

Questions proposed to the Mormonite Preachers

Boston Investigator 2 (August 10, 1832):2, Boston, Massachusetts

Questions proposed to the Mormonite Preachers and their answers obtained before the whole assembly at Julian Hall, Sunday Evening, August 5, 1832.

Question—Where is Joseph Smith now or where is he supposed to be?

Answer—In the state of Ohio—town and county stated, but not taken down.

Q.—By what means did he discover the golden plates and who was with him when he made the discovery.

A.—The golden plates were discovered through the ministration of an angel of the Lord, by Joseph Smith—no one else was with him at the time of the discovery.

Q.—By whom was a *fac simile* of some part of the language and characters taken, and on what material.

A.—It was taken by Joseph Smith on paper from the original plates themselves.

Q.—By whom was this presented to Dr. Mitchell, and at what period?

A.—By Martin Harris, one of the witnesses who had seen the plates—do not exactly know at what time.

Q.—Is that *fac simile*, now in being, and if so where is it?

A.—It is, or it was in being—I have seen it.

Q.—In what manner was the interpretation, or translation made known, and by whom was it written?

A.—It was made known by the spirit of the Lord through the medium of the Urim and Thummim; and was written partly by Oliver Cowdery, and partly by Martin Harris.

Q.—What do you mean by Urim and Thummim?

A.—The same as were used by the prophets of old, which were two crystal stones, placed in bows something in the form of spectacles, which were found with the plates.

Q.—What became of the plates after the translation was made?

A.—They were delivered into the hands of the angel of the Lord by whom they were afterwards shown to the three witnesses, who have testified to that effect.

Q.—At what place was the translation made?

A.—Partly at Manchester, Ontario county, N.Y. where the plates were found, and partly on the banks of the Susquehannah river in Pennsylvania.

Q.—How many were present at the time and who?

A.—Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris—and several others at least part of the time whose names were mentioned but not taken down.

Q.—When were the plates seen by the eight who saw them, and who have testified to that fact; before they were translated, or since?

A.—They were seen at different times while they were in the hands of Joseph Smith and during the time of their translation.

Q.—Did they see the *fac simile* also, and if so, did they compare the *fac simile* with the plates to see if they agreed?

A.—They saw the *fac simile* also, but did not compare it with the plates to see whether it agreed or not.

Q.—Who is Mr. Anthony who saw the *fac simile*? is he still living, or not?

A.—He was a professor of languages in the city of New-York, but we do not know whether he is now living or not.

Q.—By what means was the spot made known to the men who travelled for the purpose, where the city is to be built?

A.—It was made known by the spirit of the Lord.

Q.—In what way?

A.—In answer to their prayers.

Q.—This is all poetry to me—was there any visible token that unbelievers could have either seen or heard?

A.—I do not know that there was—there probably was not.

Q.—Do the members of the new church, New-Jerusalem Church, Mount Zion, or by whatever name it is called, give up their property to be held in common, or not?

A.—They hold their property in common, and the land is divided out to each one in proportion to what he can cultivate, without any regard to what he put in.

Q.—What is the government of the church, and how are its officers appointed?

A.—The government is of the Lord. They have Elders, Deacons, and Stewards, who receive their appointments from the Lord, and are ordained by the officers for the time being.

Q.—Do the people elect their own officers?

A.—They do not.

Q.—To what sect of Christendom do they approximate the nearest in opinion in regard to a future state of being?

A.—I do not know, for I am not much acquainted with the opinions of other sects; they do not agree however with any.

Q.—Do they hold to a future punishment of the wicked, and if so, do they believe in the doctrine of endless misery?

A.—They hold to the punishment of the wicked in a future state; and those who are finally so unfortunate as to be cast off will be endlessly miserable.

To the "Book of Mormon" there are annexed the following certificates.

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES.

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, his brethren, and also of the people of Jared, which 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 shewn 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 marvellous 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.

AND ALSO THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES.

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jr. the Author and Proprietor of this work, has shewn 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 shewn 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, JR.
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

It will be perceived by the above that out of twelve persons named, as being concerned in this record, as it is called, five are by the name of "Whitmer," and four (including the prophet) by the name of "Smith." Hence all excepting Cowdery, Harris and Page, appear to belong to two families. And how many of these are the real imposters, and how many are or have been their dupes, and who, we would not undertake to say. Let the imposture be divided among them as they can best agree. Our question is, how could the plates of gold, which were really material, be supported in the hands of an angel—a

being purely ethereal, serial, or immaterial? Convince us of this fact, and that they were actually so supported, and we can believe the whole story. What become of the Urim and Thummim?—did the angel take them away too?

Apparently, it was Orson Hyde who answered the twenty-one questions asked by Abner Kneeland. The following was recorded in Orson Hyde's Journal:

[August 5, 1832:]

5 preached at Julian Hall an infidel establishment and the infidels came out generally a number of hundred and paid good attention told them about the coming forth of the Book &c and also that they must repent or they would perish afternoon met with the Brethren and Sisters at Sister Brewers broke bread &c had a good time Evening went to the infidel meeting upon their invitation, and then spoke had written down I should think about a dozen or more Questions, and he called me to him and asked me to read the questions, I read them he then asked me if I was willing to answer them before the congregation I told him I was, and I did so, he then took up the subject and commenced arguing against it and we prayd that he might be confounded, and really he did not make out much or raise any insurmountable objections he gave us liberty to speak after he got through & we took away his objections and showed the people that he had contradicted his own statement &c came away

(Orson Hyde Journal, LDS Archives)

Samuel H. Smith, the missionary companion of Orson Hyde and one of the eight witnesses of the Book of Mormon, wrote in his journal:

[August 5, 1832:]

5th Sunday held a meeting in Julian hall where Infidels hold a meetings this was in the forenoon & we declared these things faithfully a large congregation of People & a great Part Infidels & in the afternoon had a meeting at ~~fanies~~ Fan[n]y Brewers with Brother & Sisters & Partook of the Sacrement & in the Evening Brother orson & I went to the infidel hall & a man by the name of kneelan asked us Some questions concerning this work the way & manner the reccord was found & translated & we answered them before the Publick congregation & then kneelon Preached against the work & he made Some [w]rong Statements or difrent from what we had it said was about [—] P the record & the testimony † after he had got through he gave us liberty to Spea<k> & remove his objections & then Brother orson Spake a few minutes & ~~removed his~~ Showed the incorrectness of <Some> his Statements & then told them to repent & we left them

(Samuel H. Smith Journal, LDS Archives)