

far, but in the midst of this light about as far off as he sits (pointing to John C. Whitmer, sitting a few feet from him), there appeared, as it were, a table with many records or plates upon it besides the plates of the Book of Mormon; also the sword of Laban, the directors—*i. e.* the ball which Lehi had, and the Interpreters. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God.'

'Elder Pratt then asked, 'Did you see the angel at this time?'

'David Whitmer answered, 'Yes; he stood before us. Our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is strictly and absolutely true, just as it is there written.'''

CHAPTER XIII.

MARTIN HARRIS.

IT is probable that many of our readers have seen Martin Harris.* It is but a few years since he died in our midst. Though his name is signed last to the testimony of the three witnesses he was considerable older than the other two.

Martin Harris was the instrument used by the Lord to enable Joseph to print the Book of Mormon. He supplied the funds necessary to pay the printer. All of this was repaid to him, by Joseph, and as he said, "more too." We mention this because it has been falsely asserted that Joseph made Martin Harris his dupe and never paid back the money he borrowed of him.

Brother Harris was a well-to-do farmer at the time he became acquainted with the Prophet Joseph. He was respected and esteemed by his neighbors, but like all the others who had anything to do with the publication of the Book of

*—Brother M. Harris, accompanied by Elder E. Stevenson reached Ogden on the 29th of August, 1870; he afterwards resided until his death at the home of his son in Smithfield, Cache county.

Mormon, he was assailed with savage bitterness, and accused of numerous sins as soon as it was known that he was a believer in that holy book. He was charged with being visionary, cruel and untruthful, and with having beaten his wife and turned her out of doors.

We will now refer to the testimony of the Kelley brothers, which we quoted when we considered the character of Joseph the Prophet. We found they asked the old residents of Manchester some questions with regard to the reputation of Martin Harris. Those who knew him, invariably spoke well of him. One said, "He was an honorable farmer; he was not very religious before the Book of Mormon was published." Another stated "Harris was an industrious, honest man." A third affirmed "He was an honorable man. He was one of the first men of the town." And so on, one after another denied the calumnies that had been heaped upon the head of this inoffensive, though somewhat peculiar gentleman, whose worst act in the eyes of these neighbors was that he helped Joseph Smith to give the Book of Mormon to the world.

It will be remembered that the testimony of the three witnesses, with regard to the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, is to the effect that "We also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for His voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and He brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates and the engravings thereon." But it must be remembered that this was not the only time that Martin Harris saw the plates. He states that on one occasion he held them on his knee for an hour and a half, and also affirms that "as many of the plates as Joseph Smith translated I handled with my hands, plate after plate." This testimony was given when Harris was not a member of the Church.

Early in the history of the Latter-day Saints Martin Harris became disaffected. He committed grave errors and gave way

to a very unchristian-like spirit. The communion of the Saints was withdrawn from him and he became an outcast to the blessings of the gospel. Thus he remained many years, or more than a third of a century, but in his old age he returned as a wandering sheep to the true fold, and again became a partaker of the gifts and blessings of the everlasting gospel. We will now insert an interview had with him when he was not a member of the Church (in 1853?) and two letters written by him nearly twenty years afterwards, after he had renewed his covenant with the Lord at the waters of baptism.

September 15th, 1853.

"Be it known to all whom this may concern that I, David B. Dille, of Ogden City, Weber county, Salt Lake, *en route* to Great Britain, having business with one Martin Harris, formerly of the Church of Latter-day Saints, and residing at Kirtland, Lake county, Ohio, did personally wait upon him at his residence, and found him sick in bed; and was informed by the said Martin Harris that he had not been able to take any nourishment for the space of three days. This, together with his advanced age, had completely prostrated him. After making my business known to Mr. Harris, and some little conversation with him, the said Martin Harris started up in bed, and, after particularly inquiring concerning the prosperity of the Church, made the following declaration:

"I feel that a spirit has come across me—the old spirit of Mormonism; and I begin to feel as I used to feel; and I will not say—'I won't go to the valley.' Then addressing himself to his wife, he said—'I don't know but that, if you will get me some breakfast, I will get up and eat it.'

"I then addressed Mr. Harris relative to his once high and exalted station in the Church, and his then fallen and afflicted condition. I afterwards put the following questions to Mr. Harris, to which he severally replied with the greatest cheerfulness: 'What do you think of the Book of Mormon? Is it a divine record?'

"Mr. Harris replied: 'I was the right hand man of Joseph Smith, and I know that he was a prophet of God. I know the Book of Mormon is true—and you know that I know that it is true. I know that the plates have been translated by the gift and power of God, for His voice declared it unto us; therefore I know of a surety that the work is true; for did I not at one time hold the plates on my knee an hour and a half, while in conversation with Joseph, when we went to bury them in the woods, that the enemy might not obtain them? Yes, I did. And as many of the plates as Joseph Smith translated,

I handled with my hands, plate after plate. Then, describing their dimensions, he pointed with one of the fingers of his left hand to the back of his right hand and said: 'I should think they were so long,' or about eight inches, 'and about so thick,' or about four inches; 'and each of the plates was thicker than the thickest tin.'

"I then asked Mr. Harris if he ever lost 3,000 dollars by the publishing of the Book of Mormon?

"Mr. Harris said, 'I never lost one cent. Mr. Smith paid me all that I advanced, and more too.' As much as to say he received a portion of the profits accruing from the sale of the books.

"Mr. Harris further said: 'I took a transcript of the characters of the plates to Dr. Anthon, of New York. When I arrived at the house of Professor Anthon, I found him in his office and alone, and presented the transcript to him, and asked him to read it. He said if I would bring the plates, he would assist in the translation. I told him I could not, for they were sealed. Professor Anthon then gave me a certificate certifying that the characters were Arabic, Chaldaic and Egyptian. I then left Dr. Anthon, and was near the door, when he said, 'How did the young man know the plates were there?' I said an angel had shown them to him. Professor Anthon then said, 'Let me see the certificate!' Upon which, I took it from my waistcoat pocket and unsuspectingly gave it to him. He then tore it up in anger, saying, there was no such things as angels now, it was all a hoax. I then went to Dr. Mitchell with the transcript, and he confirmed what Professor Anthon had said.'

"Mr. Harris is about fifty-eight years old, and is on a valuable farm of ninety acres, beautifully situated at Kirtland, Lake county, Ohio."—*Millennial Star*.

"SMITHFIELD, UTAH,

"Nov. 23, 1870.

"*Mr. Emerson,*

SIR:—I received your favor. In reply I will say concerning the plates, I do say that the angel did show to me the plates containing the Book of Mormon. Further, the translation that I carried to Professor Anthon was copied from these same plates; also, that the professor did testify to it being a correct translation. I do firmly believe and do know that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; for without, I know he could not had that gift; neither could he have translated the same. I can give, if you require it, one hundred witnesses to the proof of the Book of Mormon. I defy any man to show me any passage of scripture that I am not posted on or familiar with. I will answer any question you feel like asking

to the best of my knowledge, if you can rely on my testimony of the same. In conclusion, I can say that I arrived in Utah safe, in good health and spirits, considering the long journey. I am quite well at present, and have been, generally speaking, since I arrived. With many respects,

"I remain your humble friend,
"MARTIN HARRIS."

"SMITHFIELD, CACHE CO., UTAH.

"January, 1871.

"To H. Emerson,

DEAR SIR:—Your second letter, dated December, 1870, came duly to hand. I am truly glad to see a spirit of inquiry manifested therein. I reply by a borrowed hand, as my sight has failed me too much to write myself. Your questions:

"Question 1. 'Did you go to England to lecture against Mormonism?'"

"Answer. I answer emphatically, No, I did not. No man ever heard me in any way deny the truth of the Book of Mormon, the administration of the angel that showed me the plates; nor the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, under the administration of Joseph Smith, Jun., the prophet whom the Lord raised up for that purpose in these latter days, that He may show forth His power and glory. The Lord has shown me these things by His Spirit, by the administration of holy angels, and confirmed the same with signs following, step by step, as the work has progressed, for the space of fifty-three years.

The Lord showed me there was no true church upon the face of the earth, none built upon the foundation designed by the Savior, the rock of revelation, as declared to Peter. (*See Matt., xvi., 16-18.*) He also showed me that an angel should come and restore the holy Priesthood again to the earth, and commission His servants again with the holy gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth. (*See Revelation, xiv., 6, 7.*) He further showed me that the time was nigh when He would 'set His hand again the second time to restore the kingdom of Israel, when He would gather the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth,' when He would bring the record of Joseph which was in the hand of Ephraim, and join with the record of Judah, when the two records should become one in the hand of the Lord to accomplish His great work of the last days. (*See Ezekiel, xxxvi., xxxvii.; also Isaiah, xxix.; also Isaiah, lviii. to the end of the book; also Psalms.*)

"Question 2. 'What became of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated?'"

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

“Now, dear sir, examine these scriptures carefully; and should there still be any ambiguity relative to this great work of the last days, write again and we will endeavor to enlighten you on any point relative to this doctrine.

“I am, very respectfully,

“MARTIN HARRIS, SEN.”

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

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

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

with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembled spectacles, only they were larger. Martin said there were not many pages translated while he wrote; after which Oliver Cowdery did the writing.

In concluding this portion of our subject we desire to draw attention to the entire agreement between the witnesses as to the manner in which the plates were translated. If any fraud had been practiced, or there had been a conspiracy to deceive, these witnesses in the lapse of so many years would doubtless have told conflicting stories, especially in regard to minor details. But as it is their statements are harmonious one with the other, their testimony unchangeable and the whole consistent with the narrative of the Prophet Joseph and the condition of things by which they were then surrounded.

CHAPTER XIV.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

WE will now consider for a short time a few of the internal evidences of the genuineness of the Book of Mormon, or the proofs in itself that it is what it claims to be, a record of God's dealings with the former inhabitants of this continent.

Among the more prominent internal evidences of its genuineness may be mentioned:

- 1st. Its historical consistency.
- 2nd. The entire absence of all anachronisms, or confusion in its chronology, and of conflicting statements with regard to history, doctrine or prophecy.
- 3rd. The purity of its doctrines, and their entire harmony with the teachings of our Savior and His inspired servants as recorded in the Bible.
- 4th. Its already fulfilled prophecies.
- 5th. Its harmony with the traditions of the Indian races.