

## ONE OF THE THREE WITNESSES.

## INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF MARTIN HARRIS.

[The following interesting account of the return of Martin Harris to the Church is taken from the *Deseret News*, and will doubtless be read with much pleasure by the Saints. Ed.]

SALT LAKE CITY,  
November 30, 1881.

*Editor Deseret News:*

Having been interrogated recently regarding Martin Harris, the time of his arrival in this city, and other incidents of his life, and as at the present time newspaper reporters are interesting themselves regarding David Whitmer, the only surviving witness of the Book of Mormon, now living at Richmond, Ray Co., Mo., having resided there as long as Martin Harris did at Kirtland, Ohio, which has been since 1831, 50 years ago, and 39 years previous to his removal to Utah; for these reasons I feel prompted to offer a few facts relating to his removal from Ohio to Utah, his various testimonies, and incidents of personal observation of his life for the past 48 years.

While I was living in Michigan, then a Territory, in 1823, near the town of Pontiac, Oakland Co., Martin Harris came there and in a meeting where I was present bore testimony of the appearance of an angel exhibiting the golden plates, and commanding him to bear a testimony of these things to all people whenever opportunity was afforded him to do so; and I can say that his testimony had great effect in that vicinity. Martin had a sister living in our neighborhood. About this time Oliver Cowdery, one of the other three witnesses also, in company with Joseph Smith the Prophet bore the same testimony, and further, Joseph the Prophet promised those who with honest hearts obeyed the Gospel should receive the Holy Ghost, and signs would follow them.

As a proof of their testimony, several of that Branch of the Church, enjoyed various gifts; one, Elijah Fordham, who recently died in this Territory, spoke in tongues, and as two French travelers were passing

they heard him speaking and said to a boy outside the house were they were, that he was speaking in French, bearing testimony to the Gospel, he having no knowledge of that language. Martin often bore his testimony while in that neighborhood.

In the year 1869 I was appointed to a mission to the United States. Having visited several of the Eastern States, I called at Kirtland, Ohio, to see the first Temple that was built by our people in this generation. While there, I again met Martin Harris, soon after coming out of the Temple. He took from under his arm a copy of the Book of Mormon, the first edition, I believe, and bore a faithful testimony, just the same as that I heard him bear 36 years previous. He said that it was his duty to continue to lift up his voice as he had been commanded to do in defence of the Book that he held in his hand, and offered to prove from the Bible that just such a book was to come forth out of the ground, and that, too, in a day when there were no prophets on the earth, and that he was daily bearing testimony to many who visited the Temple.

After patiently hearing him, I felt a degree of compassion for him, and in turn bore my testimony to him, as I had received it through obedience to the Gospel, and that the work was still onward, and the words of Isaiah, second chapter, were being fulfilled, that "the house of the Lord was in the tops of the mountains," and that under the leadership of President Brigham Young all nations were gathering to Zion to learn of God's ways and to walk in his paths, and that the worst wish that we had, was for him to also prepare himself and go up and be a partaker of the blessings of the House of the Lord. My testimony impressed him. A Mr. Bond, who held the keys of the Temple, and who had been present at the dedication, and then a faithful Latter-day Saint, said to me he felt as though he would have been far better off if he had kept with the Latter-day Saints, and that if I would preach in the

Temple, he would open the doors to me, I promised to do so at some future time.

After my arrival in Utah in 1870, I was inspired to write to Martin Harris, and soon received a reply, that the Spirit of God, for the first time prompted him to go to Utah. Several letters were afterwards exchanged. President Brigham Young, having read the letter, through President G. A. Smith, requested me to get up a subscription and emigrate Martin to Utah, he subscribing twenty-five dollars for that purpose. Having raised the subscription to about \$200, on the 19th of July, 1870, I took the railroad cars for Ohio, and on the 10th of August, filled my appointment, preaching twice in the Kirtland Temple, finding Martin Harris elated with his prospective journey.

A very singular incident occurred at this time. While Martin was visiting his friends, bidding them farewell, his pathway crossed a large pasture, in which he became bewildered, dizzy, faint and staggering through the blackberry vines that are so abundant in that vicinity, his clothes torn, bloody and faint, he lay down under a tree to die. After a time he revived, called on the Lord, and finally at twelve midnight, found his friend, and in his fearful condition was cared for and soon regained his strength. He related this incident as a snare of the adversary to hinder him from going to Salt Lake City. Although in his 83th year he possessed remarkable vigor and health, having recently worked in the garden, and dug potatoes by the day for some of his neighbors.

After visiting New York and calling to visit the sacred spot from where the plates were taken upon which the characters of the book of Mormon

were engraven, I found there an aged gentleman, 74 years old, who knew Martin Harris, and said that he was known in that neighborhood as an honest farmer, having owned a good farm three miles from that place. He farther said, he well remembered the time when the Mormons used to gather at Mormon Hill, as he termed it, where it was said the plates came from.

On the 21st of August, Martin was with me in Chicago, and at the American Hotel bore testimony to a large number of people, of the visitation of the angel, etc. The following is from the *Iowa State Register*, Des Moines, Aug. 26, 1870:

"Eider Stevenson, of Salt Lake, together with Martin Harris, one of the *three witnesses* of the Mormon Bible, called at our sanctum yesterday. Mr. Harris is now in his 88th year, hale and hearty, with many interesting things to relate in reference to the finding of the tablets of the testament. We shall have occasion to mention some of these in another issue."

While in Des Moines, the capitol of Iowa, brother Harris had opportunity of bearing testimony to many, and at a special meeting held in a Branch of our Church brother James M. Ballinger, President, brother Harris bore testimony as to viewing the plates, the angel's visit, and visiting professor Anthon, with characters from the plates, who after giving him a certificate, etc., as to the correctness of the characters, asked him to fetch the plates for him to see. Martin said that they were sealed, and that an angel had forbidden them to be exhibited. Mr. Anthon then called for the certificate, tore it up and consigned it to the waste basket, saying, that angels did not visit the earth in our day, etc.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Our moral culture is of the utmost importance. We had better be poor in fortune and sick in body than broken down in virtue and disordered in motive. This is not fashionable doctrine, but it is true doctrine.

The parent or the teacher who inflicts penalties as an outlet for his own impatience or displeasure is utterly incapable of the task he has assumed. The good of the school or the family, the good of the erring child—these motives, and these only, should prompt even the mildest penalty. With these objects held close at heart, the judicious parent or teacher will find so many other avenues open, so many other motives effectual, that punishment will be rarely needed, and only as a temporary resort.