

the book of Mormon was said to be translated containing "a record of the children of Joseph and of a people who lived at a period before the days of Joseph." The plates were placed in a kind of stone box, the edges of the stone being fastened together with cement and what is very remarkable is that the stone on the top forming a kind of lid to the box was visible above the ground. The angel before named made four visits to Smith the same morning, the last one just after he had gone to his work. This was on Sept. 22nd 1823.

The command given by the angel was that Smith must go at once and take possession of the plates, and remove them from the place where they had been resting for so many centuries. There seems to have been considerable reluctance on the part of the prophet to go and possess himself of this treasure, since the angel had to return so many times to induce him to do so. And when at last he did go, his thoughts, he tells us himself, were not of the heavenly vision that he had seen, nor of the revelation that was to revolutionize all the religions on earth, but of the amount of wealth he could amass by the possession of so much gold.

He at length arrived at the memorable hill, and began to tear apart the masonry work of the mysterious stone box, thoughts of the pecuniary value of so much earthly treasure still running through his mind. As attempting to take actual possession of the plates, his whole system received a shock from some invisible power, another attempt was made, followed by a second shock, more violent than the first. Then dreams of witchcraft, sorcery, and enchantment took possession of his soul, and filled him with great alarm. A third attempt was made with no better result, then in a half frantic angry tone he cried out audibly, "Why cannot I obtain this book?" How he came to call a number of plates of gold, a book is not explained, but *N'importe*. A voice immediately replied "Because you have not kept the commandments of God." As looking around he beheld the angel who had visited him on the previous occasion, and who now informed him of the reason of his failure. A few minutes later he looked up and saw the devil and an innumerable train of evil spirits pass by. However, at length he succeeded in taking possession of the plates despite the efforts of the devil to prevent it. On this last visit of the angel, he gave the prophet a sign by which he should know that the Lord would fulfil his promise concerning the record, and this sign was, *invariable dictu* that he should be persecuted. The angel also informed him that when the people were prepared, he should be intrusted to bring to light, more records, remaining sealed as yet, and which contained the same Revelation as that made to St. John on the Isle of Patmos. This prophesy was certainly falsified at Smith's death.

Having taken possession of the plates he started for home with his treasure, but he had not gone far before a couple of ruffians waylaid him and attempted to rob him of his valuable prize. One of them struck him with a club before he perceived them, but being a "strong man and large in stature" he succeeded with great exertion in escaping from them. The robbers pursued him but were unable to overtake him, so he reached home in safety with the new Revelation.

Some very considerable difficulties present themselves at this point in the story which it will take a large amount of ingenuity to explain away. "The Voice of Warning," an indisputable authority with the Latter Day Saints, informs us that the ruffians waylaid Smith for the express purpose of robbing him of the plates, and not to procure any chance booty that they might come across. Now the question arises, how did these men know of the existence of such plates, the secret having been confided to Smith alone by the angel? Anyhow, by whatever means they had become possessed of the information is it not passing strange that they did not forestall Smith in taking the plates out of the earth, a task more easy and attended with less risk than highway robbery. Another important point is this. We are informed that the plates were of gold, in size seven inches by eight, and about the thickness of common tin, and that the whole put together measured in diameter from four to six

inches. Now two hundred plates of the thickness of common tin would measure five inches, and the matter contained in the book of Mormon, in English would certainly fill that number. But the old Egyptian characters, said to have been inscribed on the plates would, as every one acquainted with them knows, occupy five times as much space as the English. The number, therefore, required would be at least a thousand, which would measure in this case two feet instead of from four to six inches. In that case the weight would be nearly a quarter of a ton—a pretty heavy load for a man to carry, and to run so fast with it on his back that two men intending to rob him, and with nothing to carry failed to overtake him.

(Continued next week.)

The Guilty Pastors.

REV. D. D. MCLEOD.

For the Review.

In the interesting paper read by the Rev. Dr. Gillespie on "The Pastor and Foreign Missions," at the conference of F. M. Boards in the U. S. A. and Canada, held in New York Jan. 11-13, 1898, reference is made to the low condition of the funds for foreign missions in the churches. This unsatisfactory condition of affairs is ascribed to the indifference of the pastors on the subject of foreign missions. The pastors, we are told, "are asleep in Zion." The charge is made in a kindly spirit but very distinctly. It is emphasized in the discussion which followed. A motion was carried to put the address, free of charge, into the hands of the ministers of the churches there represented. Now the pastors are no doubt conscious, that they come short as other men in the discharge of their duties, and are willing to listen to any reasonable accusation touching their neglect, with due consideration. But it may be permissible before sentence is passed upon them, to say a word on their behalf. Should a convention similar to this be held on the subject of Home Missions, it is highly probable, that the charge would be made by some enthusiast, that the great lack of funds for Home Mission purposes was due to the apathy of the pastors. The motion to send a copy of the address pointing out this fact, to every minister would be cordially adopted. It is a common thing to hear from the prohibition platforms, that the reason we cannot get prohibition at once, is the lack of zeal on the part of the minister in the good cause. Our people are also frequently informed by the Plymouth Brethren, that the reason the people are not converted in larger numbers is the carnal spirit of the pastors. Again, should there be in any year a lack of candidates for the ministry, or for the foreign field, or should the funds of any of the Schemes of the Church fall short, the lack of duty on the part of the pastor is given as a sufficient explanation. Professors and agents can congratulate themselves that they are not in the number of the transgressors. The blame falls entirely upon the ministers. Now whether these charges are true or not, it is manifest that they are not fitted to exalt the pastors in the estimation of their people. This fact should be born in mind, that whatever funds there are available for foreign missions, or for other Christian objects, are the outcome of the pastors work, and it is possible that even the fire that burned so brightly in the convention, had been kindled by the despised pastors. The outcome of the ministers work in the way of money may seem small to members of the convention. But though it be so, we are told, that we are not to "despise the day of small things." But this "despising of the day of small things" is the common sin of conventions. Some men are not content if God gives them only a small thing to do. Instead of doing that small thing well, they prefer to harass the church with exhortations to imaginary greater things which are quite out of reach. The only way to get great things done is to do the small things as well as we can. One generation can only contribute its own share to the evangelization of the world. It is enough if it does its own share. Again, it should be born in mind that it is the duty of a pastor to be as loyal to one Scheme of the Church as to another. Many pastors think, that in our Canadian Church the call of the Master is for more men and