

ACCOUNTS FROM OTHERS—ON THE THREE WITNESSES

9.9 *Lucius Fenn's Letter to Birdseye Bronson, February 12, 1830, Extract*

Source Note

Letter, Lucius Fenn to Birdseye Bronson, February 12, 1830, William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, in Holland, "Mormon Americana," 387–88.

Editorial Note

This letter was written in Covert, New York, a hamlet near the west side of Cayuga Lake about twenty-five miles south-southeast of the Peter Whitmer farm. Although the narrative of the Book of Mormon it relates is somewhat garbled, it is an important historical artifact because several details are accurate and because "it is the oldest known contemporary evidence, other than newspaper notices, of the rumors that preceded the appearance of the Book of Mormon itself."¹³

Not only that, but other than the testimony of the three witnesses itself (which would not appear in the published Book of Mormon for another six weeks) this letter includes the first-known reference to an angel appearing to three men.

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there is something that has taken place lately that is mysterious to us it is this there has been a bible found by 3 men but a short distance from us which is something remarkable we think. There was it is said an angel appeared to these 3 men and told them there was a bible concealed in such a place and if one of them would go to that place he would find it he went and found as the angel said it was in a stone chest what is most to be wondered at is this that the man that found it could not read at all in the English language but he read [read?] this bible and nobody else cannot it has been concealed there for fourteen hundred years it is written on a kind of gold leaf it is the same that our is only there is an addition to it they are a printing it in Palmyra it is expected that it will come out soon so that we can see it speaks of the Millennium day and tells when it is a going to take place and it talks that the man that is to find this bible his name as Joseph and his fathers name as Joseph. Some people think that it is all a speculation and some think that something is going to take place different from what has been for my part I do not know how it will be but

it is something singular to me, as it respects religion there has been considerable of an attention paid to it this winter between these lakes and there has been considerable many as we humbly hope have been [renewed?] by the grace of God there is a general solemnity upon the people generally in these parts and we hope that there will be a greater outpouring of the spirit than ever . . .

9.10 *Observer and Telegraph Articles, November 18, 1830*

Source Note

Observer and Telegraph, Hudson, Ohio, November 18, 1830; two separate articles—the first an editorial and the second a letter from “A. S.,” with an excerpt from the Book of Mormon attached.

Document Transcript

THE GOLDEN BIBLE

We should be slow to believe that any set of men would accept to play off upon the community, so barefaced a deception as that which our correspondent speaks; and equally slow to believe, that any could be found so credulous as to be duped and led astray by it,—did we not know, that men are the same depraved beings that ever they were; did we not know, that it is a crime which Heaven has laid to the charge of our fallen race, that they “seek out many inventions”—that “they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies.” While unruly passion sways the empire of the heart, and guilt draws its film over the moral vision, and a cloud of ignorance darkens the intellect, it would be strange if men should go straight forward in the narrow path. It would be strange if, in their bewilderment, they did not listen to the cry, “lo here, and lo there.” So it has been in all ages of the world—and so it will continue to be, until the minds of men are enlightened, and their hearts warmed by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. Since commencing this article, we have received information, which goes to corroborate the statements made in the communication of our correspondent, and also furnishes several additional particulars. The Elder referred to, is the famous Campbellite leader, who has made so much noise on the Reserve for a few months past. He has finally concluded to receive the new Revelation, and has actually been baptized, (now for the third time.) “The common stock family” mentioned in the communication, is a club of Campbellites, who have all things common. It is said that they hold their meetings till late at night, and afterwards retire to the river, and baptize by the score. They profess to have the power of working miracles. Having given out that they would perform a miraculous cure upon a person who was sick, an assembly collected to witness the experiment, when lo, there was a