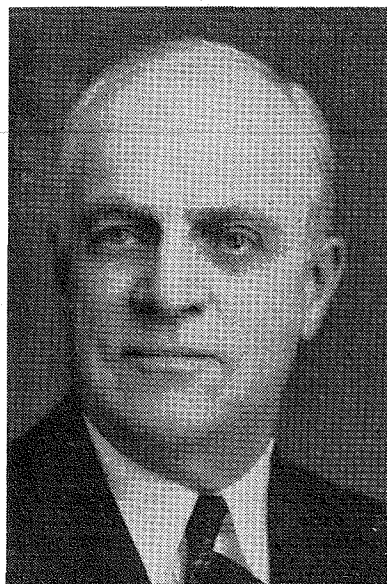


The Origin, Purpose, and Preservation of the Book of Mormon

Given at the Book of Mormon Institute on Monday, January 8

By Israel A. Smith



THE SUBJECT of my discussion, as you and I know it, is an English account of certain alleged historical records of peoples who lived in the Western Hemisphere, or New World, some hundreds of years ago. Said records are alleged to have been revealed to one Joseph Smith, Jr., by the power of God, and by him translated, by the same power, into English. We have seen what purports to be translations of this book into a few other languages, and we have heard that it has been translated into some thirty or more different languages.

Latter Day Saints—at least we of the Reorganized Church—believe the Books of Mormon we have published are authentic historical records. We presume the various translations sponsored by the Mormons are more or less correct translations of the original Book of Mormon published by Joseph Smith, Jr., in 1830, at Palmyra, New York, known as the Palmyra Edition.

We Latter Day Saints believe this book, speaking as to our issues at least, is an authentic record; that the claims of Joseph Smith with respect to the plates or records, their revelation and translation, are true. We aver these *are* facts.

As a member of the Reorganized Church, and especially as a descendant of Joseph Smith, I subscribe unreservedly to the claims of Latter Day Saints with respect to this rec-

ord, its discovery and translation, and I trust I shall be able to make an accurate, judicial, and sufficient presentation of the subject assigned to me.

Now to amplify what I have already stated. Perhaps no more concise but inclusive statement can be made than the one on the title page of the Palmyra Edition which, so far as other editions put out by the original church (The Palmyra 1830 and the Kirtland 1837 editions) and by the Reorganized Church are concerned, has continued to be a part of the title page. (I cannot speak advisedly as to editions of the book put out by the Mormons.) It bears every appearance of authenticity. Here it is in its entirety:

THE BOOK OF MORMON

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 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.

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. 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.

Joseph Smith, in referring to the title page, said:

I wish also 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's 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.

Origin

It is unnecessary to go back of the abridgment made by Moroni to the records of which he testified, for the latter stand or fall as his abridgment is established or discredited. In fact, the evidence as to the fuller records is, as we must admit, in the nature of hearsay testimony. This objection may be urged, to be frank, against the Moroni abridgment—but we *do* have the supporting evidence of the three and the eight witnesses as to the existence of plates or records, which is, of course, lacking as to the others. And the testimony of these witnesses was affirmed by all of

them throughout their lives, a fact which, in the light of human experience, suggests forcefully or convincingly that they told the truth. Many persons do not conspire to do an evil or unlawful thing without some of them exposing the conspiracy. This argument has greater weight when it is shown that some of the witnesses parted company with the church which was founded contemporaneously with the publication of the Book bearing their attestation. And here is their testimony:

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, 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 bare 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.

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

Joseph Smith's widow, Emma Smith Bidamon, also gave her testimony as to the existence of the plates.

Joseph Smith's story of early personal spiritual experiences prior to the possession of the plates is of course well known to and believed by us. Some years after the church had been organized, he began to publish a biographical sketch of his life. Enemies of the church and writers who condemn him in advance and write to justify their particular theses, have used this late biographical effort to establish a claim advanced in late years, that such early experiences as he (in 1838) was describing were an "after-thought," self-serving in their nature, an attempt to impose further on the credulity of his people now numbering a few thousands.

I have in the month just past seen some early newspapers in the files of the Library of Congress, some printed as early as 1831. These papers carried accounts of the new religious movement begun by Joseph Smith, in such terms that the writers must have heard the story of his experiences in the woods when he was but fifteen years old, and of those he alleged had followed. Evidently they were being told by the elders to their converts. But to avoid any hiatus in our sequence, let us quote from the Prophet himself.

In speaking of an angelic visitor who came to him three times during one night, he alleged the angel on his second and third visits repeated and enlarged upon what he said before. He said, speaking of the first visit:

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 Nephi [this name is given Moroni in the Doctrine and Covenants 26: 2 and 110: 20], 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 source 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 was what constituted seers in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

As to the second visitation:

I lay musing on the singularity of the scene and marvelling greatly at what had been told 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 at my bedside. He commenced and again related the very same things which he had done at his 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. He having related these things he again ascended as he had done before.

And here is a quotation from his statement as to the third visit that same night:

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 but that of building the kingdom, otherwise I could not get them.

After relating these things to his father, he said that he went to the place "where the messenger had told" him the plates were deposited, . . . "and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there."

He then told of finding the stone box with the plates and the Urim and Thummim, but was not allowed to take them—in fact though he visited the place every year it was not until September 22, 1827, that he was allowed to remove them—

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.

Recently a member of the Utah church came to my home and engaged me in a lengthy conversation in the course of which I made reference to the statement of the messenger at the first visitation, where he said "that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior . . ." in the records of the gold plates; that the term "everlasting" connoted eternally the same—from the beginning to the end, and that the Book of Mormon made reference to the doctrine about which we were talking. To that this Mormon responded: "But you know we do not have all of the Book of Mormon." And since the question raised has to do with the origin and preservation divisions of my subject, I have felt led to discuss this matter somewhat.

Joseph Smith, when some 116 pages had been translated, was persuaded by Martin Harris to take them to show to others, and in some way never fully ex-

plained, these pages were lost and never recovered—a strange incident, to say the least. Sections 2 and 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants deal with this matter of the lost manuscript. Joseph Smith was told not to attempt to translate or retranslate that portion of the record, because of the evil designs of wicked men, and in verses 8 and 9 of section 3, we find this language:

An account of those things which you have written, which have gone out of your hands, are engraven upon the plates of Nephi; 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.

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

There are other records made by the people of Book of Mormon times which we are told were, and we believe yet are, in existence and which many believe will come forth in the due time of the Lord. But I hardly believe these records can with propriety be called the "Book of Mormon." Certainly the references to the Book of Mormon in the revelations must be held to apply to the record which has come to us through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

So much for the origin of the Book—at least for our *claims* with respect to its origin. In this we have had to rely mainly, in the last analysis, on the account given by Joseph Smith himself, supported more or less satisfactorily by the testimony of those who joined their fortunes with the church.

There is, of course, with us believers; the fact that many have testified that the truthfulness of the Book has been made manifest to them by inspiration, a most satisfactory method to them, but not necessarily accepted by critics and inquirers generally.

Purpose

Under this division we who believe he was divinely led may properly turn to (1) the account given by Joseph Smith, (2) statements found in the Book itself, and (3) statements found in the Scriptures which have been presented by advocates of the Book as prophetic of its coming forth, and which have value in proportion as one believes they are truly prophetic of such an event as this Book named after Mormon.

Joseph Smith's Account

Under this head we include statements found in the revelations to the church which, after all, are properly a part of his account of the Book.

We go back again to his story of the angelic visitation, as found in Volume I of our *Church History*, page 13:

He said there was a book deposited written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source 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 was what constituted seers in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. 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 them saith 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.

Again, also, we have recourse to the authoritative title page:

... 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.

From an examination of the Book itself we could perhaps draw conclusions as to its purpose or purposes, since obviously the Book is corroborative of the Bible and especially supportive of the New Testament record, and is, as all candid and unbiased persons must admit, a new and remarkable witness for Jesus Christ. But, as we believe in the divine origin of the Book and in the revelations to the church through its

founder, we prefer to establish its purpose, if possible, by other and—likely to many people—more satisfactory means.

Early in the history of the Restoration Movement, which culminated in the organization of the church, revelations were given to the church by Joseph Smith, and to these we now turn.

In Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which purports to be God's "authority" and the "preface" of the entire book, we find this reference in paragraph 5:

After having received the record of the Nephites, yea, even my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., might have power to translate, through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon.

In an earlier revelation, however, given in July, 1828, we find the following:

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, and to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers; and this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites . . . and for this very purpose are these plates preserved . . . that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled which he made to his people, and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, . . . and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ.—Doctrine and Covenants 2: 5.

Again in Doctrine and Covenants 3: 15:

I will show unto this people that I had other sheep, and that they were a branch of the house of Jacob, . . . and I will also bring to light my gospel, . . . that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention, concerning the points of my doctrine.

The belief that the gospel of salvation would be restored in the latter days is fundamental to Latter Day Saintism, and in the Book of Mormon people would find the fullness of that gospel. In Doctrine and Covenants 26: 2 Moroni is mentioned as the human instrument who was "to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fullness of my everlasting gospel."

Again, in Section 42: 5 we find:

The elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the *fullness* of the gospel.

This definitely sets forth the greatest purpose of the book, since confusion for hundreds of years has existed and still exists in regard to what the gospel of Christ really is.

From these statements—and from our knowledge of its contents—we believe

(Continued on page 14.)

Origin, Purpose, and Preservation of the Book of Mormon

(Continued from page 7.)

this is the greatest value of the Book and therefore its primary purpose: to correct the awful apostasy which exists among the churches professing Jesus Christ.

In addition to what we find in Latter Day revelation, we discover that from the beginning of the Restoration resort has been had to some of the ancient prophets to show that such a work or record would come forth, from which prophetic statements the purpose or purposes of the Book are explicit or are fully implied as to the form of the church and its authority.

In early latter-day history it was said that the doctrines of the churches were a heterogeneous mixture of truth and error, with scarcely a vestige of the ancient and authorized pattern and form, to say nothing of its ancient power and authority. What Joseph Smith had brought forward cleared away all the doubt and confusion, and the Book of Mormon we claim was and is the greatest factor in such clarification.

From the blessing Jacob placed on the posterity of Joseph of Egypt, as set forth in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, there must have been some significance attached to Joseph's "branch running over the wall," meaning a flowing beyond the wall of water or the oceans, some important destiny connected therewith. Where has Manasseh or Ephraim beyond the seas had an important place in history, if not in the bringing forth of the record in the Book of Mormon?

Did not Ezekiel (chapter 37) predict a final gathering of Israel as a result of the two records of Joseph and Judah being united? Whether the present gathering of modern Israel in Palestine is or is not that "final gathering," at least two records—one of Joseph through the Book of Mormon and the "record" of Judah—*have been* united, actually placed together in one book.

This, then, if Ezekiel's prophecy as advanced by many Book of Mormon disciples is applicable to the Book of Mormon, is an *additional* purpose for such a record. At least, I am positive there appears no other event of history so nearly approximating the terms of Ezekiel's prediction.

We heard the claim that the coming forth of this Book was a complete fulfillment of prophecy found in the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah. Orson Pratt, the great Mormon preacher, made much out of this prophecy and claimed it had been fulfilled in every detail.

Without the benefit of inspiration—which might tempt one to be dogmatic—a careful reading and several rereadings cause me to believe the early advocates have been right. But, parenthetically, I propose to you young doctors of divinity that you make it project number one to learn what the doctors of divinity of former years—about the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon—had to say in an expository or interpretative way about this prophet Isaiah and his twenty-ninth chapter, as also the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel.

Would it not be enlightening and very helpful to our cause if we should find, as I believe may really be found, that the learned ecclesiastics of 120 years ago were interpreting Isaiah as prophesying something then yet to transpire in the way of a restoration of the gospel or of the church of Christ? This query has been entertained by me for some years, but I have not taken occasion to do the necessary research.

One of our former worthies, in considering Isaiah, said: "It has been abundantly proved that the Book of Mormon has been confirmed by the voice of the Lord, by the ministry of angels, by heavenly visions, or by the miraculous gifts and powers of the Holy Ghost, unto tens of thousands of witnesses."

He then quotes Revelation 14: 6, 7, to prove a restoration was predicted, and only the Latter Day Saints claimed such a restoral as John described.

But returning to Isaiah 29, the argument has been made that the second part of verse 2 refers to a people other than Ariel or Jerusalem, because "it" should be "as Ariel," that is, the same as with Ariel. What follows can obviously only apply to a people that had been destroyed, obliterated. It says,

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

In a later verse: "For Jehovah hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers, hath he covered."

Comment:

And all vision 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 can not, 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.

These words recall circumstances well known in our history: The *book* was delivered to Joseph Smith, an unlearned man. *Words* of the book were delivered to Professor Charles Anthon, a learned man.

Then follows the promise, because men could not read a "sealed book," that God will "proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder," which we believe was fulfilled in the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, and even the time thereof fixed by reference to it as an event that would happen about the same time Lebanon should "be turned into a fruitful field."

Then "shall the deaf hear the words of the book" or writing (marginal).

May we not conclude that the Lord here refers to the same book mentioned in the twelfth verse?

We therefore may rightfully hold that the Lord had a purpose in all these prophetic events, and that the Book of Mormon was certainly not the least of them.

Preservation

Under this division I assume it is intended that I deal with "the Book" made from the records and not the records themselves, since the records were not called the Book of Mormon, and I do not know that there is much to say about it.

We have read that great care of the manuscript was enjoined upon Joseph Smith, and that some 116 pages were lost. In this connection I have often marveled, *if* he were an imposter that he would make known to his small group of believers—and in July, 1828, there could not have been very many of them—such a castigation as Martin Harris received in Section 2 of the Doctrine and Covenants, for in that section Harris was called "a wicked man."

If Martin Harris had in fact been a co-conspirator, is it not human to believe he would have blasted Joseph Smith with a candid confession and exposure of some kind?

Do we not have the right to weigh men and events in the light of our knowledge of human nature? Who among us would have suffered the ignominy of such a rebuke as Harris received from a joint *voti feasor*—by which I mean a fellow wrongdoer—without exposing their joint ill-doing?

We are told that Joseph did guard the manuscript sedulously, and during the weeks the Book was in process of printing, he himself called every day at the Grandin printing office, bringing a few pages of new copy, and carefully taking back with him the pages for which the type had been set.

At this juncture I should like to deal briefly with the question—for question has been raised—respecting the original manuscript.

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We read in the history of Joseph Smith that there were a number of persons who served as his scribes. These were Oliver Cowdery, Emma Smith, Martin Harris, and one or two of the Whitmers. There is evidence that Oliver Cowdery claimed he wrote the entire book. We know this claim could not possibly apply to the original manuscript. It must therefore apply to a second copy which of course he could have written himself in its entirety.

We have a complete copy of the manuscript, and a copy was placed in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House. Why a copy or perhaps the original itself was not placed in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo Temple, laid I believe in 1842, in preference to the Nauvoo House (which was intended as a permanent home for Joseph Smith and his family), is hard to understand.

Now the Nauvoo House was in an unfinished condition—never occupied as a home—until in the 1860's when Mr. Bidamon altered the construction, changed the plan, cut it down, and completed only a portion of the structure originally begun.

The reduction in the size of the building left the original cornerstone, on the river side, out of the building. During the years, however, water had seeped into it and frozen, cracking the stone. This brought about a disintegration of the contents, and when the stone was removed and opened, much of its contents was in bad condition.

Years later Charles Bidamon, son of Major Bidamon who did the remodeling, gave some of the manuscript found in the stone to the late President Joseph Smith and some of it to Joseph F. Smith of Utah. Ever since then the Mormons have claimed to be in possession of a part of the original manuscript. Our manuscript, they say, with their usual air of superiority, is the copy.

An examination of photostats of the pages we received from Bidamon causes us to believe they were in Cowdery's handwriting.

In any event, the manuscript which we have, secured from the heirs of David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses, is most assuredly in the handwriting of a number of persons. Both Joseph Smith and Alexander Smith, sons of Emma, have identified portions as being in the handwriting of their mother. We ask why she should have been engaged in any but the original. We know she was used as a scribe in those momentous days.

My brethren, we have the original manuscript, safely kept in the vaults of the First National Bank in Kansas City. I hope during these meetings you can have the pleasure of examining it.

The Increase of Joy

(Continued from page 3.)

Some of the best things still come in small packages.

* * * *

It is probable that God would like his church to become large and convert many people. Yet latter-day revelation puts great emphasis on moral and spiritual quality. The matter of numbers is kept in second place.

There is a way of increasing our joy. We can be happier people by being better people. We can live by the gospel law. We can render service and have many friends in the gospel by doing what we can for the building of God's kingdom. We can increase our knowledge and improve our culture. We can seek the best things in life. We can make this a Christian world, and we can help to make ours a Christian nation by being better Christians ourselves.

L. J. L.

Personalities I Remember

DAVID CHAMBERS

(Continued from page 8.)

He had ordered certain dishes for supper which gave her something to think about. Aunt Laura cooked a delicious meal. We laughed heartily as we ate. What a wonder we didn't put on pounds!

The missionary preached a good sermon that night. Aunt Laura said he put as much vigor into it as he had in the shingling. It was a serious sermon, too, and deep with devotion.

We were quite cheery on the slow ride home. Aunt Laura was quick with retort, Uncle Pete's slow drawl had a wit worth listening for, and Brother Chambers could almost make you laugh at the moon!

Dear Brother Chambers: Did you impart so much of your merriment to us that you had none for your own hours of need? I am afraid so. Would it help to know that we have planned recreation in our church today? Children in a Sunday school class can go out in the middle of a service and play "drop the handkerchief" if they wish. Oh, we know so much better than we did that "A merry heart doeth good like medicine."

The Nature of Priesthood

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By Charles Fry

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