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## The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, No. IV

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**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 fourth part focuses on Oliver Cowdery.

is being infringed upon, trampled in the dust, for the purpose of striking a blow at those who are living within the law both human and divine; human, as prescribed and contained in the Constitution of the United States; divine, as contained in Holy Writ, and as again announced from the heavens in the day and age in which we live.

With all this before us to make us cognizant of the evils of intolerance, together with all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from Abel unto Zecharias, and down to the present day in which we live, the martyrs for conscience sake of every land and clime, including our Prophet and Patriarch, and the bonds and imprisonment of our brethren in this pre-

sent hour, all this should teach us to practice that toleration inculcated in article eleven of our faith, and lead us on to perfect ourselves in the principle inculcated by our Elder Brother when He cried: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." It is a lesson so hard of application by poor, weak humanity, that failure has characterized the human family in their attempts at practicing it thus far; but the members of the Church of Christ, before their education is completed, must learn this lesson and be able to apply it for the salvation of the souls of men, before they receive the power which shall be invested in the officers of the kingdom of God, when it shall be fully established upon the earth.

## THE THREE WITNESSES TO THE BOOK OF MORMON.

### NO. IV.

HAVING given a rather detailed account of Martin Harris, who was the last of the three witnesses, I will proceed to speak more briefly of Oliver Cowdery, the first of the witnesses. Brother Cowdery, like the others, was rather conspicuous in the Church in its early history up to 1836. I have often heard him bear a faithful testimony to the restoration of the Gospel by the visitation of an angel, in whose presence he stood in company with the Prophet Joseph Smith and David Whitmer. He testified that he beheld the plates, the leaves being turned over by the angel, whose voice he heard, and that they were commanded as witnesses to bear a faithful testimony to the world of the vision that they were favored to behold, and that the translation from the plates in the Book of Mormon was accepted of the Lord, and that it should go forth to the world and no power on earth should stop its progress. Although for a time Oliver Cowdery absented himself from the body of the Church, I never have known a time when he faltered or was recreant to the trust so sacredly entrusted to him by an angel from heaven.

In Nov. 1831 the Lord gave a revelation to the Prophet concerning Oliver Cowdery, and also appointing John Whitmer as historian, to be

assisted by Brother Oliver Cowdery. This John Whitmer is one of the eight witnesses who was permitted to behold the plates, and he kept the faith until 1837, after which fellowship was withdrawn from him, he refusing to give up the history he had kept, which was legally the property of the Church. The history is still in existence, and transmitted to his son John, now living near Richmond, Mo. Under the direction of David Whitmer this history is held sacred at this time. I will add here, in justice to John Whitmer, that up to his death he was always true to his testimony as one of the eight witnesses. A portion of the revelation spoken of reads as follows: "Hearken unto me, saith the Lord, your God, for my servant Oliver Cowdery's sake. It is not wisdom in me that he should be entrusted with the commandments and the monies which he shall carry unto the land of Zion, except one go with him who will be true and faithful: wherefore I, the Lord, will that my servant John Whitmer should go with my servant Oliver Cowdery, and also that he shall continue in writing and making a history of all the important things which he shall observe and know concerning my Church." Also in 1829, a revelation was given to Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith, an



abstract of which reads: "A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men. Behold, I am God, and give heed to my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow: therefore give heed to my words.....Therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive; if you will knock it shall be opened unto you." This revelation was given about a year before the Church was organized, and enjoins an extra injunction upon Brother Cowdery. Again, in a revelation given to Joseph Smith, Jun. and Oliver Cowdery in 1830: "Behold, thou wast called and chosen to write the Book of Mormon and to my ministry.....And thou shalt continue in calling upon God in my name, and writing the things which shall be given thee by the Comforter.....and they shall hear it, or I will send unto them a cursing instead of a blessing." To Oliver Cowdery and six Elders, Sept. 1830: "Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Redeemer, the great I AM. Verily I say unto you, ye are chosen out of the world to declare my Gospel with the sound of rejoicing, as with the voice of a trumpet,.....for the hour is nigh, and that which is spoken by my apostles must be fulfilled: for as they spoke so it shall come to pass:.....Wherefore, I the Lord God will send forth flies upon the face of the earth, which shall take hold of the inhabitants thereof, and shall eat their flesh, and shall cause maggots to come in upon them; and their tongues shall be stayed that they shall not utter against me."

Many other revelations have been given with increased responsibilities upon Oliver Cowdery, as well as to be a witness to the Book of Mormon. I have taken great satisfaction under his testimony as one of the three witnesses, and testify to the world that he was inspired of God, and his testimony stands unimpeached by any man on earth. About the year 1849 or 1850, Oliver Cowdery called to see the Latter-day Saints in their camp at Council Bluffs, Iowa, while *en route* to Utah from Illinois. He became satisfied of the continued advance of the Gospel, and was rebaptized and

publicly bore his testimony in the meetings of the Latter-day Saints with expressed satisfaction. Soon after this he went to Richmond, Ray Co., Mo., to visit David Whitmer, where he subsequently died, and was buried alongside of father and mother Whitmer. Thus two of the three witnesses have returned to the fold and identified themselves with the true and only Church and Gospel of Jesus Christ, at that time under the direction of President Brigham Young, and died in full faith and hope of a glorious resurrection, and the reign of Christ a thousand years upon this earth, when Jesus will reign as King of kings.

Before Oliver Cowdery's demise, he left with David Whitmer the manuscript from which the Book of Mormon was printed, or at least, it is claimed to be the same; but this is in dispute, as it is claimed that there were two manuscripts, one being a copy of the other, and that the original one was deposited by the Prophet in the corner stone of the Nauvoo House, at Nauvoo. Be this as it may, it would be hard to convince David Whitmer of it, and would make very little difference, as we have the substance in the book itself, while the difference in either of them would merely be the shadow. There was also a transcript of a portion of the characters as found on the golden plates taken or copied on a small piece of paper, perhaps about six or seven inches by four or five. Seven or eight lines of them were very carefully transmitted to this paper as the words of this book, which were taken to Prof. Charles Anthon, of New York, Martin Harris being the bearer of them. Oliver Cowdery also left this relic with David Whitmer. I had the pleasure of seeing and handling this choice piece of paper last February, and was very much gratified at seeing the singular characters of curious workmanship placed regularly in lines, in system and order. Martin Harris stated to me that the Professor pronounced them correct Egyptian characters, but somewhat changed, and gave him a certificate accordingly; but after asking him (Harris) regarding the book of plates, Professor Anthon desired Mr. Harris to bring the plates



or book to him. The reply was that they were sealed and he could not do so. Then Mr. Anthon replied that he could not read a sealed book. Upon inquiry how they came by them, Martin replied that an angel from heaven delivered them to the Prophet Joseph Smith. At this juncture of the conversation the Professor asked Brother Harris to let him see the certificate that he had given him. As soon as Brother Harris handed him the paper, Mr. Anthon tore it up, saying there were no angels who visited men in this enlightened day and age of the world. Martin Harris' statement having been published, was disputed by some, and a Mr. E. D. How of Painesville, Ohio, addressed a letter of enquiry to Professor Anthon, and obtained the following reply:

"Dear Sir,—I received your letter of the 9th, and lose no time in making a reply.....Some years ago a plain, apparently simple-hearted farmer called on me with a note from Dr.

Mitchel, requesting me to decipher, if possible, a paper which the former would hand me.....He gave me the following account: 'A gold book, consisting of a number of plates.....was dug up in the northern part of the State of New York,' etc., etc.

In the 29th chapter, and 11th to 14th verses, is found an excellent illustration of the above as viewed in vision by the Prophet Isaiah: "And 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 (Professor Anthon), saying, read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book (not the words or transcript) is delivered to him that is not learned, (Joseph Smith), saying, read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned." In the following verses the Lord said He would proceed to do "a marvelous work and a wonder," and did He not verily do so?

EDWARD STEVENSON.

## UTAH NEWS.

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(Summarized from Territorial Papers.)

Ogden City is again making preparations for celebrating the Fourth of July.

A great deal of finely bred cattle is being imported into Utah. Several carloads have already been taken in this season.

Gov. Caleb West has pardoned two men from the Salt Lake County jail. Their names are John Reilly and Jacob Gallagher, and they were sentenced to 200 days on a charge of petty larceny. They had been in jail since March 5th of this year.

A fire in Salt Lake City, June 9th, destroyed a house in which three families resided, rendering them homeless. The loss was about £1,000. A Mrs. Angell and her little daughter were badly burned before rescued; but it is not believed their injuries will prove fatal.

A German, calling himself Dr. Wyl, is the last individual who has undertaken the task of writing a book about the "Mormons." As he has received the endorsement of ex-Gov. Murray, H. W. Lawrence and others of that stamp, its character may readily be comprehended.

Some of the Saints in Salt Lake who have been gathered out from among the different Conferences of Great Britain are again, as last year, holding reunions, and thus keeping alive the memory of the early days when they first