



Type: Magazine Article

Evidences of the Divinity of the Book of Mormon

Author(s): John T. Greene

Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 73, No. 7
(16 February 1911)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 100–103

Abstract: This two-part series discusses how the coming forth of the Book of Mormon fulfills a prophecy made by David that the truth would spring forth from the earth. It is the record of the “other sheep” spoken of by the Savior. The book fulfills other scriptural prophecies in Ezekiel, Genesis, and Isaiah. There are eleven witnesses as well as Joseph Smith and thousands of others bear testimony of its truthfulness. The second part concludes the series.

pass by. And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen."

That is what it means, in the Scriptures, when it says that "no man has seen God at any time." Certainly not, in the fulness of His glory, because He is like a consuming fire. Now, in short, this is the Deity that we have to declare to the world—not some mysterious something or nothing that no mind can grasp, but "our Father who is in heaven," who will hear our prayers, who loves us, because we are His children. Sometimes He dislikes our ways, and is angry because of our wickedness, but He desires our welfare, and He had a plan prepared, before the foundations of the earth were laid, for the exaltation and uplifting, the progress, the development of His children, that they may go on from stage to stage, from light to light, from glory to glory, and be able to ascend into His presence and see Him as He is, and be one with Him, as Christ is, and as the Holy Ghost is—three separate and distinct individuals, forming the presiding power of Deity, but separate persons in every respect.

(To be continued.)

EVIDENCES OF THE DIVINITY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

(Concluded from page 87.)

Of the people who dwelt in Palestine, we have a record written by their prophets. That record is called the Bible. But what shall we say of the people of the new world? The Jewish scriptures simply refer to them indirectly. This Bible record tells nothing of what became of the people who landed on the Western hemisphere when the tower of Babel was in course of construction. Of Joseph who was likened unto a "fruitful bough, whose branches were to run over the wall," we know nothing from our present-day Bible. Is it not reasonable to think that those people kept a record of themselves and God's dealings with them? Where, might we not consistently ask, is that record? Consider the words of the prophet Ezekiel unto whom the Lord spake as follows: "Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions, and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand." (Ezekiel 37:16, 17.) In ancient times the people wrote upon papyrus and this was rolled upon sticks so that the "sticks" really meant books. The Bible is generally known as the stick of Judah, but where is the stick of Ephraim? The wise and prudent have failed to answer. The explanation was forthcoming in the Book of Mormon presented to the world by Joseph Smith

fourscore years ago. Indeed this book professes to be a record of the tribes of Joseph, a record of the revelations given to that people before and after Christ, written, of course, by a succession of prophets, who were direct descendants of Joseph. When the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel as above, Israel was divided, the ten tribes being known as Israel, or Ephraim, and the two tribes as Judah. The Bible is truthfully called the stick of Judah because it deals with their history written by their prophets. The Book of Mormon is rightly called the stick of Ephraim because it deals with a remnant of the tribes of Joseph, who through the grace of God, came into possession of a promised land, and whose history written on plates of gold, was committed into the hands of a modern prophet for translation. The two "sticks" or books have become one in testifying that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ and that salvation's door was flung open to the people of the West as well as those of the far East, and that mankind may gain eternal life by obeying the laws and ordinances of Christ's gospel.

If we reject the Book of Mormon, there is positively no proof to show that the blessings and promises pronounced upon the head of Joseph by Jacob his father were ever fulfilled. Read the words of Jacob who told Joseph what should befall him in the last days: "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall," (Genesis 49: 22), also consider the striking words of Jacob as he blessed Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph: "Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." Along with this comes the greater promise to Ephraim: "His seed shall become a multitude of nations." Again Jacob declares that the blessing of Joseph was to prevail above the blessing of his progenitors. The progenitors of Jacob were blessed with the country of Palestine for an inheritance, but Joseph was to be the recipient of a greater land than that, a land referred to by his father as "the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills." Where has the seed of Joseph become a multitude of nations? Was the blessing of Joseph greater than the blessing of Jacob's progenitors if his posterity has not been blessed with a greater land than Palestine? Where then is that land? Again the wisdom of man fails to answer. Let the Book of Mormon testify and the question is answered. It makes clear that God respected the words of His prophet and the predictions were fulfilled. That Joseph became a multitude of nations is sure; that his inheritance was greater than the inheritance of his progenitors is certain; that the blessings and promises which were uttered by Jacob did not fall to the ground unfulfilled we must concede; then who can say that America was not the land referred to? Proof has been given to show that mighty nations once dwelt there. The Book of Mormon tells how these vast multitudes rose, flourished and fell and their once mighty grandeur, pictured by the mouldering ruins discovered in recent years, present to us a

story too sad for words, when we compare their former greatness with the sad condition of their lineal descendants, the American Indians of to-day.

Isaiah speaking to Israel says: "Thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." (Isa. 29: 4.) The person who has read the Book of Mormon and knows how it came to light cannot help but see how literally this prophecy has been fulfilled. The record given into the hands of Joseph Smith was literally taken from the ground, and is a history of a branch of fallen Israel. It comes as a whispering testimony, with a familiar spirit, from that people, brought low through transgression, and sounds a warning voice to all nations that "the way of the transgressor is hard." The argument is further strengthened when we consider the prophet's words concerning the record. Hear his words: "And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book which is sealed which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith I am not learned." (Isa. 29: 11, 12.) Soon after Joseph Smith came in possession of the plates, he began to translate the unsealed portion of them. He copied some of the characters on paper, and along with those characters was the accompanying translation in English. Martin Harris, a friend of the young seer, took these to Charles Anthon, a learned linguist of Columbia College, who examined the characters and pronounced them genuine and of the Egyptian order. He also declared that the translation appeared to be correct. The learned man desired that the plates be brought to him, and he would undertake a translation of them. Being informed that the record could not be brought, also that part of it was sealed, this antiquarian exclaimed: "I cannot read a sealed book." He thus unknowingly fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah uttered centuries before. God did not reveal this record unto the learned and mighty men but chose a humble farmer boy, unversed in scripture and unlearned in linguistics. What a marvellous work! What a wonder! Truly His secrets are revealed to babes, and this is only another case where the weak things of the earth are raised up to confound the mighty.

There is a glorious array of evidence which shows the Book of Mormon to be a divine record. The many predictions of Holy Writ literally fulfilled by its coming forth disclose it; eight reputable witnesses bear testimony in words of soberness that they saw the plates of gold from which it was translated, lifted them and beheld the engravings thereon. Three other highly respected men testify that they saw this golden record as it was shown them by an angel and that the voice of God commanded

them to declare its truthfulness. The many prophecies related in the book itself already fulfilled and others in course of fulfillment argue well the fact that the book is God-sent. The numerous discoveries of every passing year, such as the uncovering of walls, forts and towers, in America add links of undisputable evidence to the already long and unbroken chain of truthful testimony. The fact that the translator of the record, Joseph Smith, sealed his testimony with his blood, that many of his associates were willing to and did lay down their lives for the cause he represented, attaches to the document the broadest possible seal of truth. What shall we say of the early saints who were driven from county to county and from state to state, suffering agony untold, for the testimony of truth which God had implanted within their souls? Must we overlook the combined testimony of two thousand missionaries who are in all parts of the civilized world declaring that the Book of Mormon is what it professes to be. When we know that these ambassadors of Christ perform their missionary work absolutely without worldly remuneration we must realize that a truthful message is being taught. This wonderful book of the nineteenth century proves itself to be the "stick of Ephraim," and links hands with the "stick of Judah" in establishing the fact that Jesus was the Son of God, and that salvation's message was for all peoples.

As a final proof and one which has been the means of bringing joy and heart-felt satisfaction to the souls of thousands, we repeat the statement of the Redeemer, slightly changing the words: "If any man will do the will of the Father, he shall know of this work, whether it be of God or whether we speak of ourselves." Thousands have followed this admonition, and a truthful testimony has been planted within their souls. Since the Book of Mormon came to light, the tide of opposition has beaten furiously against its claim as a Divine record, but as these reviling waves advance only to recede, the silent monitor within us makes known that the book is a truthful history and is of God!—[The writer has consulted works of Elders James E. Talmage, Brigham H. Roberts and Orson Pratt for many of the facts set forth herein.]

Liverpool.

JOHN T. GREENE.

BE USEFUL.

Be useful where thou livest, that they may
 Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
 Kindness, good parts, great places are the way
 To compass this. Find out men's wants and will,
 And meet them there. All worldly joys go less
 To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

GEORGE HERBERT.