

## ***PREFACE.***



### **TO THE READER—**

As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold, the Lord said unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and

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"God translates a book miraculously and the book is his word and it still gets lost!"

The Book of Mormon was allegedly translated from golden plates containing Reformed Egyptian by the gift and power of God by Joseph Smith the founder of Mormonism or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. First published

in 1830, it is the only sacred volume that claims to have been a divinely inspired translation. None of the myriad sects of Mormonism can be the true Church when the Book of Mormon is a hoax.

The Church itself would admit that its hard to defend the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It would point to the fact that every faith has the same problem. The Catholic Church for example when it tries to verify that miracles of healing happened at Lourdes finds it far from easy. But ordinary people have the right to see the evidence before believing and do not have the time for examining all that. A true miracle would be straightforward. Otherwise people are going to get conned and fall into error.

The evidence for the existence of the Golden Plates consists of a testimony by three witnesses and another by eight. They all agreed however that they did not see much of them. They were not looking at them day in and day out.

A Witness to the Book of Mormon plates stated that it was indeed a verbally inspired translation.

Smith got three witnesses and then eight to testify that the golden plates existed. This shows he was a hoaxer for it was more important that the translation be verified than that the existence of the plates be verified. Yet God seems to be only concerned about the plates. There is no evidence that the translation was right. The man who falsely claimed to be Smith's successor and forged a letter to help him along James Jesse Strang is dismissed by Mormons as a fraud though he chose reputable men to be the witnesses to the plates he translated. Smith's were all notoriously gullible and he said that they were wicked men. Cowdery one of the three witnesses was known to be a conman.

What really makes the testimony of the witnesses worthless is that Smith inserted changes into the Book of Mormon after

its publication. This action of his was a plain witness that he didn't believe in it himself. Adjustments were made to fit changing Mormon dogma. When the prime witness testified by his actions and actions are louder than words why bother with the rest?

The Book of Mormon says that three witnesses are needed before any charge against an elder can be listened to (Moroni 6:7). Ether 5:3,4 requires three witnesses to see the Golden Plates. But we have only Mormon and Moroni's word for the Book of Mormon if we assume that Smith was telling the truth (which really just leaves one witness, Smith). Mormon died in battle and who knows what Moroni was doing after that? So we really have one witness, Moroni! Perhaps they made the whole thing up or Moroni alone did it? Worse, perhaps Joseph Smith did get gold plates and the commission to translate them but he decided not to bother and faked the translation. Mormon scriptures admit that Smith disobeyed God and was chastised by him after he received the plates. The point is, we have only Smith's word for it that the Book of Mormon is what is on the plates. Mormons answer that God told the three witnesses that the translation was true but we are not given God's exact words. Maybe he only said, "These are the plates of Mormon and my translation of them is to be believed", meaning he wanted them to believe his translation which may or may not have been effected properly by Smith. Even Mormons now say that prophets can get things wrong because they misinterpret things. How do they know then that the apostles misunderstood the resurrection of Jesus and that what they saw was not Jesus at all?

Smith claimed that Professor Charles Anthon authenticated his translation of a bit of the plates. The characters and translation were written down by Smith on some paper and Martin Harris took it to him. Anthon always denied this claim. Yet Mormons use Smith's claim as evidence for the Book of Mormon. But the whole point of bringing in the Professor was to back Smith up and all we have is Smith's testimony!

Mormons may point out that Smith could have been lied to by Harris and that Smith was only recording what Harris said. But Smith took Harris' version very seriously. And it was Smith who reported what Harris said so was it reported correctly and truthfully? Smith is trying to get us to take hearsay as verification. If Smith had been a genuine man of God and his story was true, he would have done better than that. And its a strange way of proving something to say, "The professor said the translation is correct and the characters a real language and if he now says different he is lying."

The Book of Mormon and the revelations that accompanied it make it clear that the work in producing it could only be carried out and the plates seen only by faith. The Book of Mormon teaches that that only when faith is totally strong will God work to do miracles (1 Nephi 7:12; Moroni 7:34-38; Ether 12:12). Ether 4:11 says that he who believes in the gospel will receive supernatural manifestations from the Holy Spirit and know that the record is true. There is no evidence that there was anything special about the faith of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon or even Smith's own faith so the Book of Mormon says that their visions and revelations were dubious. They are not of the calibre of some of the Catholic Saints and they should be. The prophecy of the three witnesses in the Book of Mormon though fulfilled fails in that the witnesses did not have good enough faith and committed terrible actions later – they were not even half-decent human beings.

Martin Harris was one of the three witnesses to the Golden Bible but God would not have chosen him though Smith said he did. Harris was famous for having ludicrous visions and revelations even before he became associated with Smith.

Smith supposedly translated 116 pages of the Book of Lehi, a part of the Book of Mormon. They were lost and never recovered or re-translated. Smith claimed a revelation not to re-translate Lehi's writings but to use a part of the plates that covered much the same period. The Lord told Smith this had to be done for if he re-translated Lehi, Smith's enemies would change the 116 pages and then use them as proof that Smith's new translation did not match the old one so thereby seeming to prove that he was not translating at all. It is obvious that Smith was making it all up for his enemies could not change the pages that much. They could have forged a new 116 pages and still did that to contradict Smith's account of what happened. The episode certainly indicates that no testimony however good could salvage Smith's story of the plates and the miracle translation.

So Smith said he could not retranslate for some would see differences between the new and old one if the old turned up. This is an admission that the whole thing was a hoax. Why couldn't God tell him if the old one still existed? It was believed that Martin Harris's wife burned them in her fireplace. God would not let the precious pages be lost after enabling Smith to miraculously translate the Plates.

"Answer. They were returned to the angel, Moroni, from whom they were received, to be brought forth again in the due time of the Lord; for they contain many things pertaining to the gathering of Israel, which gathering will take place in this generation, and shall be testified of among all nations, according to the old prophets; as the Lord will set His ensign to the people, and gather the outcasts of Israel. (See Isaiah, xi.)

"Now, dear sir, examine these scriptures carefully; and should there still be any ambiguity relative to this great work

of the last days, write again and we will endeavor to enlighten you on any point relative to this doctrine.

"I am, very respectfully,  
"MARTIN HARRIS, SEN."

The following interesting statement is an extract from a letter written to the *Deseret News*, by Elder Edward Stevenson:

"Martin Harris related an instance that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon, which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone. Martin explained the translation as follows: By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, 'Written,' and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used. Martin said, after continued translation they would become weary and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translating, and on resuming their labor of translation, Martin put in place the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent unusually and intently gazing in darkness, no traces of the usual sentences appearing. Much surprised, Joseph exclaimed, 'Martin! What is the matter? All is as dark as Egypt.' Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, to stop the mouths of fools, who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them, etc.

Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained

The witnesses said they saw the Plates inside their heads and after Smith manipulated and tormented them to think they could see them (page 37, Are the Mormon Scriptures Reliable?). We don't need them to tell us. The missing 116 pages of Lehi tells us that anyway.

The coincidence that Smith found another record on the plates covering the exact period for the missing Lehi stuff that he said he was divinely banned from translating again must be one of the most startling coincidences of all time!