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## The Aborigines of America

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**Abstract:** This article claims that Old Testament and Book of Mormon prophecies provide answers to questions concerning the origins of the American Indians who are of the House of Israel. The record called the stick of Joseph came forth as the Book of Mormon.

gift from God, generally possess true humility, and willingly impart it to others who desire it, but who have not been so highly favoured.

Practice is powerful in itself. We are naturally attracted by the calm, happy, honest, virtuous bearing of a good man. The power and goodness of his religion are manifested in his kind, loving, firm deportment, the strength with which he resists temptation, the manliness with which he respects his brother's rights and protects the weak, the wisdom of his counsels, the true charity that shines in his judgments and sentiments; and we feel, whilst we admire, his superiority. He is a potent living testimony to the truth of his religion, for he preaches by precept and practice.

Practice is powerful in families. As boys increase in years, they have a craving to be men and to imitate their fathers. Girls have similar feelings towards their mothers; and the example they have set before them by their parents have more or less influence over them during their lives, according to the amount of confidence children repose in their parents. In the Church of Christ the child will wonder at being anointed with oil, and having hands laid upon it for the rebuking of disease; but on receiving a blessing through this medium, the next time it is sick it will ask for the oil with perfect confidence. We have known of children having perfect faith in this ordinance before they could be taught. "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." (James v.

14, 15.) This practice is a testimony to the truth of the doctrine of Christ, when we commence to teach the Gospel to the child by precept. Faith, order, cleanliness, and obedience have their foundation laid by the practice of parents. Precept alone will not beget confidence, but precept and practice will. Israel will become great—will become the head; and we should not consider ourselves cyphers in the kingdom of God. But all men have their mission to fulfil, and their influence is for good or evil; and their practice may influence more or less the destinies of beings yet unborn.

The religion of Jesus Christ is essentially a practical one, and our actions speak louder than the words we utter. Greatness does not consist in knowledge or position alone; but the beings who can successfully govern themselves, and live according to the light and wisdom God has blessed them with, and who set a good example by precept and practice, are on the road to greatness, for the truly good are the truly great. It is within the grasp of all classes, if they will live for it; for true nobility, or native worth, like water, will find its level; and the Lord God judges men, not according to the outward appearance: he "seeth not as man seeth," but "looketh on the heart," and also knows the motive from whence spring all our actions.

Thus may the rich and poor take up the cross of Christ, and both will find their peculiar difficulties—both have to "deny themselves." There is no royal road to salvation: both have to tread the strait and narrow way, and will have to prove their love to "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" by precept and by practice.

## THE ABORIGINES OF AMERICA.

BY ELDER HENRY W. BARNETT.

When Christopher Columbus discovered the land of America in the year 1492, he found it thickly inhabited by a remarkable race of people. Their complexion was of a rusty copper colour; their faces were fantastically painted with glaring colours; their hair, black and long, floated upon their shoulders; their heads

were decked with gaudy feathers; and in their noses were plates of gold.

Such were the red American Indians.

Who they are, and how and when they migrated to America, historians are unable to determine. But here, nevertheless, is a vast country numerous inhabited by a wild, uncultivated race of the



human family, bearing evident marks of a once-enlightened and a powerful people, but whose origin and history has been for many centuries entirely unknown. Then who are those red strangers of the West? They are a branch of the house of Israel. They are the lineal descendants of Joseph, who was banished into Egypt.

This principle is beautifully illustrated in the prophecies.

The continent of America was a blessing conferred upon Joseph and his posterity for a perpetual inheritance; for, while the patriarch Jacob resided in the land of Egypt, he blessed Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and predicted that they should become a great people, and that they should "grow into a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth." (Gen. xlviii.)

Prior to Jacob's decease, he called together his twelve sons, and predicted over their heads what would befall them in the latter days. In blessing Joseph, he said:—

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel,)—even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts and of the womb: the blessings of thy father (Jacob) have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors (Abraham and Isaac) unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." (Gen. xlix. 22—26.)

This passage is fraught with beauty and principle. It should be remembered that the blessings which Jehovah confirmed upon Jacob's "progenitors," Abraham and Isaac, and their numerous seed, was the land of Canaan for an everlasting inheritance. But Jacob's blessings "prevailed above" theirs. He obtained another blessing—a choice inheritance—a land abounding with the precious blessings of the heavens and the earth—a land distinguished for its vast wealth, and noted for its "everlasting

hills." This excellent blessing Jacob sealed "on the head of Joseph and his great family or posterity. In order to obtain possession of this promise, the "branches" of the "fruitful bough," or descendants of Joseph, were to "run over the wall," stretching far beyond the boundaries of the East—literally passing over the ocean that divides the two hemispheres.

The various Prophets contemplated this important subject with intense interest and admiration. The Prophet Isaiah utters this splendid passage:—

"They wandered through the wilderness: their branches are stretched out; they ARE GONE OVER THE SEA." (Chap. xvi. 8.)

He gives a graphical description of the form and location of the land of Joseph—the continent of America. Standing in Asia, he exclaims thus:—

"Woe (Ho) to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia." (Chap. xviii. 1.)

Zephaniah's expressions on the subject are very similar to Isaiah's. He speaks thus:—

"From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering." (Chap. ii. 10.)

The Prophet Hosea is equally forcible on the subject. He expressly mentions Ephraim's children as inhabiting the land of the West, and says:—

"I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy EPHRAIM; for I am God, and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not enter into the city. They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar like a lion. When he shall roar, then the children (of Ephraim) shall tremble FROM THE WEST." (Chap. xi. 9, 10.)

A branch of the house of Joseph was taken and planted in America in the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. A Prophet named Lehi, and his family, left Jerusalem, by the commandment of God, and emigrated to the land of America, about six hundred years before Christ. On this land they greatly multiplied and prospered. They were not without a knowledge of God, neither were they without the holy Priesthood. They had among them a sacred oracle, containing the law of the Lord, which they had



brought from Jerusalem. They were favoured with ecstatic dreams and heavenly visions, through which they were exceedingly enlightened on the coming of the Messiah and the opening of the Christian dispensation—the dispensation of the Gospel and power of God. Finally, the Son of God appeared and commenced his glorious work among the Jews. He organised his Church, founded upon Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, with gifts and powers of the Holy Spirit. And after this, (which was after his resurrection,) he manifested himself to the people in South America, where he unfolded the principles of the Gospel, called twelve Apostles, and organised a Church after the order and character of the one in the East; for Jesus himself expressly declared—

“OTHER SHEEP I have, which are not of this (Jewish) fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” (John x. 16.)

Here Jesus directly refers to Joseph's seed in the West, who would literally hear his own voice.

The Saviour's great command was to “preach the Gospel” to “all the world,” to “every creature;” and therefore the descendants of Joseph in America could not be excepted.

Christianity continued on the American continent till about the fourth century, by which time the Church had almost wasted away and become extinct through wars and apostacy. And, in order to preserve a history of the people, and like-

wise the revelations and dealings of God among them, the Prophet Moroni, the last Prophet living there, deposited records (which were skilfully engraved on fine plates of gold) in the hill Cumorah, in South America. These records, in the form of the Book of Mormon, were revealed by an angel unto the Prophet Joseph Smith in the year 1827. This sacred volume contains a clear account of the aborigines of America. It explains why the Almighty “caused a skin of blackness” to come upon the people of that land—namely, because of the wickedness of one named Laman, from whom the North American Indians have descended, called Lamanites.

The two sacred oracles, the Book of Mormon and the Bible, are the two sticks mentioned by the Prophet Ezekiel, in chapter xxxvii., verses 16, 17:—

“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.”

In this great day of restitution God will also restore the original complexion of the Lamanites. They shall become a “white and enlightened people.” Then Ephraim will no more “envy Judah, and Judah envy Ephraim;” for they will be one, even as their records are one; and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will reign over them for ever.

## THE VISITOR.

### VISIT TO A BACKSLIDER.

It was Monday evening; and previous to attending a meeting, I sallied forth for a walk.

The blustering winds and pitiless storms of rain, hail, and snow, which characterized a long fierce winter, had given way before the approaching footfalls of a tardy spring; and the calm stillness of the declining day gave the mind leisure to drink in copious draughts from the founts of loveliness around of Nature's own providing, while the heart was stirred to praise the kind Being whose hand is over

all things for good. An up-swelling of pure deep love from the innermost recesses of the soul towards all who love or seek after truth moved my thoughts to action, that they might be brought to enjoy and appreciate the smiles of Heaven, and live under the influences of the Spirit of holiness. In this mood of mind I strolled on till I reached the dwelling of one who once loved to call himself a Saint, and whose presence I had noticed at meeting on the previous evening.

Determined to call, I knocked at the