DESERET EVENING NEWS.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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MORMONISM.

Authentic Account of the Origin of this Sect from one of the Patriarchs.

DISCOVERY OF THE PLATES.

And the Translation of the Book of Mormon.

(From the *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881.)

In view of the large Mormon immigration that is now pouring into this county, and also in view of the difficulties that have heretofore existed between that sect and the people of Jackson County, the *Journal* has taken the trouble to ascertain the facts as to the origin of the sect, as well as the history of their expulsion from Jackson County in 1833.

The translation of the Book is said to have been witnessed by eleven persons, as follows: Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Christian Whitmer, Hiram Page, Jacob Whitmer, Joseph Smith, sr., Peter Whitmer, jr., John Whitmer, Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith, all of whom except David Whitmer are long since dead. David Whitmer,

THE ONLY LIVING WITNESS,

has resided since 1838 in Richmond, Ray County, Mo., and the *Journal* dispatched a reporter to Richmond to interview the "last of the eleven."

The reporter called at the residence of Mr. Whitmer and found the patriarch resting in an invalid's chair looking very pale and feeble, he having but just recovered from a long and severe illness. In person, he is about medium height, of massive frame, though not at all corpulent, his shoulders slightly bent as with the weight of years. His manly, benevolent face was closely shaven, his hair snow white, and his whole appearance denoted one of nature's noblemen. The education acquired during his boyhood days and his long life devoted to study and thought, have stored his mind with a vast fund of information.

After introducing himself, the reporter opened the conversation as follows:

"Mr. Whitmer, knowing that you are the only living witness to the translation of the Book of Mormon and also that you were a resident of Jackson County during the Mormon troubles in 1833, I have been sent to you by the *Journal* to get from your lips

THE TRUE STATEMENT OF FACTS

in regard to these matters. For nearly half a century the world has had but one side only, and it is now our desire to present to our readers for the first time the other side."

"Young man, you are right, I am the only living witness to the Book of Mormon, but I have been imposed upon and misrepresented so many times by persons claiming to be honorable newspaper men, that I feel a delicacy in allowing my name to come before the public in newspaper print again."

"I am sorry to hear that, but I promise you that we shall only give your statement as you make it, and will not misrepresent you in any manner."

After a few other remarks of the same tenor the reporter at last induced the patriarch to furnish the desired facts, which he did in the following language:

BIOGRAPHICAL.

"I was born near Harrisburg, Pa., January 7, 1805, but when only four years of age my parents removed to the State of New York, settling at a point midway between the northern extremities of Lakes Cayuga and Seneca, two miles from Waterloo, seven miles from Geneva, and twenty-seven miles from Palmyra, where I lived until the year 1831. In the year 1830 I was married to Miss Julia A. Jolly who is still living. The fruit of our union was a son David J. Whitmer, now aged 48, and a daughter, now Mrs. Julia Schweich, now aged 46 years, both of whom are now living with me. I first heard of what is now termed Mormonism, in the year 1828. I made a business trip to Palmyra, N.Y., and while there stopped with one Oliver Cowdery. A great many people in the neighborhood were talking about the finding of certain golden plates by one Joseph Smith, jr., a young man of the neighborhood. Cowdery and I, as well as many others talked about the matter, but at that time I paid but little attention to it, supposing it to be only

THE IDLE GOSSIP

of the neighborhood. Cowdery said he was acquainted with the Smith family, and he believed there must be some truth in the story of the plates, and that he intended to investigate the matter. I had conversation with several young men, who said that Joseph Smith had certainly golden plates, and that before he had attained them he had promised to share with them, but had not done so, and they were very much incensed with him. Said I, 'How do you know that Joe Smith has the plates?' They replied, 'We saw the plates in the hill that he took them out of, just as he described it to us before he obtained them.' These parties were so positive in their statements that I began to believe there must be some foundation for the stories then in circulation all over that part of the country. I had never seen any of the Smith family up to that time, and I began to inquire of the people in regard to them, and learned that one night during the year 1827, Joseph Smith, jr., had a vision, and an angel of God appeared to him and told him where certain plates were to be found, and pointed out the spot to him, and that shortly afterward he went to that place and found the plates, which were still in his possession. After thinking over the matter for a long time, and talking with Cowdery, who also gave me a history of the finding of the plates, I went home, and after several months Cowdery told me he was going to Harmony, Pa., whither Joseph Smith had gone with the plates on account of the persecutions of his neighbors, and see him about the matter. He did go, and on his way stopped at my father's house and told me that as soon as he found out anything, either

TRUTH OR UNTRUTH,

he would let me know. After he got there he became acquainted with Joseph Smith, and shortly after, wrote to me telling me that he was convinced that Smith had the records, and that he (Smith) had told him that it was the will of heaven that he (Cowdery) should be his scribe to assist in the translation of the plates. He went on and Joseph translated from the plates and he wrote it down. Shortly after this Cowdery wrote me another letter, in which he gave me a few lines of what they had translated, and he assured me that he knew of a certainty that he had a record of a people that inhabited this continent, and that the plates they were translating gave a complete history of these people. When Cowdery wrote me these things, and told me that he had revealed knowledge concerning the truth of them, I showed these letters to my parents, and brothers and sisters. Soon after I received another letter from Cowdery, telling me to come down into Pennsylvania and bring him and Joseph to my father's house, giving as a reason therefor that they had received a commandment from God to that effect. I went down to Harmony and found everything just as they had written me. The next day after I got there they packed up the plates and we proceeded on our journey to my father's house, where we arrived in due time, and the day after we commenced upon the translation of the remainder of the plates. I, as well as all of my father's family, Smith's wife, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris, were present during the translation. The translation was by Smith, and

THE MANNER AS FOLLOWS:

"He had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shape and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top and immediately below would appear the translation, in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips. The scribe would then read the sentence written, and if any mistake had been made the characters would remain visible to Smith until corrected, when they faded from sight to be replaced by another line. The translation at my father's occupied about one month, that is from June 1 to July 1, 1829."

"Were the plates under the immediate control of Smith all the time?"

"No, they were not. I will explain how that was. When Joseph first received the plates he translated 116 pages of the book of 'Lehi,' with Martin Harris as scribe. When this had been completed they rested for a time, and Harris wanted to take the manuscript home with him to show to his family and friends. To this Joseph demurred, but finally

ASKED THE LORD

if Harris might be allowed to take it. The answer was 'No.' Harris teased Joseph for a long time and finally persuaded him to ask the Lord a second time, pledging himself to be responsible for its safe keeping. To this second inquiry the Lord told Joseph, Harris might take the manuscript, which he did, showing it to a great many people, but through some carelessness allowed it to be stolen from him. This incurred the Lord's displeasure, and he sent an angel to Joseph demanding the plates, and until Joseph had thoroughly repented of his transgressions would not allow him to have the use of them again. When Joseph was again allowed to resume the translation the plates were taken care of by a messenger of God, and when Joseph wanted to see the plates this messenger was always at hand. The 116 pages of the book of 'Lehi' which were stolen were never recovered nor would the Lord permit Joseph to make a second translation of it.

"A few months after the translation was completed, that is in the spring of 1830, Joseph had the book published and this (showing a well-worn volume) is a copy of the first edition which I have had in my possession ever since it was printed."

"When did you see the plates?"

"It was in the latter part of June, 1829. Joseph, Oliver Cowdery and myself were together, and the angel showed them to us. We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon, but he also showed us the brass plates of the Book of Ether and many others. They were shown to us in this way. Joseph and Oliver and I were

SITTING ON A LOG

when we were overshadowed by a light more glorious than that of the sun. In the midst of this light but a few feet from us appeared a table upon which were many golden plates, also the sword of Laban and the directors. I saw them as plain as I see you now, and distinctly heard the voice of the Lord declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and the power of God."

"Who else saw the plates at this time?"

"No one. Martin Harris, the other witness, saw them the same day and the eight witnesses, Christian Whitmer, Hiram Page, Jacob Whitmer, Joseph Smith Sr., Peter Whitmer, Hyram Smith, Jno. Whitmer, and Samuel H. Smith saw them next day."

"Did you see the angel?"

"Yes; he stood before us. Our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is absolutely true, just as it is written there."

"Can you describe the plates?"

"They appeared to be of gold, about six by nine inches in size, about as thick as parchment, a great many in number, and bound together like the leaves of a book by massive rings passing through the back edges. The engraving upon them were very plain and of very curious appearance. Smith made fac similes of some of the plates, and sent them by Martin Harris to Profs. Anson and Mitchell, of New York City, for examination. They pronounced the characters reformed Egyptian, but were unable to read them."

"Did Joseph Smith ever relate to you the circumstance of his

FINDING THE PLATES?"

"Yes; he told me that he first found the plates in the early spring of 1823; that during the fall of 1827 he had a vision, an angel appearing to him three times in one night and telling him that there was a record of an ancient people deposited in a hill near his father's house, called by the ancients 'Cumorah,' situated in the township of Manchester, Ontario County, N. Y. The angel pointed out the exact spot, and sometime after he went and found the records or plates deposited in a stone box in the hill just as had been described to him by the angel. It was some little time, however, before the angel would allow Smith to remove the plates from their place of deposit."

"When was the church first established?"

"We had preaching during the time the book was being translated, but our church was not regularly organized until after the book was printed in the winter of 1829-30. The first organization was in Seneca County, New York, under the name of "The Church of Christ." The first elders were Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Hyrum Smith, John Whitmer, Peter Whitmer and myself. On the 6th of April, 1830, the church was called together and the elders acknowledged according to the laws of New York. Our instructions from the Lord were to teach nothing except the Old and New Testaments and the Book of Mormon. From that time the church spread abroad and multiplied very rapidly. In the summer of 1830, Parley Pratt, Peter Whitmer and S. Peterson went to Kirtland, O., and established a branch of the church, which also grew very fast, and soon after a fine temple was erected, which is still standing. During the winter of 1830 the same parties went to Independence, Mo., and established a church and purchased very large tracts of land in all parts of Jackson County, as well as a large amount of property in the town of Independence, including the site for the temple. The reason of the emigration to Jackson County was that Smith had received a revelation from God designating Independence as the place of the gathering of the Saints together in the latter days. Joseph Smith and Elder Sidney Rigdon, of the Kirtland church, established the church in Jackson County, but soon after returned to Ohio. The temple has never been built at Independence, but the site still remains vacant and the title deeds are held by the church, and I have no doubt but that at some future day

IT WILL BE BUILT.

About 500 people emigrated from Ohio to Jackson County and the church there increased in numbers with extraordinary rapidity during the ensuing two years. They lived in peace in Jackson County until early in the summer of 1833, when difficulties arose between the church and citizens of the county. What first occasioned these difficulties I am unable to say, except that the church was composed principally of Eastern and Northern people who were opposed to slavery, and that there were among us a few ignorant and simple-minded persons who were continually making boasts to the Jackson County people that they intended to possess the entire county, erect a temple, etc. This of course occasioned hard feelings and excited the bitter jealousy of the other religious denominations.

"The church at Independence established a newspaper called the *Morning and Evening Star*, which published the revelations and prophecies of Joseph Smith and the doctrines of the church, which also caused a great deal of hard feelings among the citizens. I was at that time living three miles east of Westport, and the first intimation I ever had that the people intended driving us out of the country, was an affray between an organized mob of about 80 citizens and about 18 Mormons, which occurred at Wilson's store, near Big Blue, about the middle of the summer of 1833. The mob destroyed a number of our dwellings and fired upon the little party of Mormons, killing one young man and wounding several others. The Mormons returned the fire, killing the leader of the mob, a Campbellite preacher named Lovett. The next difficulty was in Independence, about the middle of July of the same year, when

A LARGE MOB

of armed men gathered in front of the Court House, under the leadership, I think, of three men, named Wilson, Cockrell and Overton. A committee of ten was appointed to wait upon the leaders of the church and state their demands, which were that the *Morning and Evening Star* newspaper office and all other places of business be closed, and that we immediately leave the county. This was so sudden and unexpected that we asked time to consider the matter, which was refused, and a battle immediately ensued, during which the newspaper office, which stood on the southwest corner of the square, just south of the present site of Chrisman & Sawyer's bank, was torn down and the type scattered to the four winds. Bishop Partridge and another of the Saints were dragged from their houses and tarred and feathered upon the public square, and numerous other indignities heaped upon us. But no one was killed. After this, difficulties of a like nature occurred almost daily until some time in October, when the final uprising took place, and we were driven out at the muzzles of guns from the county, without being given the opportunity of disposing of our lands. Our houses were burned and our property destroyed, and several of our number killed. The indignities that were heaped upon us were

SIMPLY TERRIBLE.

"We were beaten, our families grossly insulted and we fled for our lives out of the county. We scattered in every direction, the larger portion going to Van Buren and Grand River. A short time after the citizens of Clay county invited us to come there, which we did, and were treated with the utmost kindness."

"Did your people ever have an opportunity of selling their lands in Jackson County?"

"No, they did not, and it now by right, belongs to their descendants."

* * * * *

"I belong to the original church, organized in 1829, and have never associated myself with any other, and never upheld the reorganization or change of name to 'Latter-day Saints,' at Kirtland, O."

"Where did you go after leaving Far West."

"I went first to Clay County, and in the latter part of 1838 came here and have lived here ever since. Oliver Cowdery lived in Clay County until 1848, when he came here and died in my father's house in the winter of 1849."

"What kind of people were the Mormons of Jackson county?"

"They were a peaceable, law-abiding and industrious people, and with the exception of a few simple minded ones, paid strict attention to their own business. There never was a charge of any kind preferred against any of them during their stay in Jackson County. Their only crime was that they were opposed to slavery, and were industrious, progressive and enterprising in their habits and teachings."

"How did the name of Mormons originate?"

"It was given to us by our enemies and was never recognized by us."

"I understand, Mr. Whitmer, that you have the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon."

"I have; here it is." (He produced about 500 pages of manuscript, yellow with age, of large, old-fashioned, unruled foolscap paper, closely written upon both sides with ink and fastened together in sections with yarn strings. It very plainly showed that it had been through the hands of the printer, the "take" marks being still upon it.) "This," continued he, "was kept by Oliver Cowdery, and when he came to die, he placed them in my care, charging me to preserve them so long as I lived. When I die, I will leave them to my nephew, David Whitmer, my namesake."

"Are you not afraid they will be destroyed or stolen?"

"No, the Lord will take care of his own. When this house was destroyed by the cyclone three years ago to-day (June 1st, 1878), nothing in the room where this manuscript was kept was harmed. Everthing else was completely destroyed.

Both Mr. Whitmer and his family are thoroughly imbued with the idea that the manuscript is under the immediate protection of the Almighty."

"Are there any relations of Oliver Cowdery now living in this vicinity?"

"Yes, his daughter, Mrs. Dr. Charles Johnson, now resides in town."

Correspondence.

DOVER, Sanpete County, June 6th, 1881.

Editor Deseret News:

It has always been a pleasure to me to chronicle the ultimate success of our brethren in an arduous undertakings, hence this communication.

West of the Sevier River running parallel with Fayette and Gunnison is a tract of fine arable land, some 12 miles in length, and averaging 1½ miles in breadth, and to which is now given the name of Dover. Many years ago, and at intervals since, parties of Saints endeavored to make settlements thereon and take out water from the river, but failed, and so abandoned the enterprise. But some three years ago about 20 families from Salt Lake City (mine with the rest), Bear Lake and Utah counties, joined hands and determined, if it were at all possible, to get out the water. They selected and entered their respective quarter sections of land and started to build a canal of the following dimensions: 12 miles long, 12 feet broad and 2 feet deep. With heart and will they progressed with the work, but found at the end of the first year that the canal was far from completion, owing to the small number of hands employed on the work. The brethren's supply of food, etc., was running short, and there was no way open to replenish their store. I am sorry to say, they were ridiculed by some, yet for all they started to the work again early in the following spring. Some of the brethren went to work on the railroad, so as to obtain means to support their families. When the canal builders finished their work for the season and turned the water into the canal in order to test it, they, to their great dismay, found that about six miles above the dam the water refused to flow, owing to an error in the survey. This was a great hardship to the brethren, as they were depending on raising a crop the following season, their means being entirely exhausted. Yet for all this they stuck nobly to their work, having engaged a competent surveyor—John Hougaard of Manti—to re-survey the canal, and (to abbreviate) at last their labor has been crowned with success, for now the canal is full of water running its entire length, and you may rest assured we are delighted and thankful.

Ours is a motley community comprising American, English, Scotch, Irish, Swiss, Welsh and Scandinavian nationalities.

Our next move is to build a meeting and school house and if the authorities think proper to form us into a ward with proper officers we shall be thankful. We also intend to seek the aid of the county officials to lay out our roads and to build us a bridge across the river which at present locks us in twice a year, viz: winter and summer. In summer we cannot cross the river on account of the floods, and in winter it is very dangerous, if not impossible, to cross when the ice is forming and breaking up.

We all feel well and are sanguine as to the future, desiring to live together in peace and unity to help build God's Kingdom up here on earth, and give thanks to Him for His goodness to us at all times.

Yours, etc.,
HUGH. KNOUGH.

FOR SALE.
THE NEW EDITION DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS at $1.00, $1.25, $2.00 and $2.25, at DESERET NEWS OFFICE.

5
EXPERIENCED
SHOE FITTERS & MACHINISTS,
Wanted at Z. C. M. I. Shoe Factory. d169 tf

NOTICE.
A MEETING OF THE STOCKHOLDERS of the Deseret Telegraph Company will be held at President John Taylor's Office, Salt Lake City, U. T., on Saturday, June 18, 1881, at 11 a.m., for the purpose of electing a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Nine Directors, to serve during the ensuing two years.
W. B. DOUGALL,
Secretary.
Salt Lake City, Utah, June 9th, 1881. d167 lt sw10 lt w20 lt

FOURTH OF JULY
—IN—
SAN FRANCISCO!
—AN—
EXCURSION
Party will start from Ogden on JUNE 30th, going direct through, any one returning at pleasure, with stop-over privileges on return, within limit of Ticket time, JULY 23rd.
A limited number of Tickets will be sold at
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