
Hiram Page

(1800–1852)

D&C 28

Hiram practiced medicine in Vermont and Canada before settling in Seneca County, New York. In the town of Fayette in Seneca County, he became acquainted with the Peter Whitmer Sr. family. In 1825 he married Catherine Whitmer, the daughter of Peter and Mary Whitmer. Hiram and Catherine were residing on the Whitmer farm when Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery moved into the Peter Whitmer home to finish their work on the translation of the Book of Mormon.

Hiram was an early believer of the prophetic calling of Joseph Smith. He was one of the Eight Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, having been shown the plates by the Prophet Joseph in Palmyra. Hiram attended the foundational meeting of the Church of Christ on April 6, 1830, and five days later was baptized.

About five months before the second conference of the Church, in September 1830, Hiram found a stone five-by-three inches in length and width and one-half inch thick. The stone had two distinct holes. Hiram claimed to receive revelations through this stone. One revelation identified the location of the “America’s New Jerusalem” and another the proper governing process for the Church. Joseph Smith was greatly disturbed by Hiram’s false revelations. The Lord revealed to Joseph that Oliver Cowdery should “take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me and that Satan deceiveth him” (D&C 28:11). Hiram accepted the counsel of Oliver and at the September 1830 conference renounced the spurious revelations and the stone.

In May 1831 Hiram left New York with the Whitmer family to gather with the Saints of God in Ohio. He and his family settled in Thompson, Ohio, before moving on to Jackson County,

Missouri. In Jackson, Hiram was “recommended to the Bishop in Zion as being worthy of inheritances among the people of the Lord according to the laws of the Church.”¹

In 1833 Hiram was beaten for his religious beliefs. General Moses Wilson wrote of the circumstances that led to his being beaten:

I went in company with forty others, to the house of Hiram Page, a Mormon, in Jackson county. We got logs and broke in every door and window at the same instant, and pointing our rifles at the family, we told them, we would be d—d if we didn’t shoot every one of them, if Page didn’t come out. At that, a tall woman made her appearance, with a child in her arms. I told the boys she was too d—d tall. In a moment the boys stripped her, and found it was Page. I told them to give him a d—d good one. We gave him sixty or seventy blows with hickory withes which we had prepared.²

In November 1833 Hiram sought legal recourse for being beaten from Judge Esquire Silvers. Judge Silvers refused to issue a warrant against Moses Wilson or others and advised him to “fight and kill the outlaws whenever they came upon us.”³ Rather than fight, Hiram fled across the Missouri River to Clay County and then on to Far West, Missouri, a Latter-day Saint community. In Far West, Hiram claimed that “Joseph had tried to place himself above the revealed word [by], presumptuously and prematurely attempting to gather the Saints to the revealed Zion.” Hiram viewed such actions as “so abominable that the Lord could not suffer him to hold the keys any longer.”⁴ In 1838 Hiram Page was excommunicated for expounding such views. He remained aloof from the Church the rest of his life.

Although estranged from Church fellowship, Hiram’s testimony of the Book of Mormon did not waver. He wrote,

As to the book of Mormon, it would be doing injustice to myself, and to the work of God in the last days, to say that I could know a thing to be true in 1830, and know the same thing to be false in 1847. To say that a man of Joseph’s ability, who at that time did not know how to

¹ Bruce G. Stewart, “Hiram Page: An Historical and Sociological Analysis of an Early Mormon Prototype.” M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, April 1987, 37.

² History, 1838–1856, Volume C-1, Addenda. Joseph Smith Papers.

³ Stewart, “Hiram Page,” 44.

⁴ Stewart, “Hiram Page,” 161.

pronounce the word Nephi, could write a book of six hundred pages, as correct as the book of Mormon, without super natural power . . . yeah, it would be treating the God of heaven with contempt to deny these testimonies, with too many others to mention here.⁵

⁵ Letter of Hiram Page to William E. McLellan, May 30, 1847, Ray County, Missouri, cited in *Ensign of Liberty* 1 (1848): 63.