

WE HAVE NO WITNESS GUARANTEE THAT THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS TRANSLATED CORRECTLY

THE PLATES AND THE WITNESSES

Joseph Smith (1805-1844), the Mormon founder, claimed to have had golden plates given to him by an angel. To back up this extraordinary claim, he had to have witnesses to silence people who thought that the plates never existed. He chose three witnesses who said they saw the plates as an angel turned the leaves for them to have a look. They testified also that Smith's miraculous translation of the plates was correct. Then he chose eight witnesses who said that they saw the plates close up. This testimony led to the foundation of the Church of Christ which later became the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The translation is called the Book of Mormon.

Professor Charles Anthon revealed in 1834 that one of the three witnesses, Martin Harris, told him that Smith wore magic glasses and that "Whoever examined the plates through the spectacles, was enabled not only to read them, but fully to understand their meaning." Anthon supposedly wrote a certificate to say that he had seen a piece of paper on which characters from the plates were transcribed and translated and that it was all authentic. He reportedly tore it up. In his letters, he denied that he authenticated the translation and he wrote it was a hoax. Mormons call him a liar and then claim that he authenticated their holy book! Some authentication! They say that the characters formed an unknown language Reformed Egyptian so how could he authenticate the translation?

THE THREE WITNESSES

The three witnesses, Martin Harris, David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery, of the gold plates gave a testimony which is printed at the start of the Book of Mormon. It reads that a voice from Heaven told them that the record of the Nephites and Lamanites and the Jaredites, in other words the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God. No proof is given that this voice was not a trick or from God. Sometimes people can be overcome with emotion and be led to misinterpret what was said to them.

There is an interview with Martin Harris, Tiffany's Monthly, 1859, pages 163-170. Harris speaks thus, "Joseph Smith, jr., found at Palmyra, N. Y., on the 22d day of September, 1827, the plates of gold upon which was recorded in Arabic, Chaldaic, Syriac, and Egyptian, the Book of Life, or the Book of Mormon. I was not with him at the time, but I had a revelation the summer before, that God had a work for me to do. These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, twenty-four feet from the surface. In this stone he could see many thing to my certain knowledge. It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates."

This testimony denies Smith's claim that the plates were written in Reformed Egyptian only. Harris speaks of the book as the Book of Life as if it is the only true Bible and the Book of Mormon by any standard cannot be considered to be the Book of Life unless the version we have is not the real book. Smith got the plates through using a fortune telling stone and it is known that he used a stone to "translate". All these things support a fake translation.

No attempt at proof is given by any witness that though the plates may have been translated right that the Book of Mormon was not altered afterwards by Smith or that the manuscript given to the printer was the real translation. No details are given that would convince us leaving all our questions unanswered. They just state that they heard the voice and we have no details to rule out deception.

God might have proven the existence of the plates to them but might have let the translation be ruined intending for the plates to be translated again.

The testimony of the three is useless. The Book of Mormon said it needed the witnesses but when they proved useless that proves that the Book of Mormon is a forgery. The witnesses nullified their testimony when they let Joseph Smith make changes in the Book of Mormon that were not allowed in the original manuscripts later on. The Salt Lake City Church has made thousands of alterations apart from grammatical ones since. The witnesses already believed in Smith's work to start with so if only one heard a voice they would say they all heard the voice meaning that one heard it audibly and the others heard it spiritually and inaudibly.

We must remember that the Mormon Church says that anybody who asks God if the Book of Mormon is true will know for sure that it is for the Book of Mormon promises that (Moroni 10:4) so anybody who gets a testimony and a feeling from God that the book is true is as much a witness as those who saw and touched the gold plates. That means that the three and

the eight witnesses who came along later were hellbent on declaring the book true just because a feeling said it was true. That is going very far and is preferring fiction to fact. People who would go that far are perfectly capable of visualising the Book of Mormon plates and then persuading themselves that what they pictured was real and a vision from God.

The three said that God said that the translation was done properly but we are not told that God said he meant the Book of Mormon as it was to be published. Perhaps Smith and his scribes reworked the translation and corrupted it. Perhaps they knew what was really on the plates in their heads and it was that that God was talking about.

Fraudulent apparitions like Medjugorje and Fatima and countless others have used the sun to induce visions in their victims. The shock to the system of looking directly at the sun and the excitement has caused visions. The Smith visionaries needed only to see the angel and the plates for a few seconds which makes a natural explanation easy. The accounts stress the brightness from Heaven may indicate that Smith got them to gaze at the sun. There is no proof of this. Mormons will respond that there is no evidence that Smith did this so the apparition was a miracle. But you are only supposed to believe in miracles when no natural explanation is possible. The sun not being mentioned is not evidence that that it was not deployed to cause the vision.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE EIGHT

The later testimony of the eight says nothing about the translation being right but only testifies to the existence of the plates and significantly says they have the appearance of gold as if they were not sure what they were made of which supports the theory that Smith may have used wood carved to look like a book and covered in gold paint. It was dishonest of them to say they knew the engravings were ancient and genuine for they knew nothing about ancient languages and alphabets. What else did they lie about? The translation was the most important thing and they said nothing about it making their testimony rather useless - it only means they said they saw gold plates. We are left with no reason to believe in the translation.

These problems show that God could not have let them see any plates for the time was not right. One wonders what kind of God would go to this trouble and not make sure that characters were copied off the plates for the academic world to examine. What kind of God would let them see some plates and expect us to be satisfied with that?

The blunders and problems of the Book of Mormon might indicate that it was not a correct translation at all or that it was never a translation but just a forgery.

COWDERY DENIES BOOK OF MORMON

In the Mormon newspaper, Times and Seasons, Vol 2, page 482), there was a poem written about 1841 that said Oliver Cowdery denied the Book of Mormon in such a way that he attacked its status as being the word of God. This would mean he denied the existence of the plates or that the Book of Mormon was a true translation or both. We don't know which but we do know if the plates did exist then the translation still was not a true one. But it does seem that if you deny the Book of Mormon you are denying that it is a divine translation. Denying the plates would not amount to denying the book of Mormon but would only mean he lied that he had a vision in which he saw the plates.

The Mormon Church tries to make out that Oliver never said he disbelieved in the Book of Mormon but denied it by his actions in the sense that he contradicted it by living in a forbidden way. But Oliver, like the rest, had often denied the Book this way so the poem was about something else. It gives the impression of being about a verbal denial. The Church then says that Oliver denied the Book of Mormon the way Peter did Jesus. Peter believed in Jesus and denied him without denying his belief. It was a moment of weakness and Cowdery like Peter did not mean what he said according to them and they give no evidence whatsoever that this was the case and Oliver would have apologised if he had denied it that way. The poem states that the Book of Mormon is not proved to be fake scripture by Oliver's denial indicating that he was denying that it was God's word.

Another tactic used is to dismiss what was said about Oliver as hearsay. So when the Mormon Church does not want to believe a testimony it is always hearsay. That this is more than an impression is shown by the fact that the Book of Mormon was singled out. If Cowdery had been denying the book any way apart from saying it was not inspired it would follow he was denying the Doctrine and Covenants and all the revelations given to Smith so singling out the Book of Mormon would make no sense and the Mormons would not have singled it out for it looks bad to do that unless it really was publicly renounced by Cowdery.

Would the persecuted Mormon Church of 1841 publish a poem based on gossip about one of its main figures? Joel H Johnson wrote the poem and the Church says he did not hear Cowdery deny the book for he was in Kirtland while Cowdery was Missouri. But what evidence has the Church for saying that? There is no reason to think that Johnson thought that Cowdery said it when the two were far apart. This is typical of how Christians and Mormons twist things. Johnson could have heard Cowdery which means that we cannot admit Cowdery as a witness to the Book of Mormon. If it made a mistake

would it not correct in the next edition? Where was the uproar among Oliver and his associates if the poem was wrong? Would the persecuted Mormon Church of 1841 that needed all the evidence it could get accuse Oliver of denying the Book of Mormon and fail to make it clear that it was just a weakness and that he was truly sorry for it? Why did Oliver not correct his weakness?

CONCLUSION

There is no evidence that the Book of Mormon is correctly translated.

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