mile of the house, Joseph started to meet us, telling his wife, as he left, that father and mother were coming. When he met us, his countenance wore so pleasant an aspect, that I was convinced he had something agreeable to communicate with regard to the work in which he was engaged. When I entered, the first thing which attracted my attention was a red morocco trunk, lying on Emma's bureau, which Joseph shortly informed me contained the Urim and Thummim, and the plates. And, in the evening, he gave us the following relation of what had transpired since our separation:—

“On leaving you,” said Joseph, “I returned immediately home. Soon after my arrival, I commenced humbling myself in mighty prayer before the Lord, and, as I was pouring out my soul in supplication to God, that if possible, I might obtain mercy at his hands, and be forgiven of all that I had done contrary to his will, an angel stood before me, and answered me, saying, that I had sinned in delivering the manuscript into the hands of a wicked man, and, as I had ventured to become responsible for his faithfulness, I would of necessity have to suffer the consequences of his indiscretion, and I must now give up the Urim and Thummim into his (the angel's) hands.

“This I did as I was directed, and as I handed them to him, he remarked, ‘If you are very humble and penitent, it may be you will receive them again; if so, it will be on the twenty-second of next September.’”

Joseph then related a revelation which he received soon after the angel visited him. A part of which is as follows:—

“Behold, you have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember, also, the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them; and behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. For behold, you should not have feared man more than God, although men set at nought the counsels of God, and despise his words; yet you should have been faithful and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble. Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware, thou wilt fall. But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which

thou hast done which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work. Except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift. And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred into the hands of a wicked man, who has set at nought the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment, and boasted in his own wisdom, and this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season, for thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning. Nevertheless my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people."

For the sake of brevity, I have omitted part of this revelation, but the reader will find it in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, section 3: 5-16.

I will now return to Joseph's recital.

"After the angel left me," said he, "I continued my supplications to God, without cessation, and on the twenty-second of September, I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the Urim and Thummim, with which I have again commenced translating, and Emma writes for me, but the angel said that the Lord would send me a scribe, and I trust his promise will be verified. The angel seemed pleased with me when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim, and he told me that the Lord loved me, for my faithfulness and humility."

A few months after Joseph received them, he inquired of the Lord, and obtained the following revelation:—

"Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them; and you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened; nevertheless, it is now restored unto you again, therefore, see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun. Do not run faster, or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end: pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.

Behold, they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted, has sought to destroy you. And for this cause I said that he is a wicked man, for he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been entrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift; and because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold, wicked men have taken them from you. Therefore, you have delivered them up; yea, that which was sacred, unto wickedness. And, behold, Satan has put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands. And, behold, I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that which you translated and caused to be written; and, on this wise, the devil has sought to lay a cunning plan, that he may destroy this work. For he has put it into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate."—*Doctrine and Covenants*, section x: 1-14.

While on this visit, we became acquainted with Emma's father, whose name was Isaac Hale; also his family, which consisted of his wife, Elizabeth; his sons, Jesse, David, Alva, Isaac Ward, and Reuben; and his daughters, Phebe and Elizabeth.

They were an intelligent and highly respectable family. They were pleasantly situated, and lived in good style, in the town of Harmony, on the Susquehannah river, within a short distance of the place where Joseph resided.

The time of our visit with them, we passed very agreeably, and returned home relieved of a burden which was almost insupportable, and our present joy far overbalanced all our former grief.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OLIVER COWDERY COMMENCES WRITING FOR JOSEPH—THEY ATTEND TO THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

When Mr. Smith, and myself arrived at home, we found Samuel and Sophronia very sick, indeed, they were so low that Hyrum had left his own house, and quitted business, in order to take care of them during our absence. They continued sick a length of time—Samuel did not altogether recover for a number of months.

Soon after we returned from Harmony, a man by the name of

Lyman Cowdery, came into the neighborhood, and applied to Hyrum, (as he was one of the trustees,) for the district school. A meeting of the trustees was called, and Mr. Cowdery was employed. But the following day, this Mr. Cowdery brought his brother Oliver to the trustees, and requested them to receive him instead of himself, as circumstances had transpired which rendered it necessary for him to disappoint them, or which would not allow of his attending to the school himself; and he would warrant the good conduct of the school under his brother's supervision. All parties being satisfied, Oliver, commenced his school, boarding for the time being at our house. He had been in the school but a short time, when 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. At last, however, he gained my husband's confidence, so far as to obtain a sketch of the facts relative to the plates.

Shortly after receiving this information, he told Mr. Smith that he was highly delighted with what he had heard, that he had been in a deep study upon the subject all day, and that it was impressed upon his mind, that he should yet have the privilege of writing for Joseph. Furthermore, that he had determined to pay him a visit at the close of the school, which he was then teaching.

On coming in on the following day, he said, "The subject upon which we were yesterday conversing seems working in my very bones, and I cannot, for a moment, get it out of my mind; finally, I have resolved on what I will do. Samuel, I understand, is going down to Pennsylvania to spend the spring with Joseph; I shall make my arrangements to be ready to accompany him thither, by the time he recovers his health; for I have made it a subject of prayer, and I firmly believe that it is the will of the Lord that I should go. If there is a work for me to do in this thing, I am determined to attend to it."

Mr. Smith told him, that he supposed it was his privilege to know whether this was the case, and advised him to seek for a testimony for himself, which he did, and received the witness spoken of in the Book of *Doctrine and Covenants*, section viii.

From this time, Oliver was so completely absorbed in the subject of the Record, that it seemed impossible for him to think or converse about anything else.

As the time for which we had agreed for the place was now drawing to a close, we began to make preparations to remove our family and effects to the house in which Hyrum resided. We now felt more keenly than ever the injustice of the measure which had placed a landlord over us on our own premises, and who was about to eject us from them.

This I thought would be a good occasion for bringing to Oliver's mind, the cause of all our present privations, as well as the misfortunes which he himself was liable to if he should turn his back upon the world, and set out in the service of God.

"Now, Oliver," said I, "see what a comfortable home we have had here, what pains each child we have has taken to provide for us every thing necessary to make old age comfortable, and long life desirable. Here, especially, I look upon the handiwork of my beloved Alvin, who even upon his death-bed, and in his last moments, charged his brothers to finish his work of preparing a place of earthly rest for us; that if it were possible, through the exertions of the children, our last days might be our best days. Indeed, there is scarcely anything which I here see, that has not passed through the hands of that faithful boy, and afterwards, by his brothers, been arranged precisely according to his plan, thus showing to me, their affectionate remembrance, both of their parents, and of the brother whom they loved. All these tender recollections render our present trial doubly severe, for these dear relics must now pass into the hands of wicked men, who fear not God, and regard not man. And upon what righteous principle has all this been brought about? Have they ever lifted a finger to earn any part of that which they now claim? I tell you they have not. Yet I now give up all this for the sake of Christ and salvation, and I pray God to help me to do so, without a murmur or a tear. In the strength of God, I say, that from this time forth, I will not cast one longing look upon anything which I now leave behind me. However, in consequence of these things, Oliver, we cannot make you comfortable any longer, and you will be under the necessity of taking boarding somewhere else."

"Mother," exclaimed the young man, "let me stay with you, for I can live in any log hut where you and father live, but I cannot leave you, so do not mention it."

In April, Samuel, and Mr. Cowdery set out for Pennsylvania. The weather, for some time previous, had been very wet and disagreeable—raining, freezing, and thawing alternately, which had rendered the roads almost impassable, particularly in the middle of the day. Notwithstanding, Mr. Cowdery was not to be detained, either by wind or weather, and they persevered until they arrived at Joseph's.

Joseph had been so hurried with his secular affairs, that he could not proceed with his spiritual concerns so fast as was necessary for the speedy completion of the work; there was also another disadvantage under which he labored, his wife had so much of her time taken up with the care of her house, that she could write for him but a small portion of the time. On account of these embarrassments, Joseph called upon the Lord, three days prior to the arrival of Samuel and Oliver, to send him a scribe, according to the promise of the angel; and he was informed that the same should be forthcoming in a few days. Accordingly, when Mr. Cowdery told him the business that he had come upon, Joseph was not at all surprised.

They sat down and conversed together till late. During the evening, Joseph told Oliver his history, as far as was necessary for his present information, in the things which mostly concerned him. And the next morning they commenced the work of translation, in which they were soon deeply engaged.

One morning they sat down to their work, as usual, and the first thing which presented itself through the Urim and Thummim, was a commandment for Joseph and Oliver to repair to the water, and attend to the ordinance of baptism. They did so, and as they were returning to the house, they overheard Samuel engaged in secret prayer. Joseph said, that he considered this as a sufficient testimony of his being a fit subject for baptism; and as they had now received authority to baptize, they spoke to Samuel upon the subject, and he went straightway to the water with them, and was baptized. After which, Joseph and Oliver proceeded with the work of translation as before.