

on the sacred tablet of many an honest heart, and his loving memory is embalmed among the Saints of God in the rich spices of honor and esteem!

## ONE OF THE THREE WITNESSES.

### INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF MARTIN HARRIS.

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On the following day I baptized a sister to President Ballinger, in the Des Moines River. The Branch here contributed a new suit of clothes to brother Harris, for which he felt to bless them. On the 29th of August we landed in Ogden, and the Ogden *Junction* said:

"Martin Harris arrived, (with Elder Edward Stevenson) whose name is known almost throughout the world as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon. They left Kirtland on the 19th of August."

August 31st, the Salt Lake *Herald* said:

"Martin Harris, one of the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon, arrived in Salt Lake City last night, accompanied by Elder Edward Stevenson. Two members of the Des Moines Branch of the Church accompanied them to our city."

The *Deseret News* of August 31, 1870, in over one column, notices the arrival of Martin Harris last evening, at 7.30, "who is in his 88th year. He is remarkably vigorous for one of his years, his memory being very good, and his sight, though his eyes appear to have failed, being so acute that he can see to pick a pin off the ground.

\* \* \* He has never failed to bear testimony to the Divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. He says it is not a matter of belief on his part, but of knowledge. He with the other two witnesses declared, and their testimony has accompanied every copy of the book, 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.' This declaration he has not varied from in 41 years. \* \* \* We are glad to see Martin Harris once more in the midst of the Saints."

The Salt Lake *Herald*, September 3rd, said:

"We had a call yesterday morning from Elder Edward Stevenson, who introduced Martin Harris, one of the 'three witnesses' to the Book of Mormon. Mr. Harris is now 88 years of age, and is remarkably lively and energetic for his years. He holds firmly to the testimony he has borne for over forty years, that an angel appeared before him and the other witnesses, and showed them the plates upon which the characters of the Book of Mormon were inscribed. After living many years separated from the body of the Church, he has come to spend the evening of life among the believers in that book to which he is so prominent a witness. Mr. Harris, who has a number of relatives in the Territory, came from the East under the care of Elder Edward Stevenson."

Monday *Evening News*, September 5, 1870, contains the following:

"SABBATH MEETINGS. — The congregation in the morning was addressed by Elder Edward Stevenson, Martin Harris and President George A. Smith. In the afternoon the time was occupied by Elder John Taylor, the house was crowded to overflowing."

Martin Harris related an incident that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone. Martin explained the translation as follows: By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the

Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used. Martin said, after continued translation they would become weary, and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translating, and on resuming their labor of translation, Martin put in place the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent, unusually and intently gazing in darkness, no traces of the usual sentences appearing. Much surprised, Joseph exclaimed, "Martin! What is the matter? All is as dark as Egypt!" Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the Prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, to stop the mouths of fools, who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them, etc.

Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only they were larger. Martin said there were not many pages translated while he wrote, after which Oliver Cowdery and others did the writing.

Brother Harris was taught the necessity of being rebaptized. He said that was new doctrine to him. Revelations, 2nd chapter, was explained, that those who had lost their first love and had fallen into evils and snares, were called on to "repent and do their first works," and that rebaptism was a part of the Gospel. He claimed that he had not been cut off from the Church, but said if that was required of him it would be manifested to him by the Spirit. Soon after his arrival in Utah he applied for baptism, saying that the Spirit had made known to him that it was his duty to renew his covenant before the Lord.

He was also taught a principle that was new to him—baptism for the dead, as taught and practiced by the ancient Saints, and especially taught by Paul the Apostle in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead." After consideration he came and said it had been made known to him that baptism for the dead was a correct principle, for he had seen his father in vision at the foot of a ladder, and he was above, and had to go down and help him up. In a short time the baptismal font was prepared, and by his request I baptized him, and President Geo. A. Smith, and Apostles John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Jos. F. Smith and Orson Pratt confirmed him by the laying on of hands, Orson Pratt being mouth. As soon as he was confirmed he returned into the font and was baptized for several of his dead friends—fathers, grandfathers, etc. Then his sister also was baptized for the female relatives, and they were confirmed for and in behalf of those whom they were baptized for, by the same brethren, Jos. F. Smith being mouth. It was a time of rejoicing for all who were present.

Brother Martin visited many of the wards, continuing to bear his testimony both of what he had beheld with his own eyes, and verily knew to be true. He publicly said that many years ago, in Ohio, a number of persons combined and sought to get Martin to drink wine for the purpose of crossing him in his testimony. At the conclusion they asked him if he really believed the testimony that he had signed in the Book of Mormon to be true? He replied no, he did not believe it, but, much to their surprise, he said he *knew* it to be true!

Soon after receiving his blessings in the house of the Lord, he went to Smithfield, Cache Valley, and lived with his son until he left this mortal life. Just before he breathed his last he sat up in his bed holding the Book of Mormon in his hand, and bore his last testimony to those who were present.

EDWARD STEVENSON.