

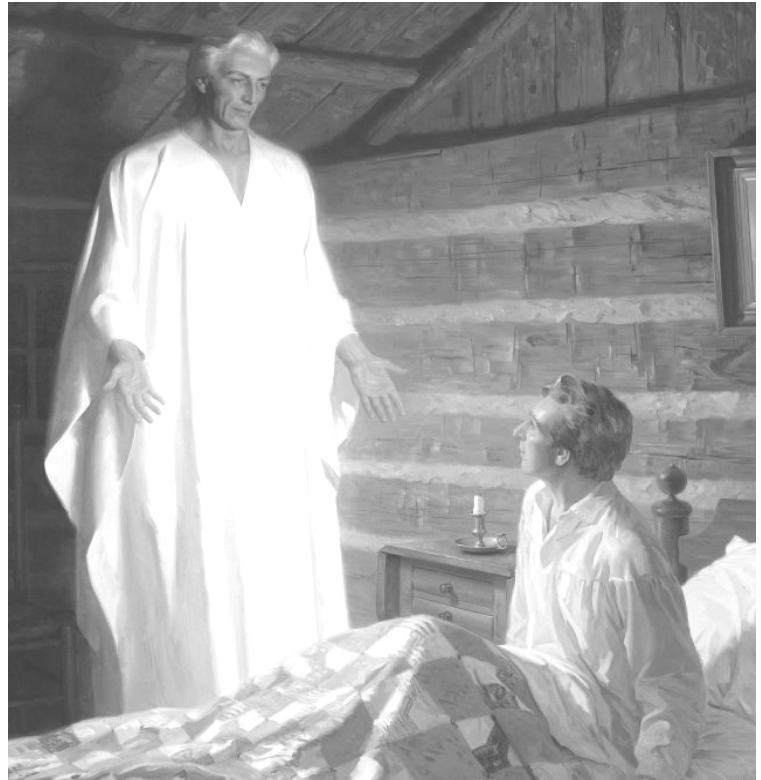
Book of Mormon Testimonies of Each Family Member
Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of Moroni's Visit to Joseph

Introduction

The Smith Family is the core family of the restoration. The Prophet Joseph's work could never have been done by him alone. It became a family responsibility. They not only shared in its glorious events, but they suffered persecution, abuse, imprisonment and even death. All these things seemed to strengthen their testimonies. Each family member believed Joseph's work was of God.

Following is a short, but representative compilation of Book of Mormon testimonies, borne by Smith family members. On

the 200th anniversary of Moroni's first visit to the Prophet Joseph, it is appropriate that we pause and be reminded that each family member knew and testified that it was true. Their testimonies reflect our ancestor's deep faith and devotion. There are many more that could have been published. There are many, many more that were unspoken. Hopefully, you will become acquainted with their testimonies. Hopefully your children, grandchildren and generations to come will become acquainted with their testimonies. As you learn, teach and share, your testimonies will grow. You will gain a greater appreciation for the price that was paid by the whole Smith family at the beginning of this work. We pray that these testimonies will build our faith and cause us to follow in their footsteps.



The Angel Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith in his room
by Tom Lovell

Compiled for the Smith Family by Karl Ricks Anderson – September 2023
Smith Family Pictures by William Whitaker used with permission
Layout by Frances Orton

Joseph Smith Sr.

Father Smith was the first one to hear of Moroni's visits to his son, Joseph Jr.. He was also the first one to believe in Joseph's visions of Moroni. After being told that Moroni instructed young Joseph to meet him at the hill Cumorah, Joseph Sr. immediately accepted it and told his son "that it was of God, and... to go and do as commanded by the messenger."¹ Father Smith walked thousands of miles bearing testimony of these events. His most prominent testimony is printed for the world to read in the front of each copy of the Book of Mormon as one of the eight witnesses. Joseph Smith Sr. boldly affixed his name testifying that he had "seen and hefted" the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. On one occasion he was imprisoned and told he would be released if he would deny the divinity of the Book of Mormon. Not only did he *not* deny it, but he converted two persons during his thirty-day confinement. In 1831, in a church conference, he stood with three of his sons and swore to the divinity of the Book of Mormon by raising his right hand. Throughout his life, Father Smith proved true to his calling to bear witness and testimony of Moroni and the Book of Mormon. At his funeral it was acknowledged that he "was chosen by the Almighty to be one of the witnesses to the book of Mormon (and that) From that time his only aim was the promotion of truth."² He was also recognized as being a "man faithful to his God and to the church in every situation, and under all circumstances."³



¹ Joseph Smith History 1:49–50.

² Times and Seasons, Vol.1, p.171.

³ Times and Seasons, Vol.1, p.171.

Lucy Mack Smith

Lucy Mack Smith was fierce in her testimony and unrelenting in support of Joseph, her prophet son. It seems that she constantly and consistently bore a fiery testimony of the Book of Mormon. She once said that people often asked her about the details of its coming forth and as a result she had “almost destroyed my lungs giving these recitals to those who felt anxious to hear them.”⁴ Mother Smith’s testimony is powerfully evidenced on her journey from New York to Kirtland on the Erie Canal. A heckler on the shore shouted to her and those on her boat, “Is the Book of Mormon true? That book” replied I “was brought forth by the power of God, and translated by the gift of the Holy Ghost; and, if I could make my voice sound as loud as the trumpet of Micheal the Arch Angel, I would declare the truth of the same from land to land, and from sea to sea... for I do testify that, God has revealed himself to man again in these last days.”⁵ On another occasion, she and Joseph Smith Sr. could have received forgiveness of a debt if they would just burn their copies of the Book of Mormon. She responded to the offer with these words, “Now, here, sir ... Because God has raised up my son to bring forth a book, which was written for the salvation of the souls of men, for the salvation of your soul as well as mine... and you think, by this, that you will compel us to deny the work of God and destroy a book which was translated by the gift and power of God. But, sir, we shall not burn the Book of Mormon, nor deny the inspiration of the Almighty.”⁶ One more account, when confronted in Palmyra by a former minister and some parishioners, confirms her consistency of testimony and fierce disposition. She boldly told the group, “If you should stick my flesh full of faggots, and even burn me at the stake, I would declare that Joseph has got that record, and that I know it to be true.”⁷



⁴ Excerpts from the *Kansas City Times*, April 11, 1895 Proceedings of the Mormon Conference in Independence. As Cited in “Katharine Smith Salisbury’s Recollections of Joseph’s Meetings with Moroni,” Kyle R. Walker, As published in *BYU Studies Quarterly* 41:3

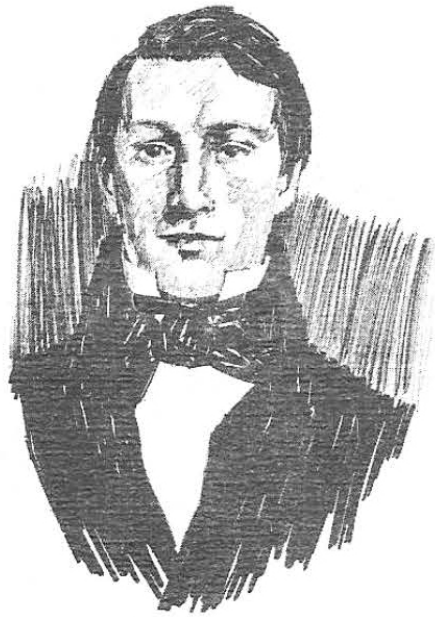
⁵ Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, p. 202, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/210?highlight=trumpet>

⁶ Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, p. 180, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/188?highlight=deny%20the%20inspiration>

⁷ Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, p. 163, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/171>

Alvin Smith

Alvin, the oldest son, manifest his testimony of the reality of Moroni's first four visits to the Smith log home on his deathbed. Alvin died in 1823 at age twenty-five. This was barely two months following Moroni's first visit and four years before Joseph received the Golden Plates. Alvin fully believed in Joseph's mission and admonished Joseph with these words, "do everything that lies in your power to obtain the Record. Be faithful in receiving instruction, and in keeping every commandment that is given you."⁸



⁸ Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, p. 91, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/98>

Hyrum Smith

Hyrum Smith's certain and unwavering testimony is documented as early as 1830 when he, along with his father and brother Samuel were allowed to view the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. As one of the Eight Witnesses, he testified for the rest of his life to the divinity of the Book of Mormon. His witness continues even to this day through the written testimony in each Book of Mormon. He testified that he "had seen the plates with his eyes and handled them with his hands."



Hyrum's testimony is strengthened by his seemingly constant persecution, abuse and even imprisonment. An example is his long imprisonment in the Liberty jail after which he declared, "I was innocent of crime... I had been dragged from my family... I had been abused and thrust into a dungeon, and confined for months on account of my faith, and the 'testimony of Jesus Christ.'" However I thank God that I felt a determination to die, rather than deny the things which my eyes had seen, which my hands had handled, and which I had borne testimony to... and I can assure my beloved brethren that I was enabled to bear as strong a testimony, when nothing but death presented itself, as ever I did in my life."⁹ In the end, Hyrum paid the ultimate price as he gave his life with his younger brother Joseph, in Carthage, as his final testimony.

⁹ Times and Seasons 1 (1839): 23.

Joseph Smith Jr

Joseph Smith's whole life was spent in testifying to his God given experiences and mission. In the preface to the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith declared his simple, short and perhaps most powerful testimony: "I would inform you that I translated [the Book of Mormon], by the gift and power of God." On several other occasions he repeated that it had been done "by the gift and power of God." Joseph Smith was so determined to establish the Book of Mormon as the center of the restored Gospel that he said, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book."¹⁰ In perhaps his most impressive public display of testimony, Joseph stood side by side with his father and brothers Hyrum and Samuel at the October 1831 church conference. With an uplifted right hand, he formally swore his solemn testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon before the congregation.¹¹ At the end of his life, Joseph paid the ultimate price as he was martyred at the hands of the mob in Carthage, Illinois. However, before the assassin's bullet took his life, he brazenly turned to the guards who held him captive and bore a powerful testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon."¹² He closed his life with his testimony and literally "sealed his mission and his works with his own blood."¹³



¹⁰ History of the Church, 4:461

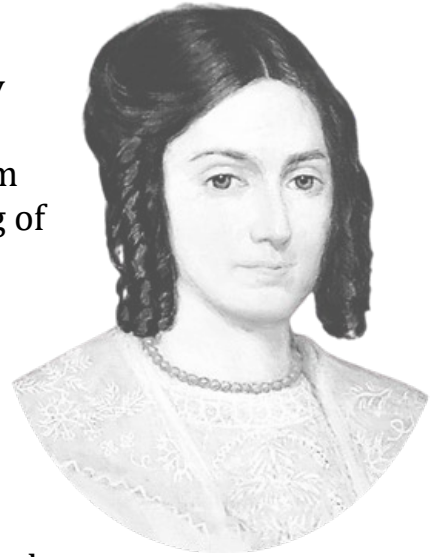
¹¹ Luke Johnson Autobiography (1807-1838) History of Luke Johnson by himself. The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star 26 (1864):834-36; 27 (1865):5-7.)

¹² See *History of the Church*, 6:600.

¹³ Doctrine and Covenants 135:3

Emma Smith

Late in life, Emma told her oldest son, Joseph III, “My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity - I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he could at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and, for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was, it was simply impossible.” She further elaborated, “The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen tablecloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.” When questioned if Joseph Smith could have dictated the Book of Mormon after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book, Emma responded, “Joseph Smith ...could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter, let alone dictate a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, ‘a marvel and a wonder’ as much so as to anyone else.”¹⁴



¹⁴ “Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald* 26 (1879):, p. 289)

Samuel Smith

Samuel developed his testimony early in Harmony Pennsylvania where he lived with Joseph and Emma while Joseph was engaged in translating the Book of Mormon.

Upon encouragement by Joseph, Samuel “retired to the woods... (and)... by secret and fervent prayer.... obtained revelation for himself sufficient to convince him of the truth.”¹⁵ At age 22 he became one of the 8 Witnesses of the Book of Mormon and signed this formal statement with his father and brother Hyrum: “Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of (the



Book of Mormon) has shown unto us the plates... which have the appearance of gold... 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... for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that (Joseph 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.” He was the first missionary formally set apart by the Prophet Joseph Smith. Samuel forever endeared himself to the John Young family, including sons Brigham and Phineas, as he gave Phineas the Young’s first copy of the Book of Mormon. As Samuel presented it, he bore this witness. “I know the book to be a revelation from God, translated by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, and that my brother Joseph Smith, jun., is a Prophet, Seer and Revelator.”¹⁶

¹⁵ History of the Church, Vol.1, p.44

¹⁶ History of Brigham Young,” *Millennial Star*, June 6, 1863, 360–61.

William Smith

William always defended his brother Joseph and bore witness that he was a Prophet. William electrified an audience in 1844 as he delivered these irrefutable words of testimony.

He said, "I hold in my hand the Book of Mormon.... The world has been filled with articles for the purpose of making it appear a falsehood.... One of the great hobbies raised upon which to fight is the angel's visit to Joseph Smith.... I well remember the effect produced upon my father's family, when he told (us) he was to receive the plates; how (we) looked forward with joy, and waited until the time should come... When Joseph received them, he came in and said: "Father, I have got the plates." All believed it was true, father, mother, brothers and sisters. You can tell what a child is. Parents know whether their children are truthful or not... Father knew his child was telling the truth. When the plates were brought in they were wrapped in a tow frock. My father then put them into a pillow case.... We handled [the plates] and could tell what they were. (As near as I could tell, they weighed about sixty pounds.) ...Being a mixture of gold and copper, they were much heavier than stone, and very much heavier than wood.... I expect to stand before angels and archangels and be judged for how I have told it."¹⁷



¹⁷ William Smith "The Old Soldier's Testimony," Saint's Herald 31 (1884), p.643-644 .

Katharine Smith

Katharine Smith Salisbury was the last surviving child of Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith. It is said that Katharine was frequently sought out by converts, missionaries, and reporters for her recollections of Moroni's visit, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the latter-day restoration. It is also said that she was quick to share her testimony of the truth of the work the family helped to establish.¹⁸ She gave one of her most powerful testimonies to an admiring Church conference just five years before her death. She declared,



"I desire before I pass away, to place my testimony on record.... I am the only surviving sister of the martyrs Joseph and Hyrum Smith and will soon be 73 years old. I can testify to the fact of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and also to its truth.... I well remember the trials my brother had... he went frequently to the hill, and upon returning would tell us, I have seen the records, also the brass plates and the sword of Laban with the breast plate and interpreters... (I) shall soon pass away, but while I can I will bear my testimony to the truth of the latter day work, both spiritual and temporal. I know that it is true."¹⁹

Katharine, apparently like others in the family, also lifted the concealed plates. She once told her grandson Herbert S. Salisbury, who was a College President and Church historian, that while dusting up the room where the Prophet had his study, she saw a package on the table containing the gold plates on which was engraved the story of the Book of Mormon. She said she hefted those plates and found them very heavy like gold and also rippled her fingers up the edge of the plates and felt that they were separate metal plates and heard the tinkle of sound that they made."²⁰

¹⁸ "Birds of Passage," *Saturday Evening Post* [Burlington, Iowa], March 10, 1894, 11. As Cited in "Katharine Smith Salisbury's Recollections of Joseph's Meetings with Moroni," Kyle R. Walker, *BYU Studies Quarterly* 41:3

¹⁹ *The Saints Herald* 33, no. 17, 1 May 1886 <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=9d90d860-8920-4514-9356-f9d33ccc4490&crate=0&index=3>

²⁰ "The Prophet's Sister Testifies She Lifted The B[ook]. of M[ormon] Plates," *The Messenger* (Berkeley, California), October 1954, 1, 6 (original newspaper clipping located in RLDS Church Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri). Cited in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, p. 523.

Don Carlos Smith

Don Carlos Smith was the youngest of the Smith sons. At Don Carlos's death, the prophet Joseph paid tribute to his younger brother's long held witness as he stated that Don Carlos was "one of the first to receive my testimony."²¹ The evening after the Book of Mormon plates were shown to the Eight Witnesses, Joseph Smith said that "all the witnesses, as also Don Carlos bore testimony to the truth of the latter-day dispensation."²² The spirit of testimony marked Don Carlos' entire life. In 1830, when but fourteen, he accompanied his father on a mission to St. Lawrence County, New York. By testifying and providing them Books of Mormon, they were instrumental in the conversion of his cousin and future church leader George A. Smith.²³ When the Smith family arrived in Kirtland in February, 1831, Don Carlos was exhausted from his journey, and fell asleep in his chair during the first Sunday meeting they attended. Nonetheless, said James Henry Rollins, "after several had spoken Don Carlos awoke and arose and bore as strong a testimony as I ever heard, of the truth of the work."²⁴ This spirit of testimony of the Book of Mormon guided him throughout missions in Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, and Ohio. He later went on missions to Tennessee and Kentucky, to raise money to buy out the claims and property of the mobbers in Daviess County, Missouri. His own journal tells of experiences in which he testified to mobs and mobbers who were violently unfriendly to the Latter Day Saint cause.²⁵ Don Carlos also was one of the few who Joseph selected to bear testimony at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Joseph simply recorded that "President Don Carlos Smith also bore testimony of the truth of the work of the Lord in which we were engaged."²⁶



²¹ History of the Church, Vol.4, p.392

²² History of the Church, Vol.4, p.392

²³ History of the Church Vol. 4, p. 393.

²⁴ "A Life Sketch of James Henry Rollins (1816-1839)," Typescript, pp. 2-3, Brigham Young University, Special Collections.

²⁵ History of the Church. Vol. 4, pp. 394-398.

²⁶ History of the Church, Vol.2, p.427

Lucy

Joseph's remaining two sisters, Sophronia born in 1803 and Lucy born in 1821, also believed in Joseph. Although documented testimonies from them is scarce, it is known that they had strong testimonies and bore them publicly. William, their brother, said, "All believed it was true, father, mother, brothers and sisters."²⁷ One reason they believed was that Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack gathered their family together in evenings to learn of Joseph's experiences and scenes he witnessed while translating.

Sophronia and Lucy, along with the others learned and developed testimonies while, as Mother Smith stated, "Joseph commenced telling us the great and glorious things which God had manifested to him." Joseph related scenes in great detail. For example, "He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent; their dress, mode of travelling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, and their buildings, with every particular; he would describe their mode of warfare, as also their religious worship. This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life with them."²⁸



²⁷ William Smith "Testimony," Saint's Herald 31 (1884), p.644

²⁸ Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1845, p. 86-87, The Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1845/93>

Sophronia

Sophronia's testimony was also buttressed in one experience in Palmyra when Joseph handed her sister, Kathrine, the wrapped plates to hide from a pursuing mob. Katherine ran to the bedroom "where she and Sophronia slept. Sophronia threw back the bedding and Katherine put the bundle on the bed, quickly replacing the bedding. Both of them lay down on the bed and pretended to sleep" thus outwitting the mob.²⁹

A few references to testimony from Sophronia and Lucy have survived. An Elder from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, George F. A. Spiller visited Sophronia and her two sisters Katherine and Lucy. He recorded, "They testified that they

knew that their brother Joseph was a prophet of God."³⁰ Sophronia died in 1876. Her obituary noted that "She was ever ready to bear her testimony to the truth of the work."³¹



²⁹ Hancock, "The Three Sisters of the Prophet Joseph Smith," 35. As cited in "Three Sisters of the Prophet Joseph Smith" Kyle R. Walker, "Katharine Smith Salisbury: Sister to the Prophet," MHS 32 Fall 2002

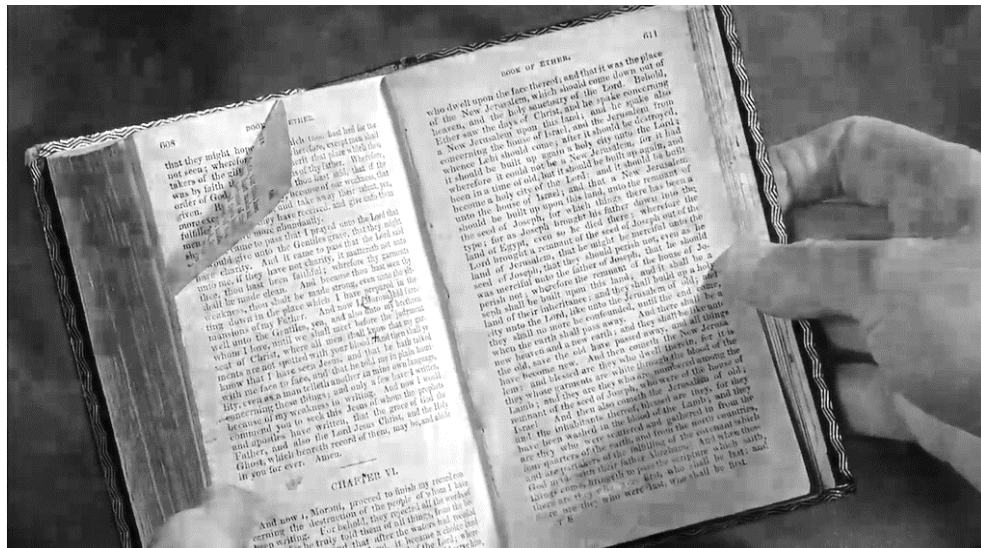
³⁰ Letter 8 December 1856, George F. A. Spiller to Thos. B. H. Stenhouse
<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets/c875ccf4-42e8-4336-a4a1-608a0e61f880/0/602?lang=eng>

³¹ *Saints' Herald*, 1 Oct. 1876. As cited in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Ensign Magazine* March 1979 "What were Joseph Smith's sisters like, and what happened to them after the martyrdom?" *Ensign Magazine* March 1979
<http://bit.ly/3YwHNLG>

Joseph & Hyrum's Dying Book of Mormon Testimony

(Perspective from Elder Jeffrey R. Holland)

When Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum started for Carthage to face what they knew would be an imminent martyrdom, Hyrum read these words



Original Book of Mormon used by Joseph and Hyrum in Carthage Jail

to comfort the heart of his brother: “Thou hast been faithful; wherefore ... thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. “And now I, Moroni, bid farewell ... until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ.”³² A few short verses from the 12th chapter of Ether in the Book of Mormon. Before closing the book, Hyrum turned down the corner of the page from which he had read, marking it as part of the everlasting testimony for which these two brothers were about to die. I hold in my hand that book, the very copy from which Hyrum read, the same corner of the page turned down, still visible. Shortly thereafter, pistol and ball would take the lives of these two testators... I submit this as yet one more evidence of its truthfulness. In this their greatest—and last—hour of need, I ask you: would these men blaspheme before God by continuing to fix their lives, their honor, and their own search for eternal salvation on a book (and by implication a church and a ministry) they had fictitiously created out of whole cloth?

³² Ether 12:37–38.

Never mind that their wives are about to be widows and their children fatherless. Never mind that their little band of followers will yet be “houseless, friendless and homeless” and that their children will leave footprints of blood across frozen rivers and an untamed prairie floor.³³ Never mind that legions will die and other legions live declaring in the four quarters of this earth that they know the Book of Mormon and the Church which espouses it to be true. Disregard all of that, and tell me whether in this hour of death these two men would enter the presence of their Eternal Judge quoting from and finding solace in a book which, if *not* the very word of God, would brand them as imposters and charlatans until the end of time? *They would not do that!* They were willing to die rather than deny the divine origin and the eternal truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.³⁴

³³ *History of the Church* 4:539.

³⁴ “Safety for the Soul” Elder Jeffrey R. Holland *Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*, October 2009 General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.