

[This is reprinted from the Mormon Church section of the *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, UT. See other side].

CHURCH ● WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 20, 1969



BOOK OF MORMON PROFILES

David Whitmer's Witness

David Whitmer has written a fascinating description of how the Prophet Joseph Smith translated the golden plates.

"He (Joseph) had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped, and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment, on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation, in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips."

The witness then explains how the scribe read the sentence back to the Prophet, and if mistakes had been made, the characters from the plates would remain before his eyes until the translation was written correctly.

Shortly before the translation was completed, David, with Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris — the Three Witnesses — was shown the plates by an angel according to Moroni's instructions:

"And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work; and unto three shall they be shown by the power of God . . ."

David Whitmer was rightly qualified to become one of the witnesses of the work. He had aided the Prophet and his family during the translation period, some of the actual work being done in the Whitmer home.

He was one of the original six members of the Church. He became a leading figure, was ordained a high priest, became president of the first high council, and, as one of the Three Witnesses, helped select the Twelve Apostles of this dispensation.

David became at odds with Church leadership, however, and in April, 1838, was excommunicated by the high council at Far West. He lived another 50 years, never rejoining the Church, but whenever challenged, he reaffirmed his testimony:

"As sure as the sun shines and I live, just so sure did the angel appear unto me and Joseph Smith, and I heard his voice, and did see the angel standing before us . . ."

DAVID WHITMER'S TESTIMONY

The tours at Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah are designed to introduce the public to Joseph Smith and his work. The tour guides will point to the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon to authenticate Joseph Smith's work. David Whitmer (1805-1888) ranks as the oldest living witness to the Book of Mormon. On the reverse side of this tract we reprinted one of the testimonies of David Whitmer that appeared in the *Deseret News Church News* section, September 20, 1969. What is remarkable about this account is that it tells a different story, with details that others often left out.

Even though tour guides say that David Whitmer never denied his testimony, they do not dare tell you how different his story is from most published accounts. Whitmer's account reveals that Joseph Smith used two small stones that he would place in a hat to translate the Book of Mormon. Smith would cover his face with the hat and within the stones would appear the characters of the Book of Mormon along with the English equivalent. Whitmer even records that the alleged golden plates were often not present.

If this seems strange to the reader, then perhaps it is because these practices are occultic in their nature. The use of seer-stones, peepstones, and crystal balls fall into the category of divination. This is condemned by God as abominable (Deut. 18:9-12). Whitmer and Smith enjoyed this practice in spite of God forbidding it. David Whitmer also writes of it in his self-published book, *An Address to all Believers in Christ* (1887, pp. 12, 30, 37).

We find nowhere in the Bible that God gives revelation through a stone in a hat. He calls those who practice divination false prophets (Deut. 18:9-12). Jesus warned us about false prophets who would come in the last days (Matt. 24:24). The Apostle Paul warns us about false gospels, even if brought by an angel (Gal. 1:6-9 and 2 Cor. 11:4). With so many warnings from God, we need to shun works like the Book of Mormon. Instead, one should trust the Word of God, the Bible. God reveals His truth in it.

UTAH GOSPEL MISSION

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