

EYE-OPENERS FROM THE BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS

The Mormon Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was founded in 1830 by a man called Joseph Smith who claimed to be a prophet of God. Smith published the Book of Commandments which recorded the revelations he and others received while the Book of Mormon was coming forth and after. He was dictating the Book of Mormon to a secretary at this stage as he translated. The Book of Commandments was printed in 1833 and in 1835 it was expanded into Doctrine and Covenants with many parts added to and many alterations made. The excuse was that the 1833 book was incomplete which only the most stupid among us would believe. What went on to transform the Book of Commandments into Doctrine and Covenants amounts to changing what was supposedly the word of God. Smith did not believe what he produced really was God's word when you consider how he treated it.

The Book of Commandments says the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God (page 1:5). Chapter 2 is about God's reaction when the 116 pages, which Martin Harris wrote for Smith as he dictated, of the Book of Mormon were stolen thanks to Martin's carelessness. In it God warned that nobody could receive revelations from him if he disobeyed God and warned Smith that he will become as an ordinary man and be no longer a prophet if he continued to disobey like he had in not watching the pages carefully and giving them out to Harris: "Thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift". God took away the gift to translate for a season. In Chapter 4 we read that God said that Smith "has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift". This tells us that Smith was not a prophet but only a dictator for what appeared on the magic glasses and would never be anything else. The Book of Commandments only gives guidance from God for Smith alone and was not scripture or on the same level as it. It is the same guidance God would give anybody. That is how you reconcile the existence of the Book of Commandments with this statement.

God then complained that if nobody would believe in what Joseph was doing they would not believe if he showed them all the wonders of Heaven. But Joseph was only saying he was translating from a book at that stage and there was no evidence that the golden book of the other half of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, existed! There could be better miracles than that.

God promised to provide three witnesses so that they could testify that the Book of Mormon was true by seeing the plates and knowing that the translation of them by Joseph Smith was true and the result was the word of God. God said that "thou shalt know of a surety that these things are true, for I will give them power, that they may behold and view these things as they are, and to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation. And the testimony of three witnesses will I send forth" (4:4; See also Doctrine and Covenants 5:13-14). This was in the context of complaining that everybody was stiff-necked in that generation. This then plainly suggests that there were to be three witnesses only and since the audience they would have would be stiff-necked it follows that they would have to be the most trustworthy men that could possibly be found. They were not and even Smith condemned them later as frauds and liars. Smith chose eight witnesses later on for he was unhappy with the three. 1:7 says, "Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them, shall all be fulfilled". Meaning yes! Not only does this tell us that the Book of Commandments was complete – God would not say such a thing if it was incomplete for what use are incomplete commandments? But it also proves that there were to be no more than three and God would not change his mind. 2 Nephi 27 says that only three will be chosen and then as an afterthought it is said a few more will be chosen to testify to the truth taught by the Book of Mormon. But the eight witnesses only saw plates and that did not put them in a position to say the translation was right and the result was the word of God. The prophecy was false.

Chapter 6 gives a piece translated by Joseph and Oliver Cowdery from parchment written by St John the Apostle. This parchment has conveniently not been left with us.

Chapter 5 says that the schoolteacher Oliver Cowdery received the power to translate like Joseph Smith and that he would translate ancient records. It does not, however, say that he would translate the Book of Mormon. God says that two or three witnesses are necessary to establish that the translations of hidden scriptures are true. Cowdery or somebody would have to translate with Smith to fulfil that. The prophecy says that Cowdery will translate with Smith if he is obedient. Cowdery was praised for obedience at that time and when he was able to get revelations. So Cowdery must have translated more than the parchment but portions of the Book of Mormon as well. The power of Cowdery to translate was confirmed (in 7:4).

Chapter 8 has God telling Cowdery "because you did not translate according to that which you desired of me, and did commence again to write for my servant Joseph, even so I would that you should continue until you have finished this record, which I have entrusted unto you: and then behold, other records have I, that I will give unto you power that you may assist to translate. It is not expedient that you translate at this present time" (8:1,2). This informs us that he did not translate as he wished yet but was still just a secretary for Joseph and must remain doing this until the Book of Mormon is completed. This prophecy failed for Cowdery left the Mormon Church and did not translate. The Mormons may say that it

is conditional. But God said nothing about conditions. Also Cowdery was faithful for years and had plenty of time to get the records and translate them but didn't. His resistance to the temptation to do so must have been heroic!

Chapter 9 indicates that the Book of Mormon was finished for now the problem of what to do about the missing portion, the manuscript with the Book of Lehi on it, which was the start of the book came up. God directed Smith to use the small plates of Nephi and not to use the plates he used to translate the missing pages. God said that if he did re-translate the missing pages a forged version would appear with alterations which would be used to convince the world that Smith could not translate at all for the wording would not be the same though it was the same plates supposedly being translated. God said that this was Satan's idea. God boasted that he would confound Satan in this thing. But it occurred to nobody and not even God that if Smith used the small plates as directed that a new manuscript of Lehi could still have been composed by a forger copying the writing of Martin Harris or however – or even a few pages - that gave an account that contradicted the plates of Nephi completely for it was held that both books covered the same period except that Lehi was less spiritual. The forgers could not issue the same pages with erased bits and new insertions squeezed in for that would be too obvious. If anybody was going to create a new Lehi translating from other plates was not going to make much of a difference. Smith was lying and the episode proves beyond doubt that Smith was faking the miracle of the translation and it stands as stronger evidence than any evidence for his miracle being genuine for it is from his own mouth and undermines everything he claimed.

The Mormon Church admits that Smith added to the revelations after he gave them and that this was not deception. They reason that the revelations of God come across as vague and abstract and mysterious to man and man has to struggle to express them. A prophet can have a revelation and put it down as best he can and then later get more inspired insights or remember things that were lost in the confusion and clarify and add to the writings. This is not right. Smith's revelations were not that difficult to grasp. He did not grapple with incomprehensible problems like God being a spirit without parts or the three persons of the Trinity being one God which would be harder to understand than anything he wrote about and which did not stop the likes of St Thomas Aquinas from writing about them clearly. And the Mormon God used to be an ordinary man so he would have been down-to-earth for Joseph's sake. There is just no law that says that Joseph had to understand what he was told but he certainly had to write it down as he was told and God would have boosted his memory for that purpose. If prophets could write like Smith did then Deuteronomy 18 would have no effect against false prophets.

In Deuteronomy 18, God says that even the most accurate of prophets must be rejected as a fraud if he reports the least thing that God didn't say or predicted something that didn't come true for God knows the future. The way Smith worked would have made it too easy for false prophets to be taken for true ones, for they could say they blame God for not been clear or themselves for being unintelligent and so could alter and correct and change their prophecies after making them when they fail.