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Introduction to a Study of the Book of Mormon: Prepared Especially for Use in the Schools of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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CHAPTER I.

Joseph Smith's Birth and Lineage—The Prophet's First Vision—"This is My Beloved Son."

Owing to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons, in relation to the rise and progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world—I have been induced to write this history, to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth into possession of

the facts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such facts in my possession. In this history I shall present the various events in relation to this Church, in truth and righteousness, as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now the eighth year since the organization of said Church.

Birth and Ancestry.—I was born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, state of Vermont. My father, Joseph Smith, was born July 12th, 1771, in Topsfield, Essex county, Massachusetts; his father, Asael Smith was born March 7th, 1744, in Topsfield, Massachusetts; his father, Samuel Smith, was born January 26th, 1714, in Topsfield, Massachusetts; his father, Samuel Smith, was born January 26th, 1666, in Topsfield, Massachusetts; his father, Robert Smith, came from England. My father, Joseph Smith, Senior, left the state of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the state of New York, when I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra he moved with his family into Manchester, in the same county of Ontario, his family consisting of eleven souls, namely—my father, Joseph Smith, my mother, Lucy Smith, (whose name, previous to her marriage, was Mack, daughter of Solomon Mack,) my brothers Alvin, (who died November 19th, 1824, in the 27th year of his age,) Hyrum, myself, Samuel Harrison, William, Don Carlos, and my sisters Sophronia, Catherine, and Lucy.

Religious Excitement in Western New York.—Some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some cry-

ing, "Lo here!" and others, "Lo, there!" Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist. For notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased—yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued; priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.

Reflections on Divided Christendom.—I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely—my mother Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia. During this time of great excitement, my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them; but so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong. My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous

in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.

Perplexity of the Prophet.—In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself, what is to be done? Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it? While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse, which reads:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Never did any passage of Scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did; for how to act I did not know and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passage of Scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible. At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to “ask of God,” concluding that if He gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture. So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

Effort of Satan to Destroy the Prophet.—After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go,

having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

The First Vision.—It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said—pointing to the other—

“This is My Beloved Son, hear Him.”

My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join. I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight: that those professors were all corrupt; that “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men: having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this

time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, "Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off." I then said to my mother, "I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true."

Sectarian Opposition.—It seems as though the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom; else why should the powers of darkness combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy? Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before-mentioned religious excitement, and, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying, it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the Apostles, and that there would never be any more of them. I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.

Reflections upon Sectarian Opposition.—It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily la-

bor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself. However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice; but still there were but few who believed him; some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad; and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise; and though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to the last breath, that he had both seen a light, and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise. So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it, at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation.

All Doubts Settled.—I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned; that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true, that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim: To establish the fact that the appearance of the Father and the Son was an objective reality.

Essentials to Emphasize:

The personality of God.

The distinct and separate personality of the Father and of the Son.

That there was no church organization on the earth that the Lord would recognize.

That the testimony of the Apostle James was proved to be true.

The way the religious leaders of the day treated Joseph proved that they were all wrong.

That Joseph Smith was a boy of extraordinary faith and courage.

The remarkable character of Joseph Smith at the age of fourteen.

Student's Problems:

What did Joseph Smith's first vision do for the world?

What has been the result?

What has it done for me?

CHAPTER II.

The Visitation of Moroni—Existence of the Book of Mormon Made Known.

I continued to pursue my common vocation in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious, and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three—having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends, and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me,—I was left to all kinds of temptations; and mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to any one who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

Appearing of Moroni.—In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to

Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before Him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had done. While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked and his arms also, a little above the wrist, so, also were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person.

Moroni's Message.—When first I looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the sources from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; also that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “Seers” in

ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

Ancient Prophecies Quoted.—After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi, and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

For behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble: for they that come shall burn them, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus:

Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.

He also quoted the next verse differently:

And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that Prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when "they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come. He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fullness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of Scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here.

Plates not to be Shown.—Again, he told me, that when I got those plates of which he had spoken—for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled—

I should not show them to any person; neither the breast-plate with the Urim and Thummim; only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them; if I did I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

Second Appearing of Moroni.—After this communication, I saw the light in the room began to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so, until the room was again left dark, except just around me, when instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended until he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance. I lay musing on the singularity of the scene and marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger; when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside. He commenced, and again related the very same things which he had done at the first visit, without the least variation; which having done, he informed me of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

Third Appearing of Moroni.—By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before; and added a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me, (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This

he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building His kingdom; otherwise I could not get them. After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

Fourth Appearing of Moroni.—I shortly after arose from my bed, and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day; but, in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house; but, in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything. The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received. I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field, and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited: and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.

The Nephite Record.—Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from

the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all round was covered with earth.

Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breast-plate, as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones crosswise of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates. Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner His kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.

Story of Being a Money Digger.—As my father's worldly circumstances were very limited, we were under the necessity of laboring with our hands, hiring out by day's work and otherwise, as we could get opportunity. Sometimes we were at home, and sometimes abroad, and by continued labor, were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance. In the year 1824 my father's family met with a great affliction by the death of my eldest brother, Alvin. In the month of October, 1825, I hired with an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Staal, who lived in Chenango county, New York. He had heard something

of a silver mine having been opened by the Spaniards in Harmony, Susquehanna county, state of Pennsylvania; and had, previous to my hiring to him, been digging, in order, if possible, to discover the mine. After I went to live with him, he took me with the rest of his hands to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it. Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger.

The Prophet's Marriage.—During the time that I was thus employed, I was put to board with a Mr. Isaac Hale, of that place; it was there I first saw my wife (his daughter), Emma Hale. On the 18th of January, 1827, we were married, while I was yet employed in the service of Mr. Stool. Owing to my continuing to assert that I had seen a vision, persecution still followed me, and my wife's father's family were very much opposed to our being married. I was, therefore, under the necessity of taking her elsewhere; so we went and were married at the house of Squire Tarbill, in South Bainbridge, Chenango county, New York. Immediately after my marriage, I left Mr. Stool's and went to my father's, and farmed with him that season.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim: To show that the Book of Mormon was of such great value that a special messenger from heaven was sent to bring it forth.

Essentials to Emphasize:

That a feeling of having been forgiven follows true repentance.

That the Angel Moroni was a theological student.

That Joseph Smith was chosen in the heavens to bring forth the Book of Mormon.

That the book contains both history and scripture.

Joseph is warned against the temptation of entertaining ideas of pecuniary gain from the Book of Mormon.

That Joseph was commanded to be a confidant of his father.

The preparation of Joseph for the prophetic time set for the coming forth of the plates.

Student's Problem: What need had the world for the Book of Mormon?

CHAPTER III.

The Nephite Record Delivered to Joseph—The Angel's Warning—The Work of Translation.

The Prophet Receives the Plates.—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.

Efforts of Enemies to Get the Plates.—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 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.

Removal to 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,* 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.

Words of the Book Given to the Learned.—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 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 Pro-

*Martin Harris, who subsequently became one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, was born in East-town, Saratoga county, New York, on the 18th of May, 1783. When in his ninth year his father moved with his family into Palmyra, Wayne county, so that, man and boy, Martin Harris had lived in Palmyra, some thirty-six years. He had amassed considerable property in lands, and had established a reputation for business reliability.

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, Assyriac, 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.

The Loss of 116 Pages of Manuscript.—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, 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, Pre-

served 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.

Prophet's Journey to Manchester and Return to Pennsylvania.—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:

*Revelation to Joseph Smith, Jun., given July, 1828, concerning certain manuscripts of the first part of the Book of Mormon, which had been taken from the possession of Martin Harris.**

1. The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to nought.

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 nought the counsels of God, and fol-

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. iii.

lows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.

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 nought the counsels of God, and despise his works;

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 nought 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.

16. Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come into 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.

Interpreters and Plates Returned to the Prophet.—

After I had obtained the above revelation, both the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from me again; but in a few days they were returned to me, when I inquired of the Lord, and the Lord said thus unto me:

*Revelation, given to Joseph Smith, Jun., informing him of the alteration of the manuscript of the fore part of the Book of Mormon.**

1. Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them.

2. And you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened.

3. Nevertheless, it is now restored unto you again, therefore see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun:

4. Do not run faster, or labor more, than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end:

5. Pray always that you may come off conqueror: yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work.

6. Behold, they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted, has sought to destroy you.

7. And for this cause I said that he is a wicked man, for he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been entrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift;

8. And because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold wicked men have taken them from you:

9. Therefore, you have delivered them up, yea, that which was sacred, unto wickedness.

10. And, behold, Satan hath put it into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands.

11. And behold, I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that which you translated and caused to be written;

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. x.

12. And, on this wise, the devil has sought to lay a cunning plan, that he may destroy this work;

13. For he hath put it into their hearts to do this, that by lying they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate.

14. Verily, I say unto you, that I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing.

15. For, behold, he has put it into their hearts to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God, in asking to translate it over again;

16. And then, behold, they say and think in their hearts, We will see if God has given him power to translate; if so, he will also give him power again;

17. And if God giveth him power again, or if he translates again, or, in other words, if he bringeth forth the same words, behold, we have the same with us, and we have altered them:

18. Therefore they will not agree, and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power:

19. Therefore we will destroy him, and also the work, and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world.

20. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good,

21. And their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations, and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil: therefore they will not ask of me.

22. Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction.

23. And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God; but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment.

24. Yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work:

25. Yea, he saith unto them, Deceive and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy—behold, this is no harm; and thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie, that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him;

26. And thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare;

27. And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

28. Verily, verily, I say unto you, woe be unto him that lieth to deceive, because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

29. Now, behold, they have altered these words, because Satan saith unto them, He hath deceived you, and thus he flat-

tereth them away to do iniquity, to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God.

30. Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands;

31. For, behold, they shall not accomplish their evil designs in lying against those words. For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words, they will say that you have lied, and that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted yourself:

32. And, behold they will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words.

33. Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this generation:

34. But behold, here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work of translation.

35. Marvel not that I said unto you, Here is wisdom, show it not unto the world, for I said, show it not unto the world that you may be preserved.

36. Behold, I do not say that you shall not show it unto the righteous;

37. But as you cannot always judge the righteous, or as you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous, therefore I say unto you, hold your peace until I shall see fit to make all things known unto the world concerning the matter.

38. And now, verily, I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi;

39. Yea, and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi.

40. And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account;

41. Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of King Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained.

42. And behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi, and thus I will confound those who have altered my words.

43. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.

44. Behold, they have only got a part or an abridgement of the account of Nephi.

45. Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my Gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work.

46. And behold, all the remainder of this work does contain all those parts of my Gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people.

47. And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;

48. Yea, and this was their faith, that my Gospel which I gave unto them, that they might preach in their days, might come unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and also all that had become Lamanites, because of their dissensions.

49. Now, this is not all—their faith in their prayers was, that this Gospel should be made known also, if it were possible, to other nations that should possess this land;

50. And thus they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this Gospel in this land, might have eternal life;

51. Yea, that it might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be.

52. And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my Gospel to the knowledge of my people. Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.

53. And for this cause have I said, if this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my Church among them.

54. Now I do not say this to destroy my Church, but I say this to build up my Church;

55. Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my Church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven;

56. But it is they who do not fear me, neither keep my commandments, but build up churches unto themselves to get gain, yea, and all those that do wickedly and build up the kingdom of the devil; yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that it is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center.

57. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I came unto my own, and my own received me not.

58. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

59. I am he who said, Other sheep have I which are not of this fold, unto my disciples, and many there were that understood me not.

60. And I will show unto this people that I had other sheep, and that they were a branch of the house of Jacob;

61. And I will bring to light their marvelous works, which they did in my name;

62. Yea, and I will also bring to light my Gospel which was

ministered unto them, and, behold, they shall not deny that which you have received, but they shall build it up, and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me;

63. And this I do that I may establish my Gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the Scriptures and do not understand them;

64. Therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery;

65. For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts.

66. Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely.

67. Behold, this is my doctrine: whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my Church.

68. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my Church.

69. And now, behold, whosoever is of my Church, and endureth of my Church to the end, him will I establish upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against him.

70. And now, remember the words of him who is the life and light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Amen.

Interval in the Work of Translation.—I did not, however, go immediately to translating, but went to laboring with my hands upon a small farm which I had purchased of my wife's father, in order to provide for my family.

Three Witnesses Promised.—The following I applied for and obtained, at the request of the aforementioned Martin Harris:

*Revelation, given March, 1829.**

1. Behold, I say unto you, that as my servant Martin Harris has desired a witness at my hand, that you, my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., have got the plates of which you have testified and borne record that you have received of me;

2. And now, behold, this shall you say unto him, He who spake unto you, said unto you, I, the Lord, am God, and have given these things unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and have commanded you that you should stand as a witness of these things,

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. v.

3. And I have caused you that you should enter into a covenant with me, that you should not show them except to those persons to whom I commanded you; and you have no power over them except I grant it unto you.

4. And you have a gift to translate the plates and this is the first gift that I bestowed upon you, and I have commanded that you should pretend to no other gift, until my purpose is fulfilled in this; for I will grant unto you no other gift until it is finished.

5. Verily, I say unto you, that woe shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth if they will not hearken unto my words;

6. For hereafter you shall be ordained and go forth and deliver my words unto the children of men.

7. Behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you.

8. Oh, this unbelieving and stiffnecked generation, mine anger is kindled against them!

9. Behold, verily I say unto you, I have reserved those things which I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations;

10. But this generation shall have my word through you;

11. And in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you:

12. Yea, they shall know of a surety that these things are true, for from heaven will I declare it unto them.

13. I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are;

14. And to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation, in this the beginning of the rising up and coming forth of my Church out of the wilderness; clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

15. And the testimony of three witnesses will I send forth of my word;

16. And behold, whosoever believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit, and they shall be born of me, even of water and of the Spirit.

17. And you must wait yet a little while, for ye are not yet ordained;

18. And their testimony shall also go forth unto the condemnation of this generation if they harden their hearts against them;

19. For a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out

from time to time, if they repent not until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming.

20. Behold, I tell you these things, even as I also told the people of the destruction of Jerusalem, and my word shall be verified at this time as it hath hitherto been verified.

21. And now I command you, my servant Joseph, to repent and walk more uprightly before me, and to yield to the persuasions of men no more;

22. And that you be firm in keeping the commandments wherewith I have commanded you, and if you do this, behold I grant unto you eternal life, even if you should be slain.

23. And now, again, I speak unto you, my servant Joseph concerning the man that desires the witness.

24. Behold, I say unto him, he exalts himself and does not humble himself sufficiently before me; but if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a view of the things which he desires to see.

25. And then he shall say unto the people of this generation, Behold, I have seen the things which the Lord hath shown unto Joseph Smith, Jun., and I know of a surety that they are true, for I have seen them, for they have been shown unto me by the power of God and not of man.

26. And I, the Lord, command him, my servant Martin Harris, that he shall say no more unto them concerning these things, except he shall say, I have seen them, and they have been shown unto me by the power of God, and these are the words which he shall say;

27. But if he deny this, he will break the covenant which he has before covenanted with me, and behold he is condemned.

28. And now, except he humble himself and acknowledge unto me the things that he has done which are wrong, and covenant with me that he will keep my commandments, and exercise faith in me, behold, I say unto him, he shall have no such views, for I will grant unto him no views of the things of which I have spoken.

29. And if this be the case, I command you, my servant Joseph that you shall say unto him, that he shall do no more, nor trouble me any more concerning this matter.

30. And if this be the case, behold, I say unto thee Joseph, when thou hast translated a few more pages, thou shalt stop for a season, even until I command thee again; then thou mayest translate again.

31. And except thou do this, behold, thou shalt have no more gift, and I will take away the things which I have entrusted with thee.

32. And now, because I foresee the lying in wait to destroy thee, yea, I foresee that if my servant Martin Harris humbleth

not himself, and receive a witness from my hand, that he will fall into transgression;

33. And there are many that lie in wait to destroy thee from off the face of the earth, and for this cause, that thy days may be prolonged, I have given unto thee these commandments;

34. Yea, for this cause I have said, Stop and stand still until I command thee, and I will provide means whereby thou mayest accomplish the thing which I have commanded thee.

35. And if thou art faithful in keeping my commandments, thou shalt be lifted up at the last day. Amen.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim:

To show that the Lord provides that His purposes will be carried out regardless of the weakness or wickedness of men, or the promptings of the Evil One.

Essentials to Emphasize:

If we will not learn by accepting the counsels of the Lord, he permits us to learn by suffering.

The courage of Joseph in the presence of intolerable persecution and apparently endless poverty.

When the progress of the work and the character of Joseph were in extreme danger, the Lord came to the rescue.

Though Joseph was chosen to do the work, he was left free to fail if he chose to.

Prayer is necessary to success in the Lord's work.

The thoughts and schemes of the wicked cannot be hid from God.

That the Lord Jesus Christ was a personal instructor of Joseph Smith.

That Joseph the Seer was more than Joseph the man.

Student's Problem:

In what way did the loss of the manuscript by Martin Harris affect the Book of Mormon?

CHAPTER IV.

Oliver Cowdery Becomes the Prophet's Scribe—The Translation of the Plates Continued.

Oliver Cowdery.—On the 5th day of April, 1829, Oliver Cowdery came to my house, until which time I had never seen him. He stated to me that having been teaching school in the neighborhood where my father resided, and my father being one of those who sent to the school, he went to board for a season at his house, and while there the family related to him the circumstance of my having received the plates, and accordingly he had come to make inquiries of me.* Two days after the arrival of Mr. Cowdery (being the 7th of April) I commenced to translate the Book of Mormon, and he began to write for me, which having continued for some time, I inquired of the Lord through Urim and Thummin, and obtained the following:

Revelation given April, 1829, to Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith, Jun. †

1. A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men.
2. Behold, I am God, and give heed unto my word, which is

*Previous to joining the Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery had met David Whitmer at Palmyra, and conversed with him concerning the rumors rife in that vicinity about the finding of the Book of Mormon plates. This chance meeting resulted in a friendship between the young men, and finally when Cowdery determined to visit the Prophet in Harmony, he went via the Whitmer residence, at Fayette, which was near the town of Waterloo, at the head of Seneca lake, Seneca county, New York; and promised his friend David Whitmer that after visiting the Prophet he would write him his impressions as to the truth or untruth of Joseph Smith's having an ancient record. (See statement of David Whitmer in *Kansas City Journal*, June 5th, 1886; also statement of the same to Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, in 1878. *Millennial Star*, vol. xl, pp. 769-774.)

†Doctrine and Covenants, section vi.

quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore give heed unto my words.

3. Behold the field is white already to harvest, therefore whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God:

4. Yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God;

5. Therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive; if you will knock it shall be opened unto you.

6. Now, as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion;

7. Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.

8. Verily, verily, I say unto you, even as you desire of me, so it shall be unto you; and if you desire, you shall be the means of doing much good in this generation.

9. Say nothing but repentance unto this generation: keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work, according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed.

10. Behold thou hast a gift, and blessed art thou because of thy gift. Remember it is sacred and cometh from above:

11. And if thou wilt inquire, thou shalt know mysteries which are great and marvelous: therefore thou shalt exercise thy gift, that thou mayest find out mysteries, that thou mayest bring many to the knowledge of the truth; yea, convince them of the error of their ways.

12. Make not thy gift known unto any, save it be those who are of thy faith. Trifle not with sacred things.

13. If thou wilt do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation.

14. Verily verily, I say unto thee, blessed art thou for what thou hast done, for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, as often as thou hast inquired, thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time.

15. Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me, and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell these things, that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the spirit of truth;

16. Yea, I tell thee, that thou mayest know that there is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart.

17. I tell thee these things as a witness unto thee that the words of the work which thou hast been writing are true.

18. Therefore be diligent, stand by my servant Joseph faithfully, in whatsoever difficult circumstances he may be for the word's sake.

19. Admonish him in his faults and also receive admonition from him. Be patient; be sober; be temperate; have patience, faith, hope and charity.

20. Behold, thou art Oliver, and I have spoken unto thee because of thy desires; therefore, treasure up these words in thy heart. Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and I will encircle thee in the arms of my love.

21. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the same that came unto my own, and my own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

22. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things.

23. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?

24. And now, behold, you have received a witness, for if I have told you things which no man knoweth, have you not received a witness?

25. And behold, I grant unto you a gift, if you desire of me, to translate even as my servant Joseph.

26. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that there are records which contain much of my Gospel which have been kept back because of the wickedness of the people;

27. And now I command you, that if you have good desires—a desire to lay up treasures for yourself in heaven—then shall you assist in bringing to light, with your gift, those parts of my Scriptures which have been hidden because of iniquity.

28. And now, behold, I give unto you, and also unto my servant Joseph, the keys of this gift, which shall bring to light this ministry; and in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

29. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if they reject my words, and this part of my Gospel and ministry, blessed are ye, for they can do no more unto you than unto me;

30. And even if they do unto you, even as they have done unto me, blessed are ye, for you shall dwell with me in glory;

31. But if they reject not my words, which shall be established by the testimony which shall be given, blessed are they, and then shall ye have joy in the fruit of your labors.

32. Verily, verily, I say unto you, as I said unto my disciples, where two or three are gathered together in my name, as touching one thing, behold, there will I be in the midst of them: even so am I in the midst of you.

33. Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow.

34 ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good, ye shall also reap good for your reward.

34. Therefore, fear not, little flock, do good; let earth and hell combine against you, for if ye are built upon my rock, they cannot prevail.

35. Behold, I do not condemn you; go your ways and sin no more; perform with soberness the work which I have commanded you.

36. Look unto me in every thought; doubt not; fear not;

37. Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet; be faithful, keep my commandments, and ye shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

Witness of the Spirit to Cowdery.—After we had received this revelation, Oliver Cowdery stated to me that after he had gone to my father's to board, and after the family had communicated to him concerning my having obtained the plates, that one night after he had retired to bed he called upon the Lord to know if these things were so, and the Lord manifested to him that they were true, but he had kept the circumstance entirely secret, and had mentioned it to no one; so that after this revelation was given, he knew that the work was true, because no being living knew of the thing alluded to in the revelation, but God and himself.

During the month of April I continued to translate, and he to write, with little cessation, during which time we received several revelations.

Oliver Desires to Translate.—Whilst continuing the work of translation, during the month of April, Oliver Cowdery became exceedingly anxious to have the power to translate bestowed upon him, and in relation to this desire the following revelations were obtained:

*Revelation, given April, 1829.**

i. Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. viii.

Scripture of which have been spoken by the manifestation of my Spirit;

2. Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost which shall come upon you, and which shall dwell in your heart.

3. Now, behold, this is the Spirit of revelation; behold, this is the Spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground;

4. Therefore this is thy gift, apply unto it, and blessed art thou, for it shall deliver you out of the hands of your enemies, when, if it were not so they would slay you and bring your soul to destruction.

5. O, remember these words and keep my commandments. Remember, this is your gift.

6. Now this is not all thy gift; for you have another gift, which is the gift of Aaron; behold, it has told you many things;

7. Behold, there is no other power, save the power of God, that can cause this gift of Aaron to be with you;

8. Therefore doubt not, for it is the gift of God, and you shall hold it in your hands, and do marvelous works; and no power shall be able to take it away out of your hands, for it is the work of God.

9. And, therefore, whatsoever you shall ask me to tell you, by that means, that will I grant unto you, and you shall have knowledge concerning it:

10. Remember that without faith you can do nothing, therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not:

11. Ask that you may know the mysteries of God, and that you may translate and receive knowledge from all those ancient records which have been hid up, that are sacred; and according to your faith shall it be done unto you.

12. Behold, it is I that have spoken it; and I am the same that spake unto you from the beginning. Amen.

*Revelation, given to Oliver Cowdery, April, 1829.**

1. Behold, I say unto you, my son, that because you did not translate according to that which you desired of me, and did commence again to write for my servant, Joseph Smith, Jun., even so I would that ye should continue until you have finished this record, which I have entrusted unto him:

2. And then, behold other records have I, that I will give unto you power that you may assist to translate.

3. Be patient, my son, for it is wisdom in me, and it is not expedient that you should translate at this present time.

4. Behold, the work which you are called to do, is to write for my servant Joseph;

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. ix.

5. And, behold, it is because that you did not continue as you commenced, when you began to translate, that I have taken away this privilege from you.

6. Do not murmur, my son, for it is wisdom in me that I have dealt with you after this manner.

7. Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought, save it was to ask me;

8. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right, I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right;

9. But if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong: therefore you cannot write that which is sacred, save it be given you from me.

10. Now if you had known this, you could have translated; nevertheless, it is not expedient that you should translate now.

11. Behold, it was expedient when you commenced; but you feared, and the time is past, and it is not expedient now;

12. For, do you not behold that I have given unto my servant Joseph sufficient strength, whereby it is made up? and neither of you have I condemned.

13. Do this thing which I have commanded you, and you shall prosper. Be faithful, and yield to no temptation.

14. Stand fast in the work wherewith I have called you, and a hair of your head shall not be lost, and you shall be lifted up at the last day. Amen.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim:

To show that in the work of the Lord, human application and effort, subject to the approval of divine inspiration is required.

Essentials to Emphasize:

That Oliver Cowdery's inner life was revealed to the Prophet Joseph.

That the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph and Oliver in person.

That the Lord was desirous of advancing Oliver as fast as he was worthy.

That the character of Joseph was free from envy.

Student's Problem:

What use can I make of Oliver Cowdery's experiences?

CHAPTER V.

Restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood—First Baptisms.

We still continued the work of translation, when, in the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying:

Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the Gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.*

Limitations of the Aaronic Priesthood.—He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter; and he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and afterwards that he should baptize me. Accordingly we went and were baptized. I baptized him first, and afterwards he baptized me, after which I laid my hands upon his head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and afterwards he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same Priesthood—for so we were commanded.

John the Baptist, May 15, 1829.—The messenger who

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. xiii.

visited us on this occasion, and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood he said would in due time be conferred on us,*

***Restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood.**—The promise to confer upon Joseph and Oliver the Melchizedek Priesthood was fulfilled; but as there is no definite account of the event in the history of the Prophet Joseph, or, for matter of that, in any of our annals, the evidences of the fact of their ordination to the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood promised them by John the Baptist, are presented now, together with a consideration of the place where, and the time when, the great event occurred.

The Prophet Joseph, in a communication to the Church, under date of September 6, 1842, makes undoubted allusion to the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in the course of an ecstatic review of the great things God had revealed to him. He said: "And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfillment of the prophets—the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca county, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book. The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light. *The voice of Peter, James and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna county, and Colesville, Broome county, on the Susquehanna river, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.*" (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. cxxviii:20.)

In one of the early revelations given to the Prophet Joseph, the Lord makes most direct reference to the restoration of the higher Priesthood through the ministration of Peter, James and John. The subject matter of the revelation is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and in the course of it the Lord promises to "drink of the fruit of the vine" with his servants on earth to whom the revelation is addressed; "and with Moroni, * * * and also Michael, or Adam, the father of all, * * * and also with *Peter, and James, and John, whom I have sent unto you, by whom I have ordained you and confirmed you to be Apostles, and special witnesses of my name, and bear the keys of your ministry, and of the same things which I revealed unto them: unto whom I have committed the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the Gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times.*" (Doctrine and Covenants, sec. xxvii.) This revelation was given

and that I should be called the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second. It was on the 15th day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger and baptized.

Outpourings of the Spirit.—Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of

some time early in August, 1830, but only the first four verses were written at that time. The rest of it was written in September of that year. (See chapter xi of this volume.) These two allusions—the one by the Prophet and the other by the Lord—to the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood not only make clear the fact that the Melchizedek Priesthood was restored in accordance with the promise of John the Baptist when conferring the Aaronic Priesthood, but they make it possible to fix upon the place where, and approximately the time when, the event occurred. Undoubtedly the *place* where the ordination was performed was on the banks of the Susquehanna river, in the wilderness between Colesville, in Broome county, New York, and Harmony, in Susquehanna county, Pennsylvania; for it is there the Prophet says the voice of Peter James and John was heard declaring themselves as “possessing the keys of the kingdom and of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times;” for which appearing and declaration there could be no other occasion than the ordination of Oliver and Joseph to the Melchizedek Priesthood in fulfillment of the promises made by John the Baptist. The *time* at which the ordination took place was evidently between the 15th day of May, 1829, and September, 1830. The last named date is the one under which the Lord so definitely referred to the circumstance of having sent Peter, James and John to ordain Joseph and others to be Apostles, even special witnesses of his name, and unto whom he had committed the keys of the kingdom. Hence the time of the ordination must have been between those two dates.

the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.*

*Oliver Cowdery, who shared in this ministration of the angel, John the Baptist, has left upon record a description of the scene and the impressions it left upon his mind, and which, withal, is of such singular beauty and power that the history of the event should not go to the world without it. After speaking of his own and the Prophet's desire to hear the commandment given, "Arise and be baptized," he says:

"This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called upon him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us His will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted—while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld—our ears heard. As in the 'blaze of day;' yes, more—above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, 'I am thy fellow-servant,' dispelled every fear. We listened, we gazed, we admired! 'Twas the voice of an angel from glory—'twas a message from the Most High, and as we heard we rejoiced, while His love enkindled upon our souls, and we were rapt in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk, no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever. But, dear brother, think further, think for a moment what joy filled our hearts and with what surprise we must have bowed, (for who would not have bowed the knee for such a blessing?) when we received under his hands the Holy Priesthood, as he said, 'Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this Priesthood and this authority, which remain upon earth, that the sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!'

"I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as it was delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit! Man may deceive his fellow man; deception may follow deception, and the

Ordination and Baptism Kept Secret.—Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the Scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of. In the meantime we were forced to keep secret the circumstances of having received the Priesthood and our having been baptized, owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood. We had been threatened with being mobbed from time to time, and this, too, by professors of religion. And their intentions of mobbing us were only counteracted by the influence of my wife's father's family (under Divine providence), who had become very friendly to me, and who were opposed to mobs, and were willing that I should be allowed to continue the work of translation without interruption; and therefore offered and promised us protection from all unlawful proceedings as far as in them lay.

Conversion of Samuel H. Smith.—After a few days, however, feeling it to be our duty, we commenced to reason out of the Scriptures with our acquaintances and friends, as we happened to meet with them. About this time my brother Samuel H. Smith came to visit us. We informed him of what the Lord was about to do for the children of men, and began to reason with him out of the Bible. We also showed him that part of the work which

children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave, but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind! The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel; the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me, past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior's goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry, and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that day which shall never cease."—(*Messenger and Advocate*, 1834.)

we had translated, and labored to persuade him concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was now about to be revealed in its fullness. He was not, however, very easily persuaded of these things, but after much inquiry and explanation he retired to the woods, in order that by secret and fervent prayer he might obtain of a merciful God wisdom to enable him to judge for himself. The result was that he obtained revelation for himself sufficient to convince him of the truth of our assertions to him; and on the twenty-fifth day of that same month in which we had been baptized and ordained, Oliver Cowdery baptized him; and he returned to his father's house, greatly glorifying and praising God, being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Assistance from Joseph Knight, Sen.—About the same time an old gentleman came to visit us of whose name I wish to make honorable mention—Mr. Joseph Knight, Sen.,* of Colesville, Broome county, New York, who, having heard of the manner in which we were occupying our time, very kindly and considerately brought us a quantity of provisions, in order that we might not be

*There is no record in the Church annals of the time and place of the birth of Joseph Knight, Sen. He was well advanced in life, however, when the work of God in these last days began to come forth. From the journal of his son, Newel Knight, it is learned that Joseph Knight, Sen., married Polly Peck; that he moved into the state of New York and settled on the Susquehanna river, near the great bend, in Chenango county, in 1809. Two years later he removed to Colesville, Broome county, New York, where he remained nineteen years. "My father," says Newel Knight in his journal, "owned a farm, a grist mill and carding machine. He was not rich, yet he possessed enough of this world's goods to secure to himself and family, not only the necessaries, but also the comforts of life. His family, consisting of my mother, three sons and four daughters, he reared in a genteel and respectable manner, and gave his children a good, common school education. My father was a sober, honest man, generally respected and beloved by his neighbors and acquaintances. He did not belong to any religious sect, but was a believer in the Universalian doctrine." The business in which Joseph Knight, Sen., engaged, made it necessary at times for him to hire men, and the Prophet Joseph was occasionally employed by him. To the Knight family, who were greatly attached to him, the young Prophet related many of the things God had revealed respecting

interrupted in the work of translation by the want of such necessaries of life; and I would just mention here, as in duty bound, that he several times brought us supplies, a distance of at least thirty miles, which enabled us to continue the work when otherwise we must have relinquished it for a season.

The Prophet's Removal to Fayette.—Shortly after commencing to translate, I became acquainted with Mr. Peter Whitmer, of Fayette, Seneca county, New York, and also with some of his family. In the beginning of the month of June, his son, David Whitmer, came to the place where we were residing, and brought with him a two-horse wagon, for the purpose of having us accompany him to his father's place, and there remain until we should finish the work. It was arranged that we should have our board free of charge, and the assistance of one of his brothers to write for me, and also his own assistance when convenient. Having much need of such timely aid in an undertaking so arduous, and being informed that the people in the neighborhood of the Whitmers were anxiously awaiting the

the Book of Mormon, then as yet, to come forth. So far at least was the elder Knight taken into the Prophet's confidence that he purposely so arranged his affairs as to be at the Smith family residence, near Manchester, at the time the plates of the Book of Mormon were given into Joseph's possession. Mr. Knight had driven to the Smith residence with a horse and carriage, and in this conveyance, according to the statement of both Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet, (See Lucy Smith's History of the Prophet, ch. xxiii), and Joseph Knight, Sen., Joseph, in company with his wife Emma, drove away very early—before daylight—on the morning of September the 22nd. It is presumed, of course, the Prophet drove to Cumorah, and there received from Moroni the plates of the Book of Mormon, the Urim and Thummim and Breastplate, which were, for some time—excepting the Urim and Thummim—concealed in the woods. Mr. Knight remained at the Smith residence several days, and was there the day Joseph brought home the plates; and in company with Joseph Smith, Sen., and Mr. Staal—who was also present at the Smith residence in company with Mr. Knight—went in search of those men who had assailed the Prophet while on his way home with the plates, but they did not find them. From Joseph's narrative in the text it will be seen that the senior Joseph Knight's interest in the work continued.

opportunity to inquire into these things, we accepted the invitation, and accompanied Mr. Whitmer to his father's house, and there resided until the translation was finished and the copyright secured. Upon our arrival, we found Mr. Whitmer's family very anxious concerning the work, and very friendly toward ourselves. They continued so, boarded and lodged us according to arrangements; and John Whitmer, in particular, assisted us very much in writing during the remainder of the work.

David, John and Peter Whitmer, Jun., as Assistants.

—In the meantime, David, John and Peter Whitmer, Jun., became our zealous friends and assistants in the work; and being anxious to know their respective duties, and having desired with much earnestness that I should inquire of the Lord concerning them, I did so, through the means of the Urim and Thummim, and obtained for them in succession the following revelations: (See Doc. and Cov. Secs. 14, 15, 16.)

Early Baptisms.—We found the people of Seneca county in general friendly, and disposed to enquire into the truth of these strange matters which now began to be noised abroad. Many opened their houses to us, in order that we might have an opportunity of meeting with our friends for the purpose of instruction and explanation. We met with many from time to time who were willing to hear us, and who desired to find out the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, and apparently willing to obey the Gospel, when once fairly convinced and satisfied in their own minds; and in this same month of June, my brother Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, and Peter Whitmer, Jun., were baptized in Seneca lake, the two former by myself the latter by Oliver Cowdery. From this time forth many became believers, and some were baptized whilst we continued to instruct and persuade as many as applied for information.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim:

That it was necessary for God to send special messengers from heaven to restore the Holy Priesthood, which authorizes men to minister in the ordinances of the Gospel.

Essentials to Emphasize:

The student attitude of Joseph and Oliver. "Seek learning even by study and also by faith."

The Messianic dispensation linked to the dispensation of the fullness of times.

The first ordinances of the Gospel were administered by divine authority.

Epochs of advancement in this work were paralleled by epochs of agitation against it.

True conversion is followed by a desire to convert others.

Student's Problem:

What has the Priesthood, restored by John the Baptist, and by Peter, James, and John done for me?

What may I further obtain through it?

CHAPTER VI.

The Testimony of the Special Witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

Provision Made for Special Witnesses.—In the course of the work of translation, we ascertained that three special witnesses were to be provided by the Lord, to whom He would grant that they should see the plates from which this work (the Book of Mormon) should be translated; and that these witnesses should bear record of the same, as will be found recorded, Book of Mormon, page 581 [Book of Ether, chapter 5, verses 2, 3 and 4], and also page 86 [II Nephi, chapter 11, verse 3]. Almost immediately after we had made this discovery, it occurred to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and the aforementioned Martin Harris (who had come to inquire after our progress in the work) that they would have me inquire of the Lord to know if they might not obtain of Him the privilege to be these three special witnesses; and finally they became so very solicitous, and urged me so much to inquire that at length I complied; and through the Urim and Thummim, I obtained of the Lord for them the following:

*Revelation to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, at Fayette, Seneca County, New York, June, 1829, given previous to their viewing the plates containing the Book of Mormon.**

1. Behold, I say unto you, that you must rely upon my word, which if you do, with full purpose of heart, you shall have a view of the plates, and also the breastplates, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face, and the miraculous directors which were given to Lehi while in the wilderness, on the borders of the Red Sea;

2. And it is by your faith that you shall obtain a view of them, even by that faith which was had by the prophets of old.

3. And after that you have obtained faith, and have seen

*Doctrine and Covenants, sec. xvii.

them with your eyes, you shall testify of them, by the power of God;

4. And this you shall do that my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., may not be destroyed, that I may bring about my righteous purposes unto the children of men in this work.

5. And ye shall testify that you have seen them, even as my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., has seen them, for it is by my power that he has seen them, and it is because he had faith;

6. And he has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him, and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.

7. Wherefore you have received the same power, and the same faith, and the same gift like unto him;

8. And if you do these last commandments of mine, which I have given you, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; for my grace is sufficient for you, and you shall be lifted up at the last day.

9. And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it unto you, that I might bring about my righteous purposes unto the children of men. Amen.

Seeking the Fulfillment of the Promise.—Not many days after the above commandment was given, we four, viz., Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and myself, agreed to retire into the woods, and try to obtain, by fervent and humble prayer, the fulfillment of the promises given in the above revelation—that they should have a view of the plates. We accordingly made choice of a piece of woods convenient to Mr. Whitmer's house, to which we retired, and having knelt down, we began to pray in much faith to Almighty God to bestow upon us a realization of these promises.

According to previous arrangement, I commenced by vocal prayer to our Heavenly Father, and was followed by each of the others in succession. We did not at the first trial, however, obtain any answer or manifestation of divine favor in our behalf. We again observed the same order of prayer, each calling on and praying fervently to God in rotation, but with the same result as before.

Upon this, our second failure, Martin Harris proposed that he should withdraw himself from us, believing, as he expressed himself, that his presence was the cause of our not obtaining what we wished for. He accordingly withdrew from us, and we knelt down again, and had not been

many minutes engaged in prayer, when presently we beheld a light above us in the air, of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a view of. He turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discern the engravings thereon distinctly. He then addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, "David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps His commandments;" when, immediately afterwards, we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying, "These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you bear record of what you now see and hear."

Martin Harris also Views the Plates.—I now left David and Oliver, and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, whom I found at a considerable distance, fervently engaged in prayer. He soon told me, however, that he had not yet prevailed with the Lord, and earnestly requested me to join him in prayer, that he also might realize the same blessings which we had just received. We accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view, at least it was again opened to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment, Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy, "'Tis enough; 'tis enough; mine eyes have beheld; mine eyes have beheld;" and jumping up, he shouted, "Hosanna," blessing God, and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly.

Other Details.—In connection with the Prophet's account, Elder B. H. Roberts comments as follows:

There are some other details connected with the obtaining of the testimony of the Three Witnesses which ought not to be omitted at this point. The day on which the Three Witnesses received their manifestation the usual morning family service was held at the Whitmer residence, namely, scripture-reading, singing, and prayer. Besides

the Whitmer family, the Prophet and his wife and Oliver Cowdery, there were present the Prophet's father and mother and Martin Harris. As soon as Joseph rose from his knees, he approached Martin Harris and said, "with a solemnity that thrills through my veins to this day," says the Prophet's mother, who relates this circumstance: "Martin Harris, you have got to humble yourself before your God this day, that you may obtain a forgiveness of your sins. If you do, it is the will of God that you should look upon the plates in company with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer." ("History of the Prophet Joseph," by Lucy Smith, ch. xxxi.) When the former transgression of Martin Harris in the matter of betraying the trust of the Prophet, by which part of the translation of the Book of Mormon had been lost (see p. 21)—when this and the pride and self-will of the man's character are taken into account, there was certainly a necessity for the admonition which the Prophet gave Martin Harris that morning. The circumstance also affords an explanation of Martin's difficulty in obtaining the testimony which, after his withdrawal from them, appears to have been given so readily to Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer.

Another circumstance is related by Lucy Smith which is here apropos, namely, the joy of the Prophet in having other witnesses than himself to the truth of the work the Lord was then bringing forth to the world. Speaking of the witnesses returning to the Whitmer home after seeing the plates, she says: "When they returned to the house, it was between three and four o'clock p. m. Mrs. Whitmer, Mr. Smith, and myself were sitting in the bedroom at the time. On coming in, Joseph threw himself down beside me, and exclaimed, 'Father, mother, you do not know how happy I am; the Lord has now caused the plates to be shown to three more besides myself. They have seen an angel, who has testified to them, and they will have to bear witness to the truth of what I have said, for now they know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people, and I feel as if I was relieved of a burden which was almost too heavy for me to bear, and it rejoices my soul that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the

world.' Upon this, Martin Harris came in. He seemed almost overcome with joy, and testified boldly to what he had both seen and heard. And so did David and Oliver, adding that no tongue could express the joy of their hearts and the greatness of the things which they had both seen and heard."—"History of the Prophet Joseph," ch. xxxi.)

The Testimony of Three Witnesses.—Having thus, through the mercy of God, obtained these glorious manifestations, it now remained for these three individuals to fulfill the commandment which they had received, viz., to bear record of these things; in order to accomplish which, they drew up and subscribed the following document:

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record—which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and 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; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true, and it is marvelous in our eyes; nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things; and we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with Him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

Supplementary Details.—Elder B. H. Roberts supplies the following additional details:

In an extended interview between Elder Orson Pratt,

Joseph F. Smith (both of the Council of the Twelve Apostles) and David Whitmer, at the home of Mr. Whitmer, in Richmond, Missouri, in September, 1878, the question was asked the then aged witness if he and the other witnesses did or did not sign the testimonies themselves. Whitmer replied that each signed his own name.—Pratt and Smith Report, "Millennial Star," Vol. xl, Nos. 49, 50. Report is dated Sept. 17, 1878.)

In the first edition of the Book of Mormon the testimony of Three Witnesses, and also the Testimony of Eight Witnesses appear at the end—or on the last two pages of the volume, instead of being, as in the later editions, on the page following the title-page. The first edition also had the following preface :

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 had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary 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 con-

found those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show 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.

THE AUTHOR.

The Testimony of Eight Witnesses.—Soon after these things had transpired, the following additional testimony was obtained:

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record, with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world to witness unto the world that which we have seen; and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
JACOB WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, JUN.,
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.,
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

Further Details.—Elder Roberts comments further as follows:

According to Lucy Smith (see "History of the Prophet Joseph," ch. xxxi) the eight witnesses obtained a view of the plates near the Smith residence at Manchester. It was on the occasion of the Prophet Joseph's coming over to Manchester from Fayette, accompanied by several

of the Whitmers and Hiram Page, to make arrangements about getting the Book of Mormon printed. After arriving at the Smith residence, Joseph Smith, Sen., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith, joined Joseph's company from Fayette, and together they repaired to a place in the woods where members of the Smith family were wont to hold secret prayer, and there the plates were shown to these eight witnesses by the Prophet himself. The difference between the testimony given the Three Witnesses and that given to the Eight, is that the former was attended by a splendid display of the glory and power of God and the ministration of an angel, while the latter was attended by no such display, but was a plain, matter-of-fact exhibition of the plates by the Prophet to his friends; and they not only saw the plates, but handled them and examined the engravings upon them.

In the first edition, the words "Author and Proprietor" appear instead of the word "translator." The reason for this is obvious. Under the laws then existing the copyright was secured to "authors and proprietors;" and hence on the title page of the first edition, "Joseph Smith, Junior, author and proprietor," takes the place of the line "Translated by Joseph Smith, Jun.," in the later editions. The Prophet merely adopted the phraseology of the law.

Early Progress in the Work.—Meantime we continued to translate, at intervals, when not under the necessity of attending to the numerous inquirers who now began to visit us—some for the sake of finding the truth others for the purpose of putting hard questions, and trying to confound us. Among the latter class were several learned priests, who generally came for the purpose of disputation. However, the Lord continued to pour out upon us His Holy Spirit, and as often as we had need, He gave us in that moment what to say; so that although unlearned and inexperienced in religious controversies, yet we were able to confound those learned priests of the day; whilst at the same time we were enabled to convince the honest in heart that we had obtained, through the mercy of God, the true and everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ; and occasionally

we administered the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins to such as believed.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim:

That the divine origin of the Book of Mormon is better authenticated by human testimony than any other book extant.

Essentials to Emphasize:

Joseph's unwavering fidelity to God in not showing the plates to others, without permission.

Unmistakable evidence of the objective reality of the plates.
The divine approval of Joseph's work of translation.

Student's Problem:

Why was it a severe trial to and a constant test of Joseph in not being permitted to show the plates to others?

CHAPTER VII.

The Day Appointed for Organizing the Church—Revelation on Church Government.

Directions for the Organization of the Church.—We now became anxious to have that promise realized to us, which the angel that conferred upon us the Aaronic Priesthood had given us, viz., that provided we continued faithful, we should also have the Melchisedek Priesthood, which holds the authority of the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. We had for some time made this matter a subject of humble prayer, and at length we got together in the chamber of Mr. Whitmer's house, in order more particularly to seek of the Lord what we now so earnestly desired; and here, to our unspeakable satisfaction, did we realize the truth of the Savior's promise—"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"—for we had not long been engaged in solemn and fervent prayer, when the word of the Lord came unto us in the chamber, commanding us that I should ordain Oliver Cowdery to be an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ; and that he also should ordain me to the same office; and then to ordain others, as it should be made known unto us from time to time. We were, however, commanded to defer this our ordination until such times as it should be practicable to have our brethren, who had been and who should be baptized, assembled together, when we must have their sanction to our thus proceeding to ordain each other, and have them decide by vote whether they were willing to accept us as spiritual teachers or not; when also we were commanded to bless bread and break it with them, and to take wine, bless it, and drink it with them; afterward proceed to ordain each other according to commandment; then call out such men as the Spirit should dictate, and ordain them; and then attend to the laying on of hands for the gift of

the Holy Ghost, upon all those whom we had previously baptized, doing all things in the name of the Lord.

[Here follow two revelations relative to building up the Church. See Doc. & Cov., Sections 18 and 20].

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim:

To show that while Joseph was engaged in completing the translation, he was also engaged in the preliminary spreading of the Gospel and making preparations for the organization of the Church.

Emphasize the efficacy of humble prayer in order to realize the promises of the Lord.

Student's Problem:

Of what use has the Savior's promise, "Ask and it shall be given unto you?" been to me?

CHAPTER VIII.

The Book of Mormon Published—The Church Organized.

Price for Publishing Book of Mormon.—Meantime, our translation drawing to a close, we went to Palmyra, Wayne county, New York, secured the copyright, and agreed with Mr. Egbert B. Grandin to print five thousand copies for the sum of three thousand dollars.

The Title Page.—I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general;* and that said title page is not by any means a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation. Therefore, in order to correct an error which generally exists concerning it, I give below that part of the title-page of the English version of the Book of Mormon, which is a genuine and literal translation of the title-page of the original Book of Mormon as recorded on the plates: .

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

An account written by the hand of Mormon, upon Plates, taken from the Plates of Nephi.

Wherefore it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation. Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile—the interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

*That is, from right to left.

An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether, also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people when they were building a tower to get to heaven; which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the *Eternal God*, manifesting Himself unto all nations. And now, if there are faults, they are the mistakes of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

The remainder of the title-page is, of course, modern.

Further Interesting Details.—Elder Roberts adds following details respecting the printing of the book:

Nothing is said by the Prophet in his History of the difficulties that arose “whilst the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer;” nor of the care that was taken to prevent the manuscript falling into the hands of enemies of the work. It is proper, however, that these matters should be stated at this point. It appears that when the arrangements were completed with Mr. Grandin for printing the Book of Mormon, the Prophet went down to Harmony, in Pennsylvania. Before taking his departure, however, it was arranged:

First: That Oliver Cowdery transcribe the whole manuscript; hence it came about that there were two manuscript copies of the Book of Mormon, the original, which was taken in charge by the Prophet after the publication of the book, and the copy made by Oliver Cowdery for the printer’s use, and which finally was given by him into the custody of David Whitmer, with whose family it remains to this day (1901).

Second: That the copy made by Cowdery from the original manuscript only should be taken to the printers, so that if that should be destroyed the original would remain in the hands of the Prophet and his associates, from which it could be replaced; and even this copy was supplied the printer in small quantities at a time, usually enough only for a single day’s work of the printer.

Third: That in going to and from the office who-

ever carried the manuscript—usually it was Oliver Cowdery—should always have a guard to attend him.

Fourth: That a guard should be kept constantly upon the watch, both night and day, about the house, to protect the manuscript from malicious persons, who might seek to destroy it. (The authorities for the above are: Lucy Smith's "History of Joseph Smith," ch. xxxi; the statements of Stephen S. Harding, who a number of times visited Grandin's establishment while the Book of Mormon was being printed; his statement is published in "The Prophet of Palmyra," by Thomas Gregg, pp. 34-56—this is that same Stephen S. Harding who was governor of Utah Territory from July, 1862, to July, 1863; also the statement of J. H. Gilbert, the principal compositor on the Book of Mormon. The extreme care in allowing the printer to have but a small amount of copy at a time is a subject of ridicule in nearly all anti-Mormon books that treat of this period. In addition to all this is the evidence of the manuscript in the hands of the Whitmer family, nearly every page of which is in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery, and by being divided into "takes," clearly bears evidence of having passed through the printer's hands. The evidence also in the existence of portions of the original manuscript, now in the possession of President Joseph F. Smith, which was taken from its depository in one of the corner stones of the Nauvoo House, where it was placed by the hands of Joseph the Prophet, with other relics, on the occasion of laying the corner stone of that building on the 2nd of October, 1841. Unfortunately a great part of the manuscript was destroyed by dampness, but enough is preserved to establish the fact that it is the original).

Notwithstanding all the precautions taken by the little group of brethren engaged in publishing the book, the Nephite record, mutilated by interlineations of human invention, omissions, and added vulgarisms intended to destroy the work, came nearly being given to the world before the Book of Mormon itself was published. This was the work of one Esquire Cole, ex-justice of the peace, who undertook to publish the Book of Mormon, in instal-

ments, in a weekly periodical called "Dogberry Paper on Winter Hill." He obtained the use of Grandin's press nights and on Sundays, and surely must have obtained the advanced sheets of the printed forms of the Book of Mormon, which he was using, with the knowledge of Mr. Grandin; at least it is difficult to conceive how he could obtain and use them without his knowledge. Hyrum Smith, feeling uneasy concerning the security of that part of the Book of Mormon in the hands of the printer, induced Oliver Cowdery one Sunday to go with him to the printer's to see if all was well, and there they found Squire Cole at work on his Dogberry paper, and publishing mutilated extracts from the Book of Mormon. He refused to desist from his unlawful course; but Joseph was sent for and came up during the week from Harmony, and by firmly asserting his rights under the copyright law, and by threatening to prosecute those who infringed them, Cole was induced to abandon his intention of publishing the Book of Mormon in his paper.

This difficulty past, another arose. The people of Palmyra and vicinity held a mass meeting and passed a resolution pledging themselves not to purchase the Book of Mormon when published, and to use their influence to prevent others from purchasing it. This had the effect of causing Mr. Grandin to suspend printing until he could obtain renewed assurances of receiving the amount agreed upon for printing the edition of five thousand. Again the Prophet was sent for, and again he made the journey from Harmony to Palmyra, quieted the fears of Mr. Grandin by renewed assurances on the part of himself and Martin Harris that the amount agreed upon would be paid. The work proceeded, and at last issued from the press, notwithstanding all the difficulties it had encountered (See Lucy Smith's "History of the Prophet Joseph," ch. xxxiii).

Organization of the Church.—Whilst the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, we still continued to bear testimony and give information, as far as we had opportunity; and also made known to our brethren that we had received a commandment to organize the Church; and

accordingly we met together for that purpose, at the house of Mr. Peter Whitmer, Sen., (being six in number,)* on Tuesday, the sixth day of April, A. D., one thousand eight hundred and thirty. Having opened the meeting by solemn prayer to our Heavenly Father, we proceeded, according to previous commandment, to call on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God, and whether they were satisfied that we should proceed and be organized as a Church according to said commandment which we had received. To these several propositions they consented by a unanimous vote. I then laid my hands upon Oliver Cowdery, and ordained him an Elder of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;" after which, he ordained me also to the office of an Elder of said Church. We then took bread, blessed it, and brake it with them; also wine, blessed it, and drank it with them. We then laid our hands on each individual member of the Church present, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be confirmed members of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us to a very great degree—some prophesied, whilst we all praised the Lord, and rejoiced exceedingly.

The Church of Jesus Christ Begins its Career.—We now proceeded to call out and ordain some others of the

*The following statement is interesting as furnishing the names of these six:

Names of the six members of the Church as they were organized April 6, 1830—

Oliver Cowdery,	Peter Whitmer, Jun.,
Joseph Smith, Jun.,	Samuel H. Smith,
Hyrum Smith,	David Whitmer.

Some of these had been baptized previously; but were all baptized on the day of organization.

These names were given to Joseph Knight by Oliver Cowdery. (Signed) JOSEPH KNIGHT.

G. S. L. City Aug. 11th, 1862.

Witnesses { G. A. SMITH,
ROBT. L. CAMPBELL,
THOS. BULLOCK,
JOHN V. LONG.

SS

brethren to different offices of the Priesthood, according as the Spirit manifested unto us: and after a happy time spent in witnessing and feeling for ourselves the powers and blessings of the Holy Ghost, through the grace of God bestowed upon us, we dismissed with the pleasing knowledge that we were now individually members of, and acknowledged of God, "The Church of Jesus Christ," organized in accordance with commandments and revelations given by Him to ourselves in these last days, as well as according to the order of the Church as recorded in the New Testament. Several persons who had attended the above meeting, became convinced of the truth and came forward shortly after, and were received into the Church; among the rest, my own father and mother were baptized to my great joy and consolation; and about the same time. Martin Harris and Orrin Porter Rockwell.

SUGGESTIVE ANALYSIS.

Important Aim:

To show that the purposes of the Lord, in the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, could not be stopped by individual or community opposition.

Essentials to Emphasize:

- The unassuming character of the prophet, and the doctrine of common consent.
- The loyalty of Joseph's friends while the Book of Mormon was being published.
- The organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Student's Problems:

- Why are we called Mormons?
- Why should I now study the Book of Mormon?

Appendix

This introduction to a study of the Book of Mormon was prepared by a committee of teachers in the Brigham Young University and approved by their board for use and later by the General Church Board of Education for use in all the Church schools. As the Book of Mormon Department in the last Annual Church Teachers' Conference desired that some of the suggestions made to them by Prof. J. E. Hickman be incorporated in the pamphlet he has furnished the following directions for the use of teachers of the Book of Mormon.

1. Remember that you are to give inspiration as well as facts. Adolescence is the period of imagination and deep emotion and the feelings should be trained as well as the memory and reason. After all, it is what we feel that impels us to a better and a bigger life. It is the inspiration that you awaken in your students that counts most.

2. Show that Christ's words to Joseph in his first vision were true by describing conditions of Christendom at that time and the changes that have since been made in their creeds. Compare some of their creeds with principles of the true gospel to impress this thought.

3. Show how the words of the angel in the second vision have been fulfilled, proving it to be a true vision, (a) the coming forth of a record, (b) Joseph's name would be had for good and evil, (c) that a marvelous work was about to come forth, (d) the persecutions he and the Saints would meet, etc.

4. Review the testimonies of the witnesses—the three and the eight. Consider: (a) how they came to be witnesses, (b) what they saw, (c) Circumstances under which they viewed the records, (d) the necessity of two sets of witnesses, (e) Show that it follows the plan given in the Book of Mormon, (f) Show that in all respects they were the most competent of witnesses, (g) Show that their testimony was given both in and out of the Church, and even on their death bed.

5. Consider the 29th chapter of Isaiah and show its peculiar fulfilment in: (a) the circumstances of the coming forth of the book (b) the conditions of the religious world as described there (c) that it should cause the "wisdom of the wise to perish has done "a marvelous work and a wonder" (e) that the deaf has done "a marvelous work and a wonder" (e) that the dead should hear the words of the book, etc.

6. Review the changes in the life of the prophet during the nine years that intervened between the first vision and the organization of the Church. It was a period of divine schooling needed to prepare him to stand at the head of the great latter day work as prophet, seer and revelator.