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The Book of Mormon—A Witness for the Bible

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Abstract: This series deals with a wide variety of aspects of the Book of Mormon including Joseph Smith, Obadiah Dogberry, ancient fortifications, metal plates, Spaulding theory, clarifications of biblical doctrine, the abridging work of Mormon, record of the Jaredites, differences between the Bible and the Book of Mormon, witnesses of the Book of Mormon, history, literary qualities, Hebrew traits in the book, its relation to the Bible, and evidence of its antiquity. The fifteenth part continues the discussion of the Book of Mormon's relationship with the Bible.

The Book Of Mormon—A Witness For The Bible

By E. CECIL MCGAVIN

BEFORE the Nephites had embarked on the ship that brought them to the American continent one of their prophets predicted the coming forth of holy scriptures in the last days and emphasised the fact that they "shall establish the truth of the first," meaning the Bible. From this remarkable prophecy we quote a few verses:—

"And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren.

"And after it had come forth unto them I beheld other books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.

TO ESTABLISH TRUTH

"And the angel spake unto me, saying: These last records, which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Saviour of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved.

<p>PART XV OF "A MARVELLOUS WORK AND A WONDER"</p>
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"And they must come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb; and the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb wherefore they both shall be established in one, for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth." (I Nephi 13: 38-41.)

Lehi, in speaking to his son Joseph, said of the scriptures which would be written by the descendants of Judah and Ephraim: "Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruits of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days." (II Nephi 3: 12.)

The title page or preface of the Book of Mormon declares that one reason for this modern book of scripture is "to the

convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ the Eternal God, manifesting Himself unto all nations."

At this time when many Bible readers are doubting the divinity of Jesus and His Mission; when certain accounts in the New Testament are regarded as the result of the zealous spirit of fanaticism rather than inspiration and when many miraculous incidents in the ministry of Jesus are regarded with suspicion, it is certainly an opportune time for such a volume as the Book of Mormon to be read from the house tops.

No one who accepts the Book of Mormon as an inspired record need doubt for a moment the validity of the Biblical references to the divine mission and message of Jesus Christ. If accepted throughout Christendom this modern witness of the Bible would put an end to the useless controversy on that subject. In 1894 Nicolas Notovitch wrote a book titled "The Unknown Life of Christ," in which he argued that Jesus traveled extensively in Persia for many years before beginning His ministry in Palestine. From the philosophers in the East He is said to have learned the great truths He later preached among His own people.

SHATTERS THEORIES

The Book of Mormon completely shatters such worldly theories about the validity of the Bible and the divinity of Jesus. Many Nephite prophets told their people about the coming of Jesus and specifically outlined many of the things He would accomplish, all of which are narrated in the Bible.

The critics have raised objections to the prophecies in the Book of Mormon which foretell the mission of Jesus, because they are written in the language of accomplished fact as if the material had been copied from the New Testament without the translator taking time to change the tense. Some critics have thought that they would destroy all faith in the Nephite Record when they called attention to this problem. Their objection was based on such Hebraic constructions as the following, which was uttered several centuries before the birth of Jesus in the flesh:—

"Wherefore, after he was baptised with water, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove. . . . And he said unto the children of men, Follow thou Me." (II Nephi 31: 8.)

STYLE LIKE NEPHITES

There are numerous instances in the Book of Mormon where the language of accomplished fact is used. Though it is not good construction in English, it is a definite Hebrew trait. Isaiah had much to say about the ministry of Jesus and he said it exactly as the Nephite prophets did—in the language of accomplished fact. The following verses from the famous text in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah show that his style was exactly like that of the Nephites:—

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . He was oppressed and he was afflicted . . . He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich

in his death . . . Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him."

Other Old Testament prophets used this same style in speaking of future events. The presence of such Hebraic futures in the Book of Mormon is evidence that it is based upon an ancient Hebrew text.

People who accept this book of scripture as the word of God do not doubt the Godhood of Jesus Christ or question the divine nature of His person and ministry. This record teaches that the resurrected Lord appeared to the Nephites and gave practically the same fundamental teachings He had given to the Jews in Palestine. It speaks with finality and authority in declaring that He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. There is no force or influence in all the world so essential and so potent as a divine witness of the Bible as is this humble record which was inscribed on sheets of gold. Faithfully and well does it adhere to its destined mission of "establishing the truths" of the Bible.

EXPRESSES BELIEF

This modern book of scripture affords an additional witness that many Christians are prayerfully seeking. Dr. George Rawlinson expressed the belief of many in these words:—

"It is a happy omen, that, while so much of the literature of our times is marked by a tone of infidelity, and especially by a disparagement of the evidences of the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures, there is in other quarters an increasing readiness to make the choicest gifts of modern science and learning tributary to the word of God. The eclipse of faith is not total. And it is an additional cause of gratitude to the God of Providence and of Revelation, that even at this remote distance of time from the date of the Sacred Oracles, new evidences of their credibility and accuracy are continually coming to light. How much may yet remain, buried under barren mounds, or entombed in pyramids and catacombs, or hidden in the yet unexplored pages of some ancient literature, it were vain to conjecture, but of this we may be sure, that if any new forms of evidence should hereafter be needed, to meet any new forms of unbelief, and authenticate afresh the word of truth, they will be found deposited somewhere, waiting for the fulness of time; and God will bring them forth in their season, from the dark hieroglyphics, or the desert sands, or the dusty manuscripts, to confound the adversaries of His Word, and to "magnify it above all His name." ("Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records.")

The Rev. John Watson has written of the value of such additional testimony:—

GREATER WITNESS

"Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing 50 words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century. If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a

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PERSONALS.

COLLINS-HINGLEY—On Saturday, October 24, 1942, the marriage of Brother Roland Collins and Sister Evelyn Hingley, both of the Sparkbrook branch, was solemnised by District President Norman Dunn, at Handsworth Chapel, Birmingham. The bride, who was given away by her grandfather, was attired in a beautiful white dress and a long veil, and carried a bouquet of deep red roses. Her sister, wearing a dress of turquoise green and carrying a bouquet of golden chrysanthemums, acted as bridesmaid. Branch President Webb was the best man. Many relatives and friends attended the wedding.

About forty people were invited to the reception, held at the home of

the bridegroom. Afterwards a dance, arranged by the mothers of the married couple, was held at the Conway Schools, Sparkbrook, attended by seventy people. The bride rendered a solo, "Because." Elder John Perry played and sang with a guitar. Brother George Craig and friends provided the music.

GERMANY-FLETCHER — Sister Marjorie Germany, of the Barnsley branch, Sheffield District, was married to Mr. Stephen Fletcher, of Liverpool, in the Sheffield Chapel, on Wednesday, October 28, 1942. Marjorie Germany has fulfilled a full-time mission and both parties were members of the Pen Friendship League.



DEATH.

We have received sad news from Mrs. Davies, English bride of just over a year, that her husband, Brother Arthur Clarence Davies, of Hillspring, Alberta, Canada, Sergeant-Pilot in the R.A.F., was killed in England on October 21, 1942,

while on operational flight. The Mission Presidency and Church members tender to his widowed wife and his folks at home their very sincere expression of sorrow and sympathy.



MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES

Lady missionaries Mabel Fitton and Lucy Ripley had the privilege of speaking at the Lodge of the Good Templars on Tuesday, December 1, 1942. The theme of the evening and the subject of our talks was "Happiness." The duets sung by them were in keeping with the theme—"Joy to the World." "Sunshine in Your Heart" and "Let the Lower Lights be Burning," and, by special request, "Santa Lucia." Approximately forty people were present.



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catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like He was, it would not matter that its colours were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have at once a solitary place amid the treasures of art." ("Life of the Master," Prologue.)

In the Book of Mormon is to be found a far greater witness and more reliable testimony than the world has ever dreamed of in making "known unto all kindreds, tongues and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Saviour of the world." After more than a century this treasure house of literature continues to be "a marvellous work and a wonder."