



Type: Magazine Article

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## Confirmatory Evidences of "Mormonism": Transliteration—Hebrew in "Reformed Egyptian"

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Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 96, No. 10  
(8 March 1934)

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

Page(s): 154–156

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**Abstract:** Harris cites many examples of one language being written with another alphabet—transliteration. This he does to support the claim of the Book of Mormon that Hebrew was written with Reformed Egyptian characters (Mormon 9:32-33; 1 Nephi 1:2). The article mentions the discovery by Sir Flinders Petrie of some writings in the Peninsula of Sinai that were in the Hebrew language but written “in Egyptian hieratic characters somewhat changed.”

responsibility of presenting the message of the Restored Gospel to those with whom we come in contact, we will find our best approach, an approach in understanding.

The coming articles in the *Sunday Dispatch* series, "What Shall A Man Believe," will provide a splendid opportunity for us to become acquainted with the doctrines and beliefs of Britain's many different religious organizations; for reading each denomination's story will doubtless give us a better comprehension of the problems that face us and perhaps suggest to us ways and means of best presenting our message to those of differing beliefs.—  
RICHARD S. BENNETT.

## CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCES OF "MORMONISM"

### TRANSLITERATION—HEBREW IN "REFORMED EGYPTIAN"

IN its hundred odd years of existence since being published, the Book of Mormon has been subjected to every sort of critical test. Every possible objection has been raised to try to cast doubt on its authenticity. It has, it seems, been the equal delight of both "learned" and unlearned to attack its various claims. Such people at times find one point which they cannot understand or accept, and reject the Book on that basis. Such has been the case when it has been mentioned that the Book was originally written in "reformed Egyptian." Critics of the Book of Mormon have been disposed to rant about such claims which, though consistent when considered in the light of common sense and the lack of definite knowledge at the time, with new facts and evidence make these critics appear to be too hasty of speech.

The Book of Mormon itself tells of the language and characters in which it was written :

We have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew, but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfections in our record. (Mormon 9: 32-33.)

Nephi relates :

Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. (1 Nephi 1: 2.)

From this we understand that though the language was Hebrew, changed no doubt as all languages do in the course of time, yet the characters were "reformed Egyptian," Egyptian characters adapted for their purposes. This expressing of the words of one language by the characters or alphabet of another is called transliteration.

What about transliteration? Has such a thing been practised in history, or is the Book of Mormon the only instance of this?

Let us look at history. Many centuries before Christ, when but little writing was done, the North Semitic alphabet was developed. This was used to write several languages, Phoenician, Moabitish, Hebrew and Aramaic.\* This alphabet later evolved into separate alphabets for each of these languages. But this North Semitic alphabet is used even to-day by the Samaritans for their Pentateuch, though the language is Hebrew.† They also use this alphabet to write Aramaic and even Arabic,‡ though in ordinary secular usage they write in Arabic characters.‡ The Samaritan Pentateuch has also been transliterated into Greek and Arabic characters.§

During the centuries when alphabets were being developed and the use of them was spreading among peoples of different languages, it was common for a people to adopt a new alphabet for their language, which would result in having to transliterate their writings into the new alphabet.|| In the great empire of Genghis Khan the Mongolian characters were used, yet after the spread of Mohammedanism, the Arabic characters were adopted.¶ The Jews themselves made this type of change. As mentioned they at first used the North Semitic alphabet, and even their sacred books were written in these characters.¶ Yet, after their return from the captivity in Babylon, they adopted the Aramaic characters, which latter evolved into the modern square Hebrew. This change necessitated the transliteration of their writings into the new characters.¶

Recently Sir Flinders Petrie, in excavating in Upper Egypt found a papyrus in a Roman pot. This papyrus proved to be so ancient a copy of the Gospel according to John that it stands next in age after the Codex Vaticanus. The text is in Coptic, an old language of Egypt derived from the hieroglyphic language, but written in Greek characters with some additional letters peculiar to the Coptic.\*\*

Coming down to more modern times, we find it is a common practice to write one language in the characters of another. For example, the British and Foreign Bible Society have published parts of the Bible in well over 600 different languages and dialects, but not in that many different kinds of characters, there being about 84 different forms used. From the very many instances shown in their booklet, *The Gospel in Many Tongues*, a few examples may serve to illustrate. The Maya and Aztec languages of the American Indians are given in Roman characters, the same kind of characters that we use. Parts of the Bible have been published in English and most European, African and Oceanic, and several Asiatic languages using the Roman characters. Even Chinese is so transliterated. One language may be given in a number of different kinds of characters, as Sanskrit, the ancient

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\**International Encyclopedia*, 1914, article on Alphabet.

†*Encyclopedia Britannica*, article on Samaritans.

‡Isaac Taylor, *History of the Alphabet*, 1 : 242.

§Moses Gaster, *The Samaritans*, pp. 120-121.

||Taylor, *History of the Alphabet*.

¶*Chamber's Encyclopedia*, article on Alphabet ; Taylor, *History of the Alphabet*, 1 : 268-69.

\*\*Hilda Petrie, *Side Notes on the Bible*, pp. 36-41.



language of the Hindoos, which is given in six different kinds, and ancient Syriac in three. Even the Book of Mormon since it was published has been transliterated at least twice; once in the English language, but using the Deseret alphabet, and once in Turkish, using the Armenian alphabet. In 1928 the Turkish National Assembly enacted the substitution of the Roman alphabet and characters for the Arabic in all official documents.

Surely all this evidence should be enough to satisfy any question as to the reasonableness of the Book of Mormon being transliterated, the Hebrew in "reformed Egyptian" characters. And yet, in addition to the evidence given, a striking evidence has been found in the last few years that is a little short of remarkable in conclusively supporting the Book of Mormon's transliteration.

In 1905, Sir Flinders Petrie led an expedition into the peninsula of Sinai, the wilderness where Israel wandered for forty years before Jericho was taken. In the middle of this wilderness at Serabit, Sir Flinders found and examined an ancient temple. Here he found side by side with Egyptian hieroglyphs, another form of writing in a kind of Egyptian, apparently written by someone who knew both languages as did the Book of Mormon historians. Subsequent expeditions there have found more of this writing and worked at its deciphering. Finally, in 1923, the conclusions of Professor Hubert Grimme, Professor of Semitic Language at Münster University, were published. According to Professor Grimme the Sinaitic writing was adopted from the Egyptian hieratic writing about 1500 B. C. The language is "pure Hebrew," but written in Egyptian hieratic characters somewhat changed!

How was Joseph Smith, in a backwoods settlement in New York, in his day to know that Hebrew might be written in "reformed Egyptian" characters when in his day Champollion had not yet been able to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphics? What would be the basis for him to make a claim that would wait many decades before being literally verified? The answer is simple—only truth would give him that courage. He spoke from knowledge given him by God.

The use of transliteration, and especially the finding in the Sinaitic peninsula of Hebrew writing in a "reformed Egyptian," is a very striking evidence of the truth of the Book of Mormon.—  
ELDER FRANKLIN S. HARRIS, JR.

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## WHEN A TOBACCO MAGNATE STOPPED SMOKING

DR. JOHN HARVEY KELLOGG, M.D., LL.D.

THERE came into my office one day a tall gentleman, very erect, with a serious and dignified air, features haggard and wrinkled, skin sallow and a depressed and worried facial expression.

Without sitting, he said, "Dr. Kellogg, I am Charles S. Keene, Vice-President of the American Tobacco Company. I am sixty-seven years old. I have myocarditis. I have consulted many physicians. They have been able to give me no help and offer me