



Type: Magazine Article

The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, No. III

Author(s): Edward Stevenson

Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 48, No. 25 (21 June 1886)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 389–391

Abstract: As a witness who sat in the presence of the prophet Joseph and the Three Witnesses, this author presents his accounts of some of the occasions when testimonies were borne. The author states that he was “deeply inspired” as he heard them many times testify of being in the presence of a heavenly messenger who talked with them and showed them the plates. They were shown the Urim and Thummim and told these seer stones were used by ancient prophets. The third part continues the focus on Martin Harris.

prices, but has also injured their fishing grounds—or waters, would perhaps be more literally correct. It is said they once made money so fast they could not spend it in their plain and simple way of living; and, as is the case among all creatures that are accredited with reasoning faculties, they had their pride. The result was the introduction of pianos when no one could, or ever hoped to be able to play them; and some actually had two pianos in their dingy little dwellings so as to put on a little more style than somebody else, or to prevent anybody from outboasting them. They now begin to appreciate the value of money, and simple as are their wants, it requires a degree of economy to make all ends meet, with the lowering of prices and the rabid competition of the steam trawlers.

At the fisheries inventions in London, some time since, several of the Newhaven fish wives were there. It is said that the Princess Louise was visiting it, and at that time the Queen's

leg was injured, as will be remembered. Passing along, she came to the Newhaven fish wives, when one of them spoke up: "I'm glad tae see ye, mem. An' hoo's yer mither's leg keepin mem?" The Princess smiled and replied: "She's much better, thank you." "I'm awfu' glad tae hear it. Tell yer mither I was speerin' about her, will ye?" "What name shall I give her?" inquired the Princess? "My name's Maggie Flucker. Guid day, mem."

A short time after a couple of Frenchmen came along, and doubtless thinking the Newhaven fish wives were from France, began to talk to them in French. The women looked at them in a dazed manner for a few minutes, when the truth began to dawn on Maggie, and she cried out: "awa we ye mun!" and pointing in the direction of the foreign fish wives added: "Tuts; d'ye tak bonny Scotch lassies for sich like things as they black craws ower yonder?"

S.

THE THREE WITNESSES TO THE BOOK OF MORMON

—o—

NO. III.

The economy of Martin Harris was particularly illustrated on the occasion of our visit to the Fifteenth Ward of Salt Lake City. The meeting was crowded, as usual, with those anxious to see him, and to hear his constant, undeviating testimony. Sister M. H. Kimball, of the Fifteenth Ward, eminent in the Relief Societies, on their behalf offered to have a new set of artificial teeth made for Brother Harris, to which he replied, "No, sisters, I thank you for your kindness, but I shall not live long. Take the money and give it to the poor." This calls to my mind a little incident or two that he related to me while we were on our journey from Ohio to Utah. He said that Joseph Smith, the Prophet, was very poor, and had to work by the day for his support, and he (Harris) often gave him work on his farm, and that they had hoed corn together many a day, Brother Harris paying him fifty cents per day. Joseph,

he said, was good to work and jovial and they often wrestled together in sport, but the Prophet was devoted and attentive to his prayers. Brother Harris gave Joseph \$50 (£10) on one occasion to help translate the Book of Mormon. This action on the part of Martin Harris so displeased his wife that she threatened to leave him. Martin said that he knew this to be the work of God, and that he should keep the commandments of the Lord, whatever the results might be. His wife, subsequently, partially separated from him, which he patiently endured for the Gospel's sake. He also stated that the Prophet translated a portion of the Book of Mormon, with the seer stone in his possession. The stone was placed in a hat that was used for that purpose, and with the aid of this seer stone the Prophet would read sentence by sentence as Martin wrote, and if he made any mistake the

sentence would remain before the Prophet until corrected, when another sentence would appear. When they became weary, as it was confining work to translate from the plates of gold, they would go down to the river and throw stones into the water for exercise. Martin on one occasion picked up a stone resembling the one with which they were translating, and on resuming their work Martin placed the false stone in the hat. He said that the Prophet looked quietly for a long time, when he raised his head and said: "Martin, what on earth is the matter, all is dark as Egypt." Martin smiled and the seer discovered that the wrong stone was placed in the hat. When he asked Martin why he had done so he replied, to stop the mouths of fools who had declared that the Prophet knew by heart all that he told him to write, and did not see by the seer stone; when the true stone was placed in the hat, the translation was resumed, as usual.

At an evening visit of some of my friends at my residence in Salt Lake City, to see and hear Brother Harris relate his experience (which always delighted him) Brother James T. Woods, who is now present while I am writing this article, reminds me that himself and G. D. Keaton were present on that occasion, and asked him to explain the manner in which the plates containing the characters of the Book of Mormon were exhibited to the witnesses. Brother Harris said that the angel stood on the opposite side of the table on which were the plates, the interpreters, &c., and took the plates in his hands and turned them over. To more fully illustrate this to them, Brother Martin took up a book and turned the leaves over one by one. The angel declared that the Book of Mormon was correctly translated by the power of God and not of man, and that it contained the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Nephites, who were a branch of the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and had come from the land of Jerusalem to America. The witnesses were required to bear their testimony of these things, and of this open vision to all people, and he (Harris) testified, not only to those pre-

sent but to all the world, that these things were true, and before God whom he expected to meet in the day of Judgment he lied not. Brother Woods testifies that he was present at the time above mentioned, and to him it was marvelous to see the zeal that was manifested by Martin Harris, and the spirit of the Lord that accompanied his words.

That Martin Harris was very zealous, somewhat enthusiastic, and what some would term egotistical, is no doubt the case; but the Lord has shown this generation that He can carry on His work independently of all men, only as they live closely and humbly before Him. I will give one or two instances of Martin's enthusiasm. When President George A. Smith and others of us were being driven by John Henry Smith in a carriage to take a bath in the Warm Springs, near Salt Lake City, while passing over a high hill President Smith directed the curtains of the carriage to be raised, giving a magnificent view of the city below. The immense Tabernacle and the Temple—and in fact the beautiful city in full view—looked wonderful to Brother Harris, who seemed wrapped in admiration and exclaimed, "Who would have thought that the Book of Mormon would have done all this?" On one occasion while celebrating a baptism, several persons being in attendance, Brother Harris with joyful feelings said, "Just see how the Book of Mormon is spreading." Having been absent so long from the body of the Church and considering his great age, much charity was necessary to be exercised in his behalf. His abiding testimony, and his assistance with his property to publish the Book of Mormon, have earned a name for him that will endure while time shall last. Soon after he had received his endowments and performed some work for his dead, he retired to live with his son, Martin Harris, at Smithfield in Cache Valley, where he was comfortably cared for in his declining old age. On the afternoon of his death he was bolstered up in his bed, where, with the Book of Mormon in his hand he bore his last testimony to those who were present. Brother Harris was over ninety

years of age at the time of his death, and had always enjoyed good health. Bishop Rigby, who preached his funeral sermon, placed the Book of Mormon on his breast, while he lay in his coffin, and it was buried with him.

EDWARD STEVENSON.

UTAH NEWS.

(Summarized from Territorial Papers.)

Some choice, early strawberries of home growth were seen in Salt Lake City on the 26th ult.

The *Utah Journal* says that the growing grain in nearly all parts of Cache Valley is very light this year, and unless rain falls shortly the dry farms will produce but a small yield.

The weather has been unusually hot in Utah, melting the snow in the mountains so quickly as to cause high waters in many places, and some damage therefrom is anticipated.

Elder John Nicholson is the author of a new work entitled: "The Martyrdom of Joseph Standing." The story of that tragedy is intensely interesting, and we are glad that so able a writer has given it to the world.

A cyclone struck the city of Eagle Rock, in Southern Idaho, on the 19th ult., entirely demolishing the Union Pacific R.R. round house. About thirty men were inside at the time who barely escaped with their lives.

Mr. George Hales, an employee of the *Southern Utonian*, has been fined 100 dollars for libel, in Judge Boreman's court at Beaver. The injustice of this is apparent from the fact that Mr. Hales has nothing whatever to do with what appeared in the paper, neither writing for it nor reading proof. The *Utonian* has been outspoken in denouncing the corrupt practices of United States officials, and the latter selected Mr. Hales for a victim.

The *Ogden Herald* says: "One of the most important discoveries of mineral wealth ever made in Utah, is undoubtedly that of Cache Valley, about ten miles south of Paradise, and not more than thirty-five or forty miles in a direct line north of Ogden City. In that region has been found a large and rich fissure vein of silver ore. The vein, as far as yet explored, is about five miles in length and now promises to even rival the famous Park City region."

An amendment to the Constitution of the United States, recommended by the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives, has been proposed in Congress. Its object is to commit the whole nation against plural marriage and prevent the recognition of polygamy as any part of the public policy. As the Constitution now stands, each State has the regulation of its own domestic affairs, but if this amendment becomes a part of the supreme law of the land, it will be conceding to the central government at Washington the right to dictate in the domestic concerns of the several States so far as marriage is concerned, and change to that extent the genius of American institutions, which has been to reserve to the people of the States the right to regulate their own domestic affairs. Unreasoning prejudice against the Latter-day Saints is the cause of this important intended innovation.