

book by reading the King James' version in parallel columns. When he came to the fourteenth verse Rabbi Kohn translated it as follows: "Therefore, behold, Joseph, I will cause to work marvelous to this people, very wonderful, and they will lose the wisdom of their wise, and (the) understanding of (the men that) understand shall hide itself."

Upon investigation we found that the same Hebrew characters and words in the thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis, and elsewhere in the Bible that are translated "Joseph," are identical with the proper noun "Joseph" in Isaiah 29: 14. Rabbi Kohn can not understand why the translators of the English Bible should have omitted the name of Joseph in their work in this verse.

The book which I obtained from Mr. Kohn is the Hebrew and English Old Testament, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society at Vienna, Austria, in 1877, compiled by Myer Levi Leteris. Rabbi Kohn has translated and published our Declaration of Independence in ten languages. He suggested that I enter his class in Hebrew this fall, saying that I would be able to read the scriptures in the original before June 1, 1910. Before we parted the old gentleman gave me fifty-five cents and requested me to order the Book of Mormon with relative tracts sent to him. I have complied with his request and have a desire to study the Hebrew language.

Rabbi Kohn said the term *Josephites* is very fittingly applied to the members of our church.

JOHN C. GRAINGER.

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#### TOLD ON THE PREACHER.

FADS AND FINANCE.—Mrs. Gramercy—"Why doesn't your church get a minister who preaches the higher criticism?"

Mrs. Dorcas—"How can we, my dear? We can't afford to pay one more than fifteen hundred dollars a year."—*Judge.*

A COINCIDENCE.—On the notice board of a church near Manchester the other day the following announcements appeared together: A potato pie supper will be held on Saturday evening. Subject for Sunday evening, "A night of agony."—*Manchester Guardian.*

"It is remarkable," said the preacher to his confidential friend at the club, "how differently people are affected by the same thing."

"How do you mean?" inquired his friend.

"Well, I was thinking of my sermon. It kept me awake four nights, and put everybody who heard it to sleep in half an hour."

One of the suburbs of Chicago is the site of a well-known school of theology, from which go out

each week-end many members of the senior class to try their voices as "supplies."

A passenger on a Monday morning train was surprised at the number of them who got off at the station.

"What are all these chaps getting off here for?" he asked the brakeman.

"Them?" asked the brakeman. Oh, they're returned empties, for the college."—*Youth's Companion.*

## Original Articles

### THE SAINTS' HERALD HISTORICAL SERIES.

THE THREE WITNESSES. A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THEIR TESTIMONY FROM A LAWYER'S STANDPOINT. THEIR CHARACTER AND HISTORY. BY S. A. BURGESS, ATTORNEY AT LAW.

The time is past when we may have the privilege our fathers had of visiting and hearing the testimony of a living witness to the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon. We may each study traditional, biblical, and archæological evidences for ourselves. We may each receive a personal testimony of its divinity by putting the matter to a fair test. (Book of Mormon, p. 775, pars. 3-5); but as to the existence and character of the plates, their material and appearance, we are dependent on the testimony of those who were present when the book came forth. Eighty years have elapsed since the plates were seen, so that the evidence pro and con is not quite definitely known.

#### THEIR TESTIMONY.

Now what is the testimony that these men commonly referred to as the "three witnesses," give? It is found in the opening of the Book of Mormon as follows:

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; that 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 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.

Their testimony as given above is also confirmed by Joseph Smith.

Not many days after the above commandment was given [section 15], 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 revelation; that they should have a view of the plates, etc. 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 arrangements I commenced, by vocal prayer to our heavenly Father, and was followed by each of the rest in succession. We did not yet, however, obtain any answer, or manifestation of the 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 would 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 discover the engravings thereon distinctly. He 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 to bear record of what you now see and hear."

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 to me, and I once more beheld, and heard the same things; whilst at the same moment Martin Harris cried out, apparently in ecstasy of joy, "'Tis enough; mine eyes have beheld," and jumping up he shouted, Hosanna, blessing God, and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly.

#### TESTIMONY OF THE EIGHT.

And this testimony is further confirmed by the testimony of *eight* other witnesses, as follows:

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

Thus we have twelve witnesses in all, twelve men testifying as to the one fact, the existence of the plates.

Here, however, we desire to take into more particular consideration the three witnesses. What is their character and credibility? Oliver Cowdery was a school-teacher in western New York, but acted as a scribe for Joseph Smith, jr., in translating the Book of Mormon. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 33.) He was baptized and ordained to the Aaronic priesthood, May 15, 1829, by Joseph Smith, jr., for whom he performed a like service. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 34.) In June, 1829, in the vicinity of Fayette,



OLIVER COWDERY.

New York, he was one of the three special witnesses to whom were shown the plates of the Book of Mormon (Church History, vol. 1, p. 46), and the same month he was called to the Melchisedec priesthood at the same time as Joseph Smith, jr. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 59.) He was also present at the first organization of the church, April 6, 1830, being one of the original six members. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 77.) Then by vote of the church he was accepted and ordained an elder. But shortly after this he severely criticised Joseph Smith, jr., on account of section 17: 7 of the Doctrine and Covenants as now published. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 113.) This matter was satisfactorily adjusted. He was present at the dedication of the Temple Lot, August 3, 1831 (Church History, vol. 1, p. 209), and also acted as missionary in Missouri and to the Indians. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 180.) In May, 1832, he was one of a committee to review and prepare the revelations for publication. (Church History, vol.

## MARTIN HARRIS.

1, p. 249.) He was editor of the *Star* at Kirtland for a time (Church History, vol. 1, p. 372); also of the *Messenger and Advocate* (Church History, vol. 1, p. 515), and on February 17, 1834, he was chosen one of the first High Council. (Doctrine and Covenants, section 99; Church History, vol. 1, p. 432.) He with the other two witnesses, on February 14, 1835, chose the first Quorum of Twelve. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 541.) He was later elected president of the High Council (Church History, vol. 2, p. 6), and on April 3, 1836, in company with Joseph Smith, jr., he saw a vision in Kirtland Temple, in which the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to them, then Moses, Elias, and Elijah in turn. (Church History, vol. 2, p. 46.) In September, 1837, he was chosen assistant counselor to the First Presidency (Church History, vol. 2, p. 107); and also acted in other capacities in the church. In 1838, some difficulty arose between him and some other officials of the church, which resulted in his expulsion on April 12, 1838. (Church History, vol. 2, p. 150.)

We see from the above that he was a man closely associated with Joseph Smith, jr., in all the early history of the church, and was in a position to know the real facts in regard to the Book of Mormon and the early history. He repeated his testimony at various times in the years immediately following the vision of the angel and the plates. But even after he had left the church, we find no variation in his testimony in regard to the divinity of the Book of Mormon; though he then believed the church had gone astray. He was a man of sterling worth, and we may rest assured that it was not fear that held him steadfast, since we see how readily he criticised Joseph Smith, jr., in the matter of Hiram Page, and what is now section 17: 7 of Doctrine and Covenants; also in the matter which led to his separation from the church.

David Whitmer informs us that he was present with Oliver Cowdery at his deathbed, March 3, 1850, and that his last words were, "Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon." (Church History, vol. 1, pp. 49, 50; David Whitmer's Address, p. 8; Church History, vol. 4, pp. 446 to 449.) Also Hiram Page, in a letter to Dr. Warren Cowdery, informs him that he, too, was present at his deathbed and Oliver Cowdery said that any organization that does not agree with the order laid down in the Bible and the Book of Mormon in the gospel dispensation, is to be rejected; knowing that for us to support such errors would be opposing the order of God, and would be worshiping the man of sin. Among his last words, was to reaffirm his testimony to the Book of Mormon. (Church History, vol. 4, p. 515.)

Martin Harris was a man of business, of good standing, and assisted Joseph Smith, jr., in printing the Book of Mormon, although he informs us he lost nothing whatever by that work. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 52.) Mr. Harris was born May 18, 1783, Saratoga County, New York; moved to Palmyra about 1792, where he met Joseph Smith, jr., in 1827. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 18.) In February, 1828, he visited Doctor Mitchill and Professor Anthon with a transcript of the characters from the plates of the Book of Mormon. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 19.) After the plates were restored to Joseph, Mr. Harris acted as scribe from April to June, 1828. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 23.) He also was one of the three witnesses in June, 1829 (Church History, vol. 1, p. 46), as well as being one of the six original members of the church, April 6,

1830. (Church History, vol. 4, p. 108.) He was present at the dedication of the Temple Lot in Jackson County, Missouri, August, 1831, (Church History, vol. 1, p. 209,) and was also a member of the first church. (Doctrine and Covenants, section 99; Church History, vol. 1, p. 432.) He went on several missions during these early years, but in September, 1837, was objected to as a



MARTIN HARRIS.

member of the High Council. (Church History, vol. 2, p. 108.) After the death of Joseph Smith, jr., Mr. Harris remained at Kirtland for a number of years, being associated with David Whitmer in a faction for a short time (Church History, vol. 3, pp. 79 to 82); but in 1870 he went to Utah, where he died, July 10, 1875. (Church History, vol. 4, p. 108.)

He is generally considered to have been disaffected and to have withdrawn from active relations with the church before the death of Joseph Smith, jr., but despite his disaffection, we find him time and again reaffirming his testimony, in 1853 to David B. Dille, at Kirtland, Ohio, again in letters to Mr. Emerson, November 23, 1870, and January, 1871. While Simon Smith states that he was present with Martin Harris during his last sickness about four days before his death, and says, "He (Martin Harris) certified to me that his testimony in connection with the Book of Mormon was true, and added: 'I

tell you these things that you may tell others. I can not and dare not deny it lest the power of God consume me.'” (Church History, vol. 1, pp. 51 to 53.) Also Martin Harris, jr., in an obituary published in the *Ogden Junction*, says that his father always bore a “faithful and undeviating testimony to the divinity of the Book of Mormon, whether in Kirtland, in the midst of the wicked and ungodly, or in Utah.” Also, “He was in his happiest mood when he could get somebody to listen to his testimony, and he never appeared to get tired of talking about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and testifying to its truth. . . . His last audible words were something about the Book of Mormon and the three witnesses.”—Church History, vol. 4, pp. 108, 109. So we see that despite his disaffection, he still remained firm to his testimony even to the end.

#### DAVID WHITMER.

The third witness, David Whitmer, was also an early associate of Joseph Smith, jr., and was baptized in June, 1829, (Church History, vol. 1, p. 44.)



DAVID WHITMER.

about the time of the vision of the plates. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 46.) Considerable of the translation of the Book of Mormon was done in his father's house. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 42.) He went on various missions, and July 3, 1834, was elected president of the High Council of Zion in Clay County, Missouri. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 503.) But in 1837 he was arrayed with others against Joseph Smith, jr. (Church History, vol. 2, p. 101.) Although November 7, 1837, finds him elected as president of the Far West Branch, he was deposed from office the following February, (Church History, vol. 2, p. 142,) and expelled from the church the following April 13, 1838. (Church History, vol. 2, p. 150.) He became president of a small faction at Kirtland for a short time (Church History, vol. 3, p. 78 and following), but was unalterably opposed to polygamy and the church in Utah. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 55; “Address to all believers in Christ,” pp. 8, 9.) At the death of Oliver Cowdery he received from him the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, which has the original printers' marks. (Church History, vol. 4, pp. 245 and 458; General Conference Minutes, p. 1129; Church History,

vol. 4, pp. 446 to 448.) Orson Pratt with others visited him and told him simply to name his price for the manuscript, that the church in Utah had millions behind it, and were ready to pay him his price. He showed his sterling character in informing them that it was not for sale, not at any price, and that “there is not enough gold in the world to purchase them” from him. (Church History, vol. 4, p. 447.) After his death the manuscript was turned over by his heirs to Joseph Smith, President of the Reorganized Church. (General Conference Minutes, 1128.) Mr. Whitmer lived until January 25, 1888, (Church History, vol. 4, p. 587,) and so had a longer opportunity than the others of bearing his testimony. One of the encyclopedias printed that the three witnesses had denied their testimony. This caused Mr. Whitmer to come forth time and again in defense of his testimony and that of his associates, (Church History, vol. 1, pp. 54 to 58; vol. 4, pp. 361 to 371, 446 to 449, 587.) Although he had been disassociated from the church for nearly fifty years, and men went to him even in his last years to secure a denial from him of his testimony. (Church History, vol. 4, pp. 361, 447, 448; *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881.) Without there being any possibility of anyone being able to disprove it, had he denied it, since he was the last of the whole twelve witnesses, still he remained unalterably, unchangeably firm to the end. He was visited time and again by men of the church and by others, but it was invariably to reaffirm his testimony. In March, 1881, he issued “An address to all believers in Christ” (Church History, vol. 4, p. 350), touching on the point of the denial of his testimony as one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon. Therein he said:

It having been represented by one John Murphy, of Polo, Caldwell County, Missouri, that I, in a conversation with him last summer, denied my testimony as one of the three witnesses to the “Book of Mormon.”

To the end, therefore, that he may understand me now, if he did not then; and that the world may know the truth, I wish now, standing as it were, in the very sunset of life, and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public statement:

That I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with that book, as one of the three witnesses. Those who know me best, well know that I have adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all my statements, as then made and published.

“He that hath ear to hear, let him hear;” it was no delusion! What is written is written, and he that readeth let him understand.

To this statement there is attached the following, signed by twenty-two of the most representative citizens of that place:

We, the undersigned citizens of Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, where David Whitmer has resided since the year A. D. 1838, certify that we have been long and intimately acquainted with him and know him to be a man of the highest integrity, and of undoubted truth and veracity.

*The Richmond Conservator*, March 24, 1881, publishes the above statement, and the editor voluntarily adds:

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 Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon (a facsimile of the characters he now has in his possession with the original records), is firmly convinced of its divine origin. . . . 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.—Church History, vol. 1, pp. 56, 57.

#### NO ONE OF THE WITNESSES EVER RETRACTED.

Many other such testimonies could be given, but to avoid too great length we will close with the statement that on his deathbed, after asking the physician who attended him whether or not he was in his right mind, and securing an affirmative answer, "He then addressed himself to all around his bedside in these words, 'I want to say to you all, the Bible and the record of the Nephites (Book of Mormon) is true, so you can say you have heard me bear my testimony on my deathbed. God bless you all. My trust is in Christ for ever, worlds without end, Amen.'"

It is worthy of note that not one of the eight witnesses, nor Joseph Smith, jr., ever denied their testimony, though several of the eight witnesses also became disaffected.

None of these men seemed to fear or hesitate to denounce a wrong, whenever they believed one appeared. All were in a position to know whereof they spoke. Yet, having every reason to change their testimony, if it were not true, and such temptations as would have caused many men to change it, even though it were true, still one and all remained steadfast until death had sealed their testimony. All appear to have been honorable, truthful men, and a careful consideration at this time would modify some of the harsh statements made on both sides at the time of the difficulties in Missouri, when they separated from the church. Nothing has been shown affecting their credibility in any way, so far as we have been able to discover.

#### SUMMARY OF POINTS.

Now what was their testimony? 1. That they saw the plates, from which the book was translated. 2. They saw the engravings upon the plates. 3. These things were shown them by an angel. 4. They heard the voice of God declaring that the translation was by the power of God, and that by the grace of God and his power they beheld and bore record, a thing marvelous in their sight, as it would be in the eyes of all men, but nevertheless true. 5. That the voice of God commanded them that they bear record, wherefore to be obedient unto the com-

mandments of God they bear this testimony. 6. That they now know the work is true. 7. That the plates have been translated by the power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto them. (Church History, vol. 1, pp. 47, 48.)

On all these points their testimony is confirmed by Joseph Smith, jr., and on the first and second points, as to the existence of the plates and the engravings thereon, their testimony is confirmed also by eight other witnesses, making twelve, in all.

The eight testify:

1. Joseph Smith had shown them the plates. 2. The plates had the appearance of gold. 3. They handled the plates, and particularly the leaves Joseph Smith had translated. 4. They saw the engravings thereon. 5. The engravings looked like ancient work. 6. They had not only seen, but had also hefted, and so knew the plates were material and real. (Church History, vol. 1, p. 48.)

Other points of explanation and description as to the size and appearance of the plates are proved by their oral and written testimony at other times and places to wit: The plates were about six by nine inches, and six inches thick, thin like tin, and attached together by a ring at the back, and that part of them were sealed. (Church History, vol. 1, pp. 50 to 52.)

#### OBJECTIONS.

But it is objected that the testimony agrees with that in the Doctrine and Covenants, regarding the character of the plates. Suppose that it did not agree? We think there would then exist much stronger objection. While it agrees in all the essential particulars, as we might expect, if true, the style and writing is such as to show that the statements in the Book of Mormon and those in the Doctrine and Covenants were not written by the same person, as the style is quite dissimilar, as must appear on examination.

The next objection is made that there should be but three witnesses (Book of Mormon, 150: 133, 134; 726: 2, 3; Doctrine and Covenants 4: 3), while in fact there were eleven besides the translator. A careful examination of the above statements will show that three special witnesses were foretold, also that the plates should not be generally shown, yet no statement prevents them from being shown to a few others at the command of the Lord. In fact the book itself says, "And there is none others which shall view it, *save it be a few*, according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men."—Book of Mormon, 150: 134. "Save it be a few" is sufficient to justify the eight witnesses.

A few have claimed that the witnesses have denied their testimony, but on the most favorable view this seems to be a misunderstanding, or misrepresent-

sentation. There has not been a single instance where anyone of them denied or contradicted his testimony in any material point, but rather they reaffirmed it even in the face of death.

It is again objected that their testimony is not independent statements, but a joint draft. As to this, it will be noted that since all testified to the one event, for economy of space it was wisdom that they should all sign one statement. But many other times did they give their separate testimony, both orally and in writing, whether among friends or among those who desired to undo their work. (See citations above.)

A further objection is that the revelation of Martin Harris told him to lie. (Doctrine and Covenants 5:5.) A careful reading of this paragraph is all that is necessary to show this statement is not true, and the objection not well taken.

Another objection is that their testament does not speak of their seeing the Urim and Thummim, the Breastsplate, and other things as provided for in the Doctrine and Covenants. (Doctrine and Covenants 15:1.) This is true so far as the single statement in the Book of Mormon is concerned, since in it the only material features were those which related to the plates of that book. But in their individual testimony this objection is fairly met, since there they state they saw the other articles. Church History, vol. 1, p. 50; vol. 4, pp. 361, 370, 447.)

The only other explanation ever offered has been the Solomon Spalding Manuscript. But the presumptions are so numerous, there is so little evidence to sustain them, that even its principal defenders have admitted it will not stand examination. We are now told there were four Solomon Spalding manuscripts. Why four? Simply because their testimony is so contradictory that it would take that many different drafts to protect all the witnesses. Given the facts, that a man in a certain State, writing a manuscript, and another man enters the same State, they assume without evidence that (1) the manuscript is of a certain character; (2) that this manuscript is stolen; (3) that it was stolen by the second man. By making such presumptions as these, it would be easy to prove any man a criminal.

#### THE LOGIC OF THE SITUATION.

Affirmatively then, we have the unimpeached testimony of twelve men to the actual existence of the plates and the characters thereon. They are men who were in a position to know and of such characters as to be worthy of belief. Again, one who can say, "I saw," is worth more than a thousand who would say, "I did not see, and therefore, do not believe." In this case twelve men saw and handled. The most conservative conclusion we can make, is, that plates of that character were then in existence,

and those plates had the appearance of gold, and on them were marks of ancient appearance; that four of these witnesses heard a voice or manifestation, which was not of themselves, and which they believed to be divine.

Ordinarily we would rest here, but some undertake arbitrarily to reject the evidence and say it is not according to earthly logic, nor in accordance with the rules of evidence. This we suggest is rather a confusion of terms. "Logic is the branch of philosophy that treats of forms of thinking in general, and more especially of inference and of scientific method."—Murry's Dictionary, vol. 6, p. 401. A form of thinking, a method of reasoning, which proves some part of truth, and utterly fails when used to test some other portion of truth, is fatally defective; if there is such a system. But usually the difficulty is not so much with the logic as it is a certain unwillingness or inability to accept the conclusions of logic unless those conclusions fall within our own very narrow experience. It is true that we do not now *know* in the absolute sense of the word. Our knowledge is relative. Or as one great logician states it, "Now we see through a glass, darkly."

#### THE LAWS OF EVIDENCE.

As to the laws of evidence, that standard work, Greenleaf on Evidence (sixteenth edition), states: "While unbounded credulity is the attribute of weak minds, which seldom think or reason at all, . . . unlimited skepticism belongs only to those who make their knowledge and observation the exclusive standard of probability."—Page 22.

The laws of evidence do not prevent proof by any means, though in any particular case it will demand the *best* evidence obtainable, and that such evidence be relevant to the case.

Merely because the evidence offered does not come within our personal experience, would hardly be sufficient grounds to justify its rejection. The King of Siam would not believe the Danish Ambassador when he told him of ice and snow, that the rivers of Denmark became solid during part of the year. Shall we believe, if one tells us, that after the long polar night the snow is purple at the North Pole? When we were told that geraniums grow in California six or seven feet high, we doubted it very much, but that did not change the fact. One hundred years ago, who would have believed it, if a picture of to-day with its various modes of rapid transit, electric lights, telegraph, and telephone had been reported? Yet we have passed even that stage and have wireless telegraphy and aviation. Also the society for psychic research is gradually establishing some facts, which are outside the realm of mathematics or chemistry, though their parallel is found in the pages of history. In fact, the following has been repeatedly held by our highest courts:

"Express testimony can not be rejected on the sole grounds of its improbability." (16 N. J. Eq. 172.)

"It would be a monstrous proposition, that an improbable fact can not be established in a court of law." (113 F. R. 378.)

Again, "Science has not yet drawn, and probably never will draw, a continuous and permanent line between the possible and impossible, the knowable and unknowable. . . . Advance in the use of electricity and experiments in telepathy, hypnotism, and clairvoyance warn us against dogmatism." (Post vs. U. S., 135 F. R. 1.)

Human knowledge is acquired in but a small part from our own perception and reflection. The greater portion comes from others. Children believe all things, till later finding some things not true, they learn to distrust. So in later life we learn to test, and hence come to a more rational belief. Every fact is tested by facts previously accepted as known or believed; but we should not, for this reason, unduly distrust all others.

Even in that one science capable of exact demonstration, mathematics, ignorance will prevent belief and proof. Unless he has learned the fundamental principles and then progressed, so his mind is able to receive, algebra, let alone calculus, is to him a realm unknown. A certain one says that he does not believe we know anything about the distance of the sun, moon, and stars; that it is all the merest assertion. Though he be a man of considerable education, yet if he does not know trigonometry, the demonstration or even the most ordinary proof is difficult, if not impossible. Yet it does not change the fact that with a probable error, enormous when stated in miles, yet relatively small, some fairly accurate demonstrations can be made.

We do not and can not expect the same method of proof and experiment for mathematics, chemistry, physics, psychology, and sociology, to say nothing of the spiritual realm. Yet the same method of proving all things, of earnestly seeking the truth regardless of what it may be, can be and should be used in the study of each and all. Qualification as a mathematician does not fit one to talk Greek, nor does chemistry prepare for psychical researches, although such an one should be able to more quickly prepare himself for intelligent study and experiment.

Logically, the conclusion we should draw from the testimony of these twelve men is not at all uncertain. From the standpoint of evidence the great preponderance sustains them. The ability of these twelve men to observe accurately and to report correctly, what they have seen, has never been impeached, nor has their credibility been questioned. Were it necessary we could introduce many living witnesses who have seen an angel, as well as corroborative testimony on other points. The fact that the

evidence may be outside the previous experience and knowledge of the jury, is not important, since by their oath they must "a true verdict give according to the law and the evidence."

#### INVESTIGATION AND RESEARCH INVITED.

As to the matter of the testimony of the three witnesses, the case is fully proven by a clear preponderance of evidence. But since the book contains so much of importance to us, as students and lovers of truth, so much of vital interest, as it concerns the questions of eternal life, it becomes us as individuals to study and prove for ourselves. We have no quarrel with the skepticism which proves all things, holds fast to that which is true. We hold no brief for credulity or blind faith; but we do for an intelligent growing faith, which becomes *knowledge*. We do affirm a faith that works, that tests and tries and questions, having "an assurance of things hoped for, an evidence of things not seen." But a man who arbitrarily rejects evidence, because not within his experience as yet, is acting contrary both to the principles of science and of logic. Man has powers as yet undeveloped and little understood. We want neither credulity nor incredulity, but investigation and proof. It requires sincere work, as does any other search for truth. If made with sufficient care, the investigator becomes no longer a fit juror, but instead a qualified witness.

The reason is found in the Book of Mormon itself, very near its close:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.—Book of Mormon 775: 4, 5.

This certainly is a remarkable promise and a test worthy of our thought and consideration. Here we rest, confident of the outcome to all lovers of truth, to all those who are willing to "prove all things," and "hold fast to that which is true."

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI.

"Somebody has said that many an one becomes better than he was by being thought better. Remember that loving faith and trust is the greatest inspiration we know to better living, and if you can not help your friends in any other way, help them by trusting them."

"We do not gain anything by being impatient with ourselves. There are some girls who discourage themselves because they are such hard critics of their own actions. Remember that the blossoms of character, like those in our gardens, need the gentle rain and sunshine, but impatience and harsh criticism, like the pelting hailstones, lay them low."