

W. A. Holman, County Treasurer.

J. S. Hughes, Banker, Richmond.

James Hughes, Banker, Richmond.

D. P. Whitmer, Attorney-at-Law.

Hon. Jas. W. Black, Attorney-at-Law.

Thos. McGinnis, ex-Sheriff Ray County.

J. P. Quesenberry, Merchant.

W. R. Holman, Furniture Merchant.

Lewis Slaughter, Recorder of Deeds.

Geo. W. Buchanan, M. D.

A. K. Reyburn."

From the Richmond, (Mo.) *Conservator*, March 24, 1881.

AN EXPLANATION.

"Elsewhere we publish a letter from David Whitmer, an old and well-known citizen of Ray, as well as an indorsement of his standing as a man, signed by a number of the leading citizens of this community, in reply to some unwarranted aspersions made upon him.

"There is no doubt that Mr. Whitmer, who was one of the three witnesses of the authenticity of the gold plates, from which he asserts that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon (a fac simile of the characters he now has in his possession with the original records), is firmly convinced of its divine origin, and while he makes no effort to obtrude his views or beliefs, he simply wants the world to know that so far as he is concerned there is no 'variableness or shadow of turning.' Having resided here for near a half of a century, it is with no little pride that he points to his past record with the consciousness that he has done nothing derogatory to his character as a citizen and a believer in the son of Mary, to warrant such an attack on him, come from what source it may, and now with the lilies of seventy-five winters crowning him like an aureole, and his pilgrimage on earth well nigh ended, he reiterates his former statements, and will leave futurity to solve the problem that he was but a passing witness to its fulfillment. His attacks on the vileness that has sprung up with the Utah Church, must have a salutary effect upon those bigamists who have made adultery the corner-stone in the edifice of their belief."

Besides other false statements that are in the two encyclopædias above mentioned is the old story of the Spaulding manuscript. That is, that one Solomon Spaulding who died in Amity, Penn., in 1816, had written a romance, the scene of which was among the ancient Indians who lived in this country. That Spaulding died before he published his romance, and that Sydney Rigdon got hold of the manuscript in a printing office and copied it; that subsequently the manuscript was returned to Solomon Spaulding; that thirteen years after the death of Spaulding, in 1829, Rigdon became associated with Joseph Smith, who read the Spaulding manuscript from behind a blanket to Oliver Cowdery, his amanuensis, who wrote it down. Hence the origin of the Book of Mormon. This is what is claimed by the enemies of the book: Satan had to concoct some plan to account for the origin of that book. I will say that all who desire to investigate the Spaulding manuscript story will not be obliged to go very far before they will see the entire

falsity of that claim. I testify to the world that I am an eye-witness to the translation of the greater part of the Book of Mormon. Part of it was translated in my father's house in Fayette, Seneca County, N. Y. Farther on I give a description of the manner in which the book was translated.

When the Spaulding story was made known to believers in the book, they called for the Spaulding manuscript, but it could not be found; but recently, thanks to the Lord, the original manuscript has been found and identified. It has been placed in the library of Oberlin college, Oberlin, Ohio, for public inspection. All who have doubts about it being the original Spaulding manuscript, can satisfy themselves by visiting Oberlin and examining the proofs. The manuscript is in the hands of those who are not believers in the Book of Mormon. They have kindly allowed the believers in the book to publish a copy of the manuscript, with the proofs that it is the manuscript of Solomon Spaulding. There is no similarity whatever between it and the Book of Mormon. Any one who investigates this question will see that the Spaulding manuscript story is a fabrication concocted by the enemies of the Book of Mormon, in order to account for the origin of that book. Neither Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris or myself ever met Sydney Rigdon until after the Book of Mormon was in print. I know this of my own personal knowledge, being with Joseph Smith, in Seneca County, N. Y., in the winter of 1830, when Sydney Rigdon and Edward Partridge came from Kirtland, Ohio, to see Joseph Smith, and where Rigdon and Partridge saw Joseph Smith for the first time in their lives.

The Spaulding manuscript story is a myth; there being no direct testimony on record in regard to Rigdon's connection with the manuscript of Solomon Spaulding.

I have in my possession the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery and others, also the original paper containing some of the characters transcribed from one of the golden plates, which paper Martin Harris took to Professor Anthon, of New York, for him to read "*the words of a book that is sealed*:" but the learned professor, although a great linguist could not read the language of the Nephites. There is some evidence in the American Cyclopædia favorable to the Book of Mormon that I will speak of. It is as follows:

"Martin Harris called upon Prof. Anthon, of New York, with a 'transcript on paper which Smith had given him of the characters on one of the golden plates.' 'This paper,' Prof. Anthon said, in a letter dated 'New York, Feb. 17, 1834, 'was in fact a singular scroll. It consisted 'of all kinds of crooked characters, disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time 'a book containing various alphabets. Greek and Hebrew letters, crosses 'and flourishes, Roman letters, inverted or placed sideways, were arranged 'and placed in perpendicular columns,' etc. The '*learned*' could not read it, and the book was delivered to him that is not learned. I will quote two verses from the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, which is the prophecy regarding this matter.

"And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the book is delivered

to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee : and he saith, I am not learned."

(Verses 11 and 12.) No man could read it, but God gave to an unlearned boy the gift to translate it.

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.

The characters I speak of are the engravings on the golden plates from which the book was translated. They were engraved thereon by the hand of a holy prophet of God whose name was Mormon, who lived upon this land four hundred years after Christ. Mormon's son, Moroni, after witnessing the destruction of his brethren, the Nephites, who were a white race — they being destroyed by the Lamanites (Indians) — deposited the golden plates in the ground, according to a command of God. An angel of the Lord directed Brother Joseph to them. The language of the Nephites is called the reformed Egyptian language.

I will give you the preface to the Book of Mormon, written by Moroni, and translated in the same manner as the Book was translated.

PREFACE.

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MORMON UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI.

"Wherefore, it is an abridgement 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 prophesy 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.

"An abridgement 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.