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The Signs of the Times: The Book of Mormon

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Abstract: External evidence of the Book of Mormon substantiates its validity. Scientists have tried to prove it a forgery, but after one hundred years they have not succeeded and it has stood the test of time and close examination.

"apostolic." Fraud cannot stand the scrutiny of Father Time.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

What about the Book of Mormon?

That book has stood the test of a century. When it first appeared it was denounced as a forgery and has been so regarded by scientists, from Prof. Anthon to John Fiske. It has now been before the world almost a hundred years, and it is increasing in popularity. No scientist has been able to break down the evidence of its genuineness or its authenticity. On the contrary, the closer it is examined, the clearer its value becomes, as a source of both history and doctrine.

Let me offer one illustration. According to the Book of Mormon, important battles have been fought around the hill Cumorah in the state of New York. Critics have said, that cannot be true, because few evidences of armed conflicts have been found in that locality.

This objection is not well taken. Modern discoveries prove that even in more recent times, before the advent of the Europeans, Indians in the western parts of the state of New York, where Cumorah, the land and the hill, is situated, migrated, fought and fortified the hills, in their struggle for existence.

According to a very interesting paper on "the Migration of the Seneca Nation," in the *American Anthropologist* for April-June, 1927, by Frederick Houghton, the latest pre-European Seneca village was at Richmond Mills, near Honeoye Lake. A hilltop village just west of Canandaigua Lake, in Bristol, marks the beginning of another town. At Portageville, above the falls of the Genesee river is an undoubted pre-European Seneca site, a typical hilltop fort, near Sugartown. Hilltop forts have in pre-historic times existed north of Salamanca in Callavangus Co., on a hill at Ellington, Chautauqua Co., and in a number of other localities. The

author concludes, speaking of both recent and early migrations:

"Unlike the later migrations which led the Seneca into familiar and unoccupied country, this early migration seems to have been through a country already occupied by a hostile people, through which their course led, not along easily traveled water courses, but along the crests of the highest divides, where every stopping place must be fortified. Of this there can be no reasonable doubt."

"Now, it is reasonable to assume that the people who lived on the sites, who threw up the earthen wall on the crest of Ellington Hill, who fortified the hill slopes in the Cassadaga Valley, and who formed the black refuse pits in the fort above Findley Lake, were not autochthonous. They came to these places, and before they came they had acquired a culture which differentiates them from the peoples among whom they had established themselves. East of Cassadaga there seems every reason to believe that they were the people to be known long after as Seneca, Sonnontorian, the Hill People."

Here we have a picture of the migrations, the hill forts and battles of historically famous Indian nations in Western New York—a picture which in some of its general features reminds us of the history of the descendants of Lehi, as preserved in the Book of Mormon. That is, in my judgment, strong presumptive evidence in favor of his record, and the fact is that, as times roll by, such evidence is accumulating. If the Book of Mormon were not true, science would long ago have proved it false, as it has a great number of forged ancient documents.

SECTARIANISM CONDEMNED

Closely connected with the appearance of the Book of Mormon is the first vision of the earnest young boy Joseph Smith, in which he was told that the entire Christian world was in error.

Some of our Protestant friends have taken offense at this indictment, as did the Jews, when our Lord told them that they were not the children of Abraham, as long as they harbored murderous thoughts in their hearts. God, our critics say, could never have