

Comments on Doctrine & Covenants 3

Section three recounts the Lord's comments to Smith regarding the loss of the 116 manuscript pages which contained Mormon's abridgement of the book of Lehi. Smith apparently translated all of Mormon's abridgement from Lehi to Benjamin, lent only that portion which dealt with Lehi to Martin Harris and was subsequently commanded by the Lord to publish the small record of Nephi in the place of that which had already been translated. See my comments on Words of Mormon for more discussion on this.

1 THE works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. 2 For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round. 3 Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men; 4 For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.

v1-4 A general policy statement of sorts where the Lord indicates that regardless of the actions of mortals or the adversary His work will be accomplished. Verses 1-2 contrast v. 3-4 with the Lord's works not being frustrated opposing man's being frustrated.

v1 "The works...designs...purposes of God", in this case referring to the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, cp. v. 16, 10:43 and 11:9 where Smith is said to be assisting in bringing the work forth.

v4 This verse indicates that a spiritual person may fall from grace if they allow pride to creep in, cp. Ezek. 30:8-20, Matt. 7:21-23. It also indicates that pride is the reason that humans are not like God as described in v. 2.

5 Behold, you have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember also the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them. 6 And behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. 7 For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words-- 8 Yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his

arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble. 9 Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall. 10 But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work; 11 Except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift. 12 And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred into the hands of a wicked man, 13 who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. 14 And this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season-- 15 For thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning.

v5-15 Text specifically addressing Smith and the incident in question.

v7-8 It would appear from the text that Smith was hoping to persuade at least some people to his favor and possibly dissuade some of his critics by releasing the manuscript.

v12 "a wicked man", cp. 10:6-7.

v15 "thy director", this usage is unique and only otherwise applied to the Liahona. This term would have been particularly poignant to Smith at this time as the record of Lehi surely would have described the Liahona to some degree, and Smith lost that record by failing to heed the Director. Assuming the book of Lehi was reasonably similar in content to Nephi's accounts there would have been the account of the various rebellions against the Liahona and their subsequent failures to make progress in their journey, etc. Only after they repented did the Liahona work again. Thus, the Lord is drawing a correlation between two instances of rebellion and indicating to Smith that so long as he shapes up, his ultimate goal will be reached.

16 Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people-- 17 And to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers-- 18 And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the

Nephites, because of their iniquities and their abominations. 19 And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records--that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; 20 And that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen.

v16-20 The Lord's purpose in bringing the BofM forward is to bring the knowledge of the Savior to the natural remnants of Israel. See 10:44-56 for the purpose of the plates expounded. The primary target of the BofM is the natural remnants of Lehi, cf. Mormon 7:1, Moroni 10:1.

v16 This one verse effectively summarizes the concepts of 1 Ne. 13 and 2 Ne. 29.

"Jews", using the Isaianic concept of Jews, meaning Israel in general and not exclusively the literal descendants of the tribe of Judah, cp. 2. Ne. 29:5, 2 Ne. 30:4.

"my people", i.e. Israel in general (cf. 3 Ne. 16:8-15) and the descendants of Lehi in specific.

v17 Even though the Nephites were culturally annihilated, the lineage of Nephi was not annihilated because some few defected to the Lamanites, cf. Mormon 6:15.

v19 For the promises the Lord made, see my comments on D&C 2:2.

Historical Material Pertaining to Doctrine & Covenants 3

The first excerpt is Smith's recounting of what transpired with Harris some years later in a public periodical. The second excerpt is a historical overview with a little quote by Smith concerning Martin Harris' initial faithfulness. The third is the preface to the first edition Book of Mormon, which comments briefly on the loss of the manuscript. The fourth excerpt is Smith's brief and surprisingly undetailed comments regarding the loss of the manuscript, choosing instead to comment moreso on Martin's interview with Anthon. Perhaps his embarrassment over the matter caused the brevity in comment. The fourth excerpt is from Smith's mother's comments on the loss of the manuscript and are very detailed.

The fourth and most revealing excerpt starts with the latter part of chapter 23 of that book and gives a rather unflattering review of the character of Martin Harris' wife. Chapter 24 covers the events surrounding the loaning and the loss of the manuscript from Joseph's point of view. Chapter 25 then backtracks somewhat to cover the events leading up to the loss of the manuscript apparently as told by Martin Harris. Chapter 26 then covers the subsequent events to the loss of the manuscript and those leading up to the revelation of the text of D&C 3.

The single point of most interest in Mother Smith's account is the conclusion it was none other than Martin Harris' wife who had stolen the 116 pages and conspired again Joseph.

Excerpt from Times & Seasons

Mr. Harris having returned from this tour he left me and went home to Palmyra, arranged his affairs and returned again to my house about the twelfth of April, eighteen hundred and twenty eight, and commenced writing for me, while I translated from the plates, which we continued until the fourteenth of June following, by which times he had written one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript on foolscap paper. Some time after Mr. Harris had begun to write for me he began to tease me to give him liberty to carry the writings home and shew them, and desired of me that I would enquire of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim if he might not do so. I did enquire, and the answer was that he must not. However, he was not satisfied with this answer, and desired that I should enquire again. I did so, and the answer was as before. Still he could not be contented, but insisted that I should enquire once more. After much solicitation I again enquired of the Lord, and permission was granted him to have the writings on certain conditions, which were, that he shew them only to his brother Preserved Harris, his own wife, his father, and his mother, and a Mrs. Cobb, a sister to his wife. In

accordance with this last answer I required of him that he should bind himself in a covenant to me in the most solemn manner, that he would not do otherwise than had been directed. He did so. He bound himself as I required of him, took the writings and went his way.

Notwithstanding however the great restrictions which he had been laid under, and the solemnity of the covenant which he had made with me, he did shew them to others, and by stratagem they got them away from him, and they never have been recovered nor obtained back again unto this day. (Joseph Smith, Times & Seasons, Vol. 3, pages 785-786, May 16, 1842)

Excerpt from Joseph Smith and the Doctrine and Covenants

Moroni continued to tutor the young prophet for four years. After Joseph Smith obtained the gold plates from the angel in September 1827, persecution intensified. Consequently, in December, Joseph and Emma moved to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and located near her parents' home. There Joseph began translating the Book of Mormon with Emma serving as scribe. In February 1828, Martin Harris, a Palmyra farmer who had previously befriended and assisted the Prophet, traveled to Harmony to personally help with the work. In that same month, Martin also journeyed to New York City, where an ancient prophecy was fulfilled (see Joseph Smith-History 1:64-65).

A relatively unknown history written by Joseph Smith in 1832 points out that because of Martin's faith and his assisting Joseph in the move to Harmony, "the Lord appeared unto him in a vision and shewed unto him his marvilous work which he was about to do and <he> imediately came to Su[s]quehanna and said the Lord had shown him that he must go to new York City with some of the c<h>aracters so we proceeded to copyy some of them and he took his Journy to the Eastern Cittys and to the Learned <saying> read this I pray thee and the learned said I cannot but if he would bring the plates they would read it but the Lord had fo<r>bid it and he returned to me and gave them to <me to> translate and I said... [I] cannot for I am not learned, but the Lord had prepared... spectacles for to read the Book therefore I commenced translating the char=acters and thus the Prop[h]icy of Is<ai>ah was fulfilled which is written in the 29 chapter concerning the book" (Jessee, Personal Writings, pp. 7-8).

In April 1828, Martin arranged his business affairs in Palmyra, returned to Harmony, and became a scribe for Joseph Smith. By June 14, the Prophet had dictated 116 pages of manuscript. Martin, on three separate occasions, asked Joseph for permission to take the manuscript to show to relatives and friends in Palmyra. The first two times, the Lord denied the request, but the third time granted it, if Martin would show the

writings only to five specified members of his immediate family. "In accordance with this last answer," Joseph recorded, "I required of him that he should bind himself in a covenant to me in a most solemn manner that he would not do otherwise than had been directed. He did so. He bound himself as I required of him, took the writings, and went his way. Notwithstanding, however, the great restrictions which he had been laid under, and the solemnity of the covenant which he had made with me, he did show them to others, and by stratagem they got them away from him, and they never have been recovered unto this day" (History of the Church, 1:21). (Milton V. Backman, Jr, and Richard O. Cowan, Joseph Smith and the Doctrine and Covenants, pages 8-10)

Preface to the First Edition Book of Mormon

PREFACE.

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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 has put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary to 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 behold ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. Wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me

respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New-York.

Excerpt from History of the Church

At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the Breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.

I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible. But by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the [p.19] second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.

The excitement, however, still continued, and rumor with her thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating falsehoods about my father's family, and about myself. If I were to relate a thousandth part of them, it would fill up volumes. The persecution, however, became so intolerable that I was under the necessity of leaving Manchester, and going with my wife to Susquehanna county, in the state of Pennsylvania.

While preparing to start, being very poor, and the persecution so heavy upon us that there was no probability that we would ever be otherwise, -in the midst of our afflictions we found a friend in a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris,² who came to us and gave me fifty dollars to assist us on our journey. Mr. Harris was a resident of Palmyra township, Wayne county, in the state of New York, and a farmer of respectability. By this timely aid was I enabled to reach the place of my destination in Pennsylvania; and immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated

some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father, in the month of December, and the February following.

Some time in this month of February, the aforementioned Mr. Martin Harris came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates, and started with them to the city of New York. For what took place relative to him and the characters, I refer to his own account of [p.20] the circumstances, as he related them to me after his return, which was as follows:

I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyric, and Arabic; and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

He then said to me, "Let me see that certificate." I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying, that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, "I cannot read a sealed book." I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation.³

Mr. Harris, having returned from his tour, left me and went home to Palmyra, arranged his affairs, and returned again to my house about the 12th of April, 1828, and commenced writing for me while I translated from the plates, which we continued until the 14th of June following, [p.21] by which time he had written one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript on foolscap paper. Some time after Mr. Harris had begun to write for me, he began to

importune me to give him liberty to carry the writings home and show them; and desired of me that I would inquire of the Lord, through the Urim and Thummim, if he might not do so. I did inquire, and the answer was that he must not. However, he was not satisfied with this answer, and desired that I should inquire again. I did so, and the answer was as before. Still he could not be contented, but insisted that I should inquire once more. After much solicitation I again inquired of the Lord, and permission was granted him to have the writings on certain conditions; which were, that he show them only to his brother, Preserved Harris, his own wife, his father and his mother, and a Mrs. Cobb, a sister to his wife. In accordance with this last answer, I required of him that he should bind himself in a covenant to me in a most solemn manner that he would not do otherwise than had been directed. He did so. He bound himself as I required of him, took the writings, and went his way. Notwithstanding, however, the great restrictions which he had been laid under, and the solemnity of the covenant which he had made with me, he did show them to others, and by stratagem they got them away from him, and they never have been recovered unto this day.

In the meantime, while Martin Harris was gone with the writings, I went to visit my father's family at Manchester. I continued there for a short season, and then returned to my place in Pennsylvania. Immediately after my return home, I was walking out a little distance, when, behold, the former heavenly messenger appeared and handed to me the Urim and Thummim again for it had been taken from me in consequence of my having wearied the Lord in asking for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings, which he lost by transgression-and I inquired of the Lord through it, and obtained the following:

[text of D&C 3 quoted]

(Joseph Smith, History of the Church, Vol. 1, Ch. 3, pages 18-21)

Excerpt from History of Joseph Smith, by his Mother

With the view of commencing the work of translation and carrying it forward as speedily as circumstances would permit, Joseph came to me one afternoon and requested me to go to this Mr. Harris and inform him that he had got the plates and that he desired to see Mr. Harris concerning the matter. This, indeed, was an errand which I much disliked as Mr. Harris' wife was a very peculiar woman, one that was naturally of a very jealous disposition; besides this, she was rather dull of hearing and when anything was said that she did not hear distinctly she suspected that it was some secret which was designedly kept from her. So I told Joseph that I would rather not go, unless I could have the privilege of speaking to her first upon the subject. To this he consented and I went according to his request.

On arriving at Mr. Harris', I cautiously detailed the particulars with regard to Joseph's finding the plates, so far as wisdom dictated and necessity demanded in order to satisfy Mrs. Harris' curiosity. However, she did not wait for me to get through with my story before she commenced urging upon me a considerable amount of money that she had at her command. Her husband always allowed her to keep a private purse in order to satisfy her singular disposition, and it was this private money that she wished me to receive. She also had a sister living with her who desired me to receive an amount of money, I think some seventy-five dollars, to assist in getting the Record translated.

I told her that I came on no such business, that I did not want her money and that Joseph would attend to his own affairs; but, that I would like to talk to Mr. Harris a moment and then return home, as my family would soon be expecting me. Yet, notwithstanding all this, she was determined to assist in the business, for she said she knew that we should want money and she could spare two hundred dollars as well as not.

After detaining me a few minutes she went with me to her husband and I told him that I wished to speak to him. He replied that he was not going to stop his work, for he was just laying the last brick in his hearth.

"You see," said he, "this is the last work I have to do on the house, and it is the last work I shall do about the house, or on the farm, in one year. And when this is done I am going to hire a hand to work a year for me, as I shall travel that length of time before I shall settle myself at home again."

After completing the work in which he was engaged, he left the house, but was absent only a short time. On returning, he came to me and said, "Now I am a free man--my hands are altogether untied--I can come and go and do as I please."

I related, in short, the errand on which I had come. He said that he would see Joseph in the course of a few days. At this his wife exclaimed, "Yes, and I am coming to see him, too, and I will be there on Tuesday afternoon, and will stop over night."

Accordingly, when Tuesday afternoon arrived, Mrs. Harris made her appearance and as soon as she was well seated she began to importune my son relative to the truth of what he had said concerning the Record, declaring that if he really had any plates, she would see them, and that she was determined to help him publish them.

He told her she was mistaken--that she could not see them, for he was not permitted to exhibit them to any one except those whom the Lord should appoint to testify of them. "And, in relation to assistance," he observed, "I always prefer dealing with men, rather than their wives."

This highly displeased Mrs. Harris, for she considered herself altogether superior to her husband and she continued her

importunities. She would say, "Now, Joseph, are you not telling me a lie? Can you look full in my eye and say before God that you have in reality found a Record, as you pretend?"

To this Joseph replied, rather indifferently, "Why, yes, Mrs. Harris, I would as soon look you in the face and say so as not, if that will be any gratification to you."

Then said she, "Joseph, I will tell you what I will do, if I can get a witness that you speak the truth, I will believe all you say about the matter and I shall want to do something about the translation--I mean to help you any way."

This closed the evening's conversation. The next morning, soon after she arose, she related a very remarkable dream which she said she had had during the night. It ran about as follows: She said that a personage appeared to her who told her that as she had disputed the servant of the Lord, and said his word was not to be believed, and had also asked him many improper questions, she had done that which was not right in the sight of God. After which he said to her, "Behold, here are the plates, look upon them and believe."

After giving us an account of her dream, she described the Record very minutely, then told us that she had made up her mind in relation to the course which she intended to pursue; namely, that she had in her possession twenty-eight dollars which she received from her mother just before she died, while she was on her death bed, and that Joseph should accept of it. If he would, he might give his note, but he should certainly take it upon some terms.

The last proposal Joseph accepted in order to get rid of further importunity upon the subject.

Soon afterwards, Alva Hale, Joseph's brother-in-law, came to our house from Pennsylvania, for the purpose of moving Joseph to his father-in-law's, as word had been sent to them that Joseph desired to move there as soon as he could settle up his business. During the short interval of Alva's stay with us, he and Joseph were one day in Palmyra, at a public-house, transacting some business. As they were thus engaged, Mr. Harris came in: he stepped immediately up to my son and taking him by the hand, said, "How do you do, Mr. Smith." After which he took a bag of silver from his pocket and said again, "Here, Mr. Smith, is fifty dollars; I give this to you to do the Lord's work with; no, I give it to the Lord for his own work."

"No," said Joseph, "We will give you a note, Mr. Hale, I presume, will sign it with me." "Yes," said Alva, "I will sign it."

Mr. Harris, however, insisted that he would give the money to the Lord, and called those present to witness the fact that he gave it freely and did not demand any compensation, that it was for the purpose of helping Mr. Smith to do the Lord's work. And

as I have been informed, many were present on that occasion who witnessed the same circumstance.

Joseph in a short time arranged his affairs and was ready for the journey. The Record and breast-plate, for security, he nailed up in a box and then put them into a strong cask; and after filling the cask with beans, headed it up again.

When it became generally known that Joseph was about moving to Pennsylvania, a mob of fifty men collected themselves together, and they went to Dr. McIntyre and requested him to take the command of the company, stating that they were resolved on following "Joe Smith" and taking his "Gold Bible" from him. The doctor's ideas and feelings did not altogether harmonize with theirs, and he told them they were a pack of devilish fools, and to go home and mind their own business; that if Joseph Smith had any business of that sort to attend to, he was capable of doing it, and that it would be better for them to busy themselves about that which more concerned them.

After this a quarrel arose among them respecting who should be captain, and it ran so high that it broke up the expedition.

When Joseph had had a sufficient time to accomplish the journey and transcribe some of the Egyptian characters, it was agreed that Martin Harris should follow him--and that he (Martin) should take the characters to the East, and, on his way, he was to call on all the professed linguists, in order to give them an opportunity to display their talents in giving a translation of the characters.

When Mrs. Harris heard of what her husband had in contemplation, she resolved to accompany him; but he, concluding that it would be better to go without her, left quite suddenly without her knowledge, in company with my son Hyrum.

Mrs. Harris soon missed her husband, and came to me for the purpose of ascertaining if I knew where he was. I told her what he had said concerning his leaving, suppressing, however, his remarks pertaining to herself.

On hearing this, she became highly exasperated, and charged me with planning the whole affair. I protested against it, asserting that I had nothing to do with the plan, nor the execution of it. Furthermore, that the business of a house, which was the natural cares of a woman, was all that I attempted to dictate, or interfere with, unless it was by my husband's or son's request.

Mrs. Harris then observed that she had property, and knew how to take care of it, which she would convince me of.

"Now, stop" said I, "do you know that we have never asked you for money or property? and that if we had been disposed to take advantage of your liberality, could we not have obtained at least, two hundred and seventy dollars of your cash?" She answered in the affirmative, notwithstanding she went home in a

great rage, determined to have satisfaction for the treatment which she had received.

In a short time Mr. Harris returned, and his wife's anger kindled afresh at his presence, insomuch that she prepared a separate bed and room for him, which room she refused to enter.

A young man by the name of Dikes, had been paying some attention to Miss Lucy, Martin Harris' oldest daughter. To this young man Mr. Harris was quite attached, and his daughter Lucy was by no means opposed to him; but Mrs. Harris, of course, was decidedly upon the negative. However, just at this crisis, a scheme entered her brain which materially changed her deportment to Mr. Dikes. She told him, if he would manage to get the Egyptian characters from Mr. Harris' possession, and procure a room in Palmyra for the purpose of transcribing them, and then bring her the transcript, that she would consent to his marriage with her daughter Lucy.

To this, Mr. Dikes cheerfully consented, and suffice it to say he succeeded to her satisfaction, and thus received the promised reward.

When Mr. Harris began to make preparations to start for Pennsylvania the second time, with the view of writing for Joseph, his wife told him that she had fully decreed in her heart to accompany him. Mr. Harris, having no particular objections, informed her that she might do so; that she might go and stay one or two weeks, and then he would bring her home again, after which he would return, and resume his writing for Joseph. To this she cheerfully agreed. But Mr. Harris little suspected what he had to encounter by this move. The first time he exhibited the characters before named, she took out of her pocket an exact copy of the same; and told those present, that "Joe Smith" was not the only one who was in possession of this great curiosity, that she had the same characters, and, they were quite as genuine as those shown by Mr. Harris. This course she continued to pursue, until they arrived at Joseph's.

As soon as she arrived there, she informed him that her object in coming, was to see the plates, and that she would never leave until she had accomplished it. Accordingly, without delay, she commenced ransacking every nook and corner about the house--chests, trunks, cupboards, etc.; consequently, Joseph was under the necessity of removing both the breast-plate and the Record from the house, and secreting them elsewhere. Not finding them in the house, she concluded that Joseph had buried them, and the next day she commenced searching out of doors, which she continued to do until about two o'clock p.m. She then came in rather ill-natured; after warming herself a little, she asked Joseph's wife if there were snakes in that country in the winter. She replied in the negative. Mrs. Harris then said, "I have been walking round in the woods to look at the situation of your

place, and as I turned round to come home, a tremendous black snake stuck up his head before me, and commenced hissing at me."

The woman was so perplexed and disappointed in all her undertakings, that she left the house and took lodgings during her stay in Pennsylvania with a near neighbor, to whom she stated that the day previous she had been hunting for the plates, and that, after a tedious search, she at length came to a spot where she judged, from the appearance of things, they must be buried; but upon stooping down to scrape away the snow and leaves, in order to ascertain the fact, she encountered a horrible black snake which gave her a terrible fright, and she ran with all possible speed to the house.

While this woman remained in the neighborhood, she did all that lay in her power to injure Joseph in the estimation of his neighbors--telling them that he was a grand imposter, and, that by his specious pretentions, he had seduced her husband into the belief that he (Joseph Smith) was some great one, merely through a design upon her husband's property.

When she returned home, being about two weeks after her arrival in Harmony, the place where Joseph resided, she endeavored to dissuade her husband from taking any further part in the publication of the Record; however, Mr. Harris paid no attention to her, but returned and continued writing.

Immediately after Martin Harris left home for Pennsylvania, his wife went from place to place, and from house to house, telling her grievances, and declaring that Joseph Smith was practicing a deception upon the people, which was about to strip her of all that she possessed, and that she was compelled to deposit a few things away from home in order to secure them. So she carried away her furniture, linen, and bedding; also other moveable articles, until she nearly stripped the premises of everything that could conduce either to comfort or convenience, depositing them with those of her friends and acquaintances, in whom she reposed sufficient confidence to assure her of their future safety.

Chapter 24

Martin Harris, having written some one hundred and sixteen pages for Joseph, asked permission of my son to carry the manuscript home with him, in order to let his wife read it, as he hoped it might have a salutary effect upon her feelings.

Joseph was willing to gratify his friend as far as he could consistently, and he inquired of the Lord to know if he might do as Martin Harris had requested, but was refused. With this, Mr. Harris was not altogether satisfied, and, at his urgent request, Joseph inquired again, but received a second refusal. Still, Martin Harris persisted as before, and Joseph applied again, but

the last answer was not like the two former ones. In this, the Lord permitted Martin Harris to take the manuscript home with him, on condition that he would exhibit it to none, save five individuals whom he had mentioned, and who belonged to his own family.

Mr. Harris was delighted with this, and bound himself in a written covenant of the most solemn nature, that he would strictly comply with the injunctions which he had received. Which being done, he took the manuscript and went home.

Joseph did not suspect but that his friend would keep his faith, consequently, he gave himself no uneasiness with regard to the matter.

Shortly after Mr. Harris left, Joseph's wife became the mother of a son, which, however, remained with her but a short time before it was snatched from her arms by the hand of death. And the mother seemed, for some time, more like sinking with her infant into the mansion of the dead, than remaining with her husband among the living. Her situation was such for two weeks, that Joseph slept not an hour in undisturbed quiet. At the expiration of this time she began to recover, but as Joseph's anxiety about her began to subside, another cause of trouble forced itself upon his mind. Mr. Harris had been absent nearly three weeks, and Joseph had received no intelligence whatever from him, which was altogether aside of the arrangement when they separated. But Joseph kept his feelings from his wife, fearing that if she became acquainted with them it might agitate her too much.

In a few days, however, she mentioned the subject herself, and desired her husband to go and get her mother to stay with her, while he should repair to Palmyra, for the purpose of learning the cause of Mr. Harris' absence as well as silence. At first Joseph objected, but seeing her so cheerful, and so willing to have him leave home, he finally consented.

He set out in the first stage that passed for Palmyra, and, when he was left to himself, he began to contemplate the course which Martin had taken, and the risk which he (Joseph) had run in letting the manuscript go out of his hands--for it could not be obtained again, in case Martin had lost it through transgression, except by the power of God, which was something Joseph could hardly hope for--and that, by persisting in his entreaties to the Lord, he had perhaps fallen into transgression, and thereby lost the manuscript. When, I say, he began to contemplate these things, they troubled his spirit, and his soul was moved with fearful apprehensions. And, although he was now nearly worn out, sleep fled from his eyes, neither had he any desire for food, for he felt that he had done wrong, and how great his condemnation was he did not know.

Only one passenger was in the stage besides himself: this

man observing Joseph's gloomy appearance, inquired the cause of his affliction, and offered to assist him if his services would be acceptable. Joseph thanked him for his kindness, and mentioned that he had been watching some time with a sick wife and child, that the child had died, and that his wife was still very low; but refrained from giving any further explanation. Nothing more passed between them upon this subject, until Joseph was about leaving the stage; at which time he remarked, that he still had twenty miles further to travel on foot that night, it being then about ten o'clock. To this the stranger objected, saying, "I have watched you since you first entered the stage, and I know that you have neither slept nor eaten since that time, and you shall not go on foot twenty miles alone this night; for, if you must go, I will be your company. Now tell me what can be the trouble that makes you thus dispirited?"

Joseph replied, about as before--that he had left his wife in so low a state of health, that he feared he should not find her alive when he returned; besides, he had buried his first and only child but a few days previous. This was true, though there was another trouble lying at his heart, which he dared not to mention.

The stranger then observed, "I feel to sympathize with you, and I fear that your constitution, which is evidently not strong, will be inadequate to support you. You will be in danger of falling asleep in the forest, and of meeting with some awful disaster."

Joseph again thanked the gentleman for his kindness, and, leaving the stage, they proceeded together. When they reached our house it was nearly daylight. The stranger said he was under the necessity of leading Joseph the last four miles by the arm; for nature was too much exhausted to support him any longer, and he would fall asleep as he was walking along, every few minutes, towards the last of this distance.

On entering our house, the stranger remarked that he had brought our son through the forest, because he had insisted on coming, that he was sick, and needed rest, as well as refreshment, and that he ought to have some pepper tea to warm his stomach. After thus directing us, relative to our son, he said, that when we had attended to Joseph he would thank us for a little breakfast for himself, as he was in a haste to be on his journey again.

When Joseph had taken a little nourishment, according to the directions of the stranger, he requested us to send immediately for Mr. Harris. This we did without delay. And when we had given the stranger his breakfast, we commenced preparing breakfast for the family; and we supposed that Mr. Harris would be there, as soon as it was ready, to eat with us, for he generally came in such haste when he was sent for. At eight o'clock we set the

victuals on the table, as we were expecting him every moment. We waited till nine, and he came not--till ten, and he was not there--till eleven, still he did not make his appearance. But at half past twelve we saw him walking with a slow and measured tread towards the house, his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the ground. On coming to the gate, he stopped, instead of passing through, and got upon the fence, and sat there some time with his hat drawn over his eyes. At length he entered the house. Soon after which we sat down to the table, Mr. Harris with the rest. He took up his knife and fork as if he were going to use them, but immediately dropped them. Hyrum, observing this, said "Martin, why do you not eat; are you sick?" Upon which Mr. Harris pressed his hands upon his temples, and cried out in a tone of deep anguish, "Oh, I have lost my soul! I have lost my soul!"

Joseph who had not expressed his fears till now, sprang from the table, exclaiming, "Martin, have you lost that manuscript? Have you broken your oath, and brought down condemnation upon my head as well as your own?"

"Yes; it is gone," replied Martin, "and I know not where."

"Oh, my God!" said Joseph, clinching his hands. "All is lost! all is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned--it is I who tempted the wrath of God. I should have been satisfied with the first answer which I received from the Lord; for he told me that it was not safe to let the writing go out of my possession." He wept and groaned, and walked the floor continually.

At length he told Martin to go back and search again.

"No"; said Martin, "it is all in vain; for I have ripped open beds and pillows; and I know it is not there."

"Then must I," said Joseph, "return with such a tale as this? I dare not do it. And how shall I appear before the Lord? Of what rebuke am I not worthy from the angel of the Most High?"

I besought him not to mourn so, for perhaps the Lord would forgive him, after a short season of humiliation and repentance. But what could I do to comfort him, when he saw all the family in the same situation of mind as himself; for sobs and groans, and the most bitter lamentations filled the house. However, Joseph was more distressed than the rest, as he better understood the consequences of disobedience. And he continued pacing back and forth, meantime weeping and grieving, until about sunset, when, by persuasion, he took a little nourishment.

The next morning, he set out for home. We parted with heavy hearts, for it now appeared that all which we had so fondly anticipated, and which had been the source of so much secret gratification, had in a moment fled, and fled forever.

I will now give you a sketch of the proceedings of Martin Harris during the time he was absent from Joseph.

After leaving Joseph, he arrived at home with the manuscript in safety. Soon after, he exhibited the manuscript to his wife and family. His wife was so pleased with it, that she gave him the privilege of locking it up in her own set of drawers, which was a special favor, for she had never before this allowed him even the privilege of looking into them. After he had shown the manuscript to those who had a right, according to his oath, to see it, he went with his wife to visit one of her relatives, who lived some ten or fifteen miles distant.

After remaining with them a short time, he returned home, but his wife declined accompanying him back. Soon after his return, a very particular friend of his made him a visit, to whom he related all that he knew concerning the Record. The man's curiosity was much excited, and, as might be expected, he earnestly desired to see the manuscript. Martin was so anxious to gratify his friend, that, although it was contrary to his obligation, he went to the drawer to get the manuscript, but the key was gone. He sought for it some time, but could not find it. Resolved, however, to carry his purpose into execution, he picked the lock, and, in so doing, considerably injured his wife's bureau. He then took out the manuscript, and, after showing it to this friend, he removed it to his own set of drawers, where he could have it at his command. Passing by his oath, he showed it to any good friend that happened to call on him.

When Mrs. Harris returned, and discovered the marred state of her bureau, her irascible temper was excited to the utmost pitch, and an intolerable storm ensued, which descended with the greatest violence upon the devoted head of her husband.

Having once made a sacrifice of his conscience, Mr. Harris no longer regarded its scruples; so he continued to exhibit the writings, until a short time before Joseph arrived, to any one whom he regarded as prudent enough to keep the secret, except our family, but we were not allowed to set our eyes upon them.

For a short time previous to Joseph's arrival, Mr. Harris had been otherwise engaged, and thought but little about the manuscript. When Joseph sent for him, he went immediately to the drawer where he had left it, but, behold it was gone! He asked his wife where it was. She solemnly averred that she did not know anything respecting it. He then made a faithful search throughout the house, as before related.

The manuscript has never been found; and there is no doubt but Mrs. Harris took it from the drawer, with the view of retaining it until another translation should be given, then to alter the original translation, for the purpose of showing a discrepancy between them, and thus make the whole appear to be a deception.

It seemed as though Martin Harris, for his transgression, suffered temporally as well as spiritually. The same day on which the foregoing circumstances took place, a dense fog spread itself over his fields, and blighted his wheat while in the blow, so that he lost about two-thirds of his crop, whilst those fields which lay only on the opposite side of the road, received no injury whatever.

I well remember that day of darkness, both within and without. To us, at least, the heavens seemed clothed with blackness, and the earth shrouded with gloom. I have often said within myself, that if a continual punishment, as severe as that which we experienced on that occasion, were to be inflicted upon the most wicked characters who ever stood upon the footstool of the Almighty--if even their punishment were no greater than that, I should feel to pity their condition.

Chapter 26

For nearly two months after Joseph returned to his family, in Pennsylvania, we heard nothing from him, and becoming anxious about him, Mr. Smith and myself set off to make him a visit. When we came within three-quarters of a mile of the house, Joseph started to meet us, telling his wife, as he left, that father and mother were coming. When he met us, his countenance wore so pleasant an aspect, that I was convinced he had something agreeable to communicate with regard to the work in which he was engaged. When I entered, the first thing which attracted my attention was a red morocco trunk, lying on Emma's bureau, which Joseph shortly informed me contained the Urim and Thummim, and the plates. And, in the evening, he gave us the following relation of what had transpired since our separation:

"On leaving you," said Joseph, "I returned immediately home. Soon after my arrival, I commenced humbling myself in mighty prayer before the Lord, and, as I was pouring out my soul in supplication to God, that if possible I might obtain mercy at his hands and be forgiven of all that I had done contrary to his will, an angel stood before me, and answered me, saying, that I had sinned in delivering the manuscript into the hands of a wicked man, and, as I had ventured to become responsible for his faithfulness, I would of necessity have to suffer the consequences of his indiscretion, and I must now give up the Urim and Thummim into his (the angel's) hands.

"This I did as I was directed, and as I handed them to him, he remarked, 'If you are very humble and penitent, it may be you will receive them again; if so,

it will be on the twenty-second of next September.'"

Joseph then related a revelation which he received soon after the angel visited him. A part of which is as follows:

[text of D&C 3:5-15 quoted]

For the sake of brevity, I have omitted part of this revelation, but the reader will find it in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 3:5-16.

I will now return to Joseph's recital.

"After the angel left me," said he, "I continued my supplications to God, without cessation, and on the twenty-second of September, I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the Urim and Thummim, with which I have again commenced translating, and Emma writes for me, but the angel said that the Lord would send me a scribe, and I trust his promise will be verified. The angel seemed pleased with me when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim, and he told me that the Lord loved me, for my faithfulness and humility."

A few months after Joseph received them, he inquired of the Lord, and obtained the following revelation:

[quotes text of D&C 10:1-13]

While on this visit, we became acquainted with Emma's father, whose name was Isaac Hale; also his family, which consisted of his wife, Elizabeth; his sons, Jesse, David, Alva, Isaac Ward, and Reuben; and his daughters, Phebe and Elizabeth.

They were an intelligent and highly respectable family. They were pleasantly situated, and lived in good style, in the town of Harmony, on the Susquehannah river, within a short distance of the place where Joseph resided.

The time of our visit with them, we passed very agreeably, and returned home relieved of a burden which was almost insupportable, and our present joy far overbalanced all our former grief. (Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith by his Mother, pages 114-137)

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