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The Book of Mormon Needed

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Abstract: Brookbank states that the moral and religious principles contained in the Book of Mormon are akin to those in the Bible. The Book of Mormon does, however, contain new teachings. It specifies the proper mode of baptism, rejects infant baptism, rejects the doctrine of predestination, is a second witness of the Savior, stresses the terrible consequences of disobedience to gospel laws, and demonstrates the principle of modern revelation. The second part concludes the series.

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MILLENNIAL STAR.

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“Let us then be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things keep ourselves loyal to truth.”—LONGFELLOW.

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THE BOOK OF MORMON NEEDED.

(Concluded from page 166.)

Before they can answer this question one way or the other, they must know just what the primitive Church organization was. If they do know all this now, why do they not establish it among themselves, and unite together on it? If they cannot determine a simple question of this kind, relating to organization merely, what right have they to set themselves up for judges of what the revelations of the Almighty should contain? The Book of Mormon is valuable on the ground that two witnesses to truth are better than one. Under the Mosaic dispensation two witnesses were required before the extreme penalty of death could be legally inflicted on malefactors. As the time for the second coming of Christ is near at hand, according to the general expectation of Christendom, when the Almighty will inflict the death penalty in a very direct manner upon multitudes of the rebellious sons of Adam, He has righteously sent into this world the second witness to the gospel truth, and He thus complies with a principle of His own law to mankind. It would be wise for us to note the preparation for His second coming which this second witness portends. It is more valuable as a witness for gospel truth since it agrees with the Bible, than if it disagreed with it in essential doctrines and principles.

The Book of Mormon is invaluable as showing by its sacred

historical records what are the disastrous consequences that follow disobedience to gospel laws. There is no other sacred history of this character extant. The Mosaic dispensation had an associated detailed history showing the results of obedience or of disobedience to the Mosaic laws, and it would be quite strange to find nowhere an inspired history relating the consequences of a failure to comply with gospel laws, or to show at large what have been the fruits of obedience to them. The Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament is the nearest approach to a record of the kind in view which the Bible contains; but it is merely the opening chapter of the needed history. The Book of Mormon supplies this need in the most perfect manner. Again, it is useful to show how the purpose of the Lord to scatter the people from the tower of Babel abroad upon the face of the whole earth, was accomplished with respect to this Western Continent. That book is valuable because it manifests where the other fold of his sheep, spoken of by the Savior, was located. It is of great worth because it shows that, for some reason or other God holds the land of America choice above all other lands in the world, and that a high standard of righteousness is expected of those who occupy it. Other points connected with this case are deserving attention, but remarks for the present will be concluded by pointing out the one great use that the Salt Lake Ministerial Association, collectively and individually, can make of the Book of Mormon.

Two principal and ever present means have, from the beginning of God's dealings with mankind in Eden down to the present, been left open to the choice of every person who hears His laws and the gospel of Jesus Christ, by which the virtue of these principles can be tested, and their Divine origin ascertained. We can accomplish this end by obedience to them, or we can test their authority and power just as effectively by disobedience. No matter which of these alternate courses we follow, the matter is to be definitely settled by experience—an experience that is, on the one hand, an everlasting joy and blessing to us, or one, on the other, that has for its end only regret, bitterness and woe.

Accepting the general understanding of the events that transpired in Eden, we find that Adam tested the divinity of the commandments which the Almighty gave to him by disobedience. He ate of the forbidden fruit, and lost Eden with all its joys and blessings, nor was a second trial of the matter allowed. Later, Noah preached the commandments of God and the duty of obedience to them, to the antediluvians, for one hundred and twenty years. In this case also the people tested the divine inspiration of this servant of God, and the authority of the laws which he promulgated and the virtue of the prophecies which he announced, by the experience that comes from neglect and disobedience, but none of them lived long enough on this earth after the flood came to profit much in their temporal lives by the knowledge they were

acquiring. No second probation was granted to them either. The Israelites often tested the divinity of God's laws and the authority of His earthly representatives by experience, and they, too, garnered the fruits of their doings in full measure.

We all know that experience is sometimes very costly, and often wholly destructive of our hopes and prospects. The false steps that we take may not be recovered. Their results are not always foreseen, but are often concealed until they come upon us in overwhelming and deadly power. Experience, further, requires time for its development, and so if the Divinely ordained way of eternal life is not chosen in the beginning, death may overtake us before we realize our error, or an opportunity can be seized for tracing out a different course.

Many of the opponents of "Mormonism" have been trained from youth to look upon it as a snare and a fraud, and are, therefore, not inclined to test its truth by experience. They receive our testimony also with incredulity, and scorn our claims that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. Jesus said that if any man do the Father's will he should know of the doctrine, whether it was of God or of man. That appears to constitute a sufficient test under all ordinary circumstances; but in view, it may be presumed, of the great judgments which are to come upon the earth in the "last days," and knowing just what position the people of the world generally would occupy respecting His great Latter-day work, He has, in amazing mercy, opened the way for every person of adult age, and who possesses ordinary intelligence, to ascertain whether this work is of God or not without passing through any religious experience whatever. He makes the appeal to the cold, intellectual, reasoning powers of His creatures. "Mormonism," as this work is commonly known, is so constructed that the Book of Mormon holds the keys, visible to all, of its truth or falsity, and they are offered to us for our personal use.

The case so stands that if the Book of Mormon is true historically, "Mormonism" is the truth of God, and on the other hand, if the historical records of that book are false, "Mormonism" is false from beginning to end. The "Mormons" can in no way escape from these conclusions, and if they cannot, on what grounds can other people avoid facing them, and bearing the consequences of their related actions? The "Mormons" do not wish to fly from this position—from this feature of their case—and what good reason can be given why anyone should wish to do so. Why should not the contention be joined on that very score? If "Mormonism" has a weak point anywhere in its whole structure, just here is where it can most likely be found. In what other feature can it be weaker, if it is a fraud? Why is the apparently most vulnerable point in this work overlooked so conspicuously, and ceaseless attacks upon it elsewhere? What great harm can sectarians do to it by showing that the moral and religious principles of the

Book of Mormon harmonize closely, or even perfectly, with those in the Bible? Will not unprejudiced people conclude hence that it must be a very good book? And that it may be even sinful to cry down such a work? Let our opponents prove that the history contained in the Book of Mormon is not true, and they will then have struck a blow at this Church, which affects it in a vital part. When that is done it will make no difference to anyone what becomes of the little side issues that some ministers magnify into mountains of importance.

Why should men rail at the Priesthood in this Church? It has been subjected to such attacks from the beginning, and still exists. *Just let it be proven that the historical records in the Book of Mormon are false, and then the Mormon Priesthood will tumble of its own accord, and all other features of this work that are distinctly Mormonistic will also perish from the earth.* In attempting this work, no experience in "Mormonism" is necessary. No disobedience to its principles entails a penalty. The work of proving the Book of Mormon records false is open to everybody. If that history is false, sectarian ministers can scarcely be ignorant of that fact; and they ought not to have much trouble in making its untruthfulness apparent. Some of them seem to be greatly interested in efforts to destroy "Mormonism," and if they do not set about that kind of work, in the manner just pointed out to them, shall we not righteously conclude that they do not wish to make any use of the Book of Mormon under any circumstances? Shall we not justly believe that they, as well as we, are aware that that history can not be proven false, and that they are wilfully opposing a work which they know is of God?

If this idea of one great use that sectarian ministers can make of the book in question has not occurred to them before, they might now make a note of it before it is forgotten. Young brethren and sisters, to you, who may from one cause or another, lack a perfectly satisfying testimony in your experience of the divinity of the work of the Lord in these latter days, which work is represented by this Church, the remarks just concluded, also apply in some measure. You can arrive at a certain and truthful conclusion in this matter by simply comparing the historical records of the Book of Mormon with the now known facts of ancient American history. As there is an astonishing agreement between them, the Book of Mormon was given by the inspiration of God; for He alone held the keys of that history in modern times, until it was revealed to His servant Joseph Smith, the great Latter-day prophet of the Lord.

Flagstaff, Arizona,
February 17th, 1910.

THOMAS W. BROOKBANK.

EVERY human action gains in honor, in grace, in all true magnificence, by its regard to things that are to come.