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The Lamanites (15 March 1878)

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Abstract: Notes that scientists recognized that the ancestors of the American Indians were highly civilized and had apparent ties to the East. The Book of Mormon is the one reliable source to explain this.

THE LAMANITES.

VARIOUS speculations have been indulged in by ethnologists concerning the origin of the race of people known as American Indians. Very little attention was paid to the subject previous to the last-half a century, but during the latter period scientific men have spent much time and means in collecting data to enlighten them in regard to the past history and origin of the native races of this continent. The ruins of their ancient dwellings and temples scattered over the country have been explored, their picture writings have been copied, their inscriptive monuments have been studied, and their mounds and burial places have been burrowed into in the tireless search for relics. Sufficient has been learned to convince those engaged in the study that the early inhabitants of this continent were highly civilized, and that there is an apparent relationship between their civilization and that of the eastern continent. But where to find the connecting link between the two, and how to account for the origin of these American tribes, are questions that have puzzled the brains of the profoundest thinkers and most learned ethnologists of the age. The speculative theories advanced by different writers upon the subject are as varied and conflicting as it is possible to imagine. Some claim that they represent a separate and distinct creation from the rest of mankind, others that they



are the remnants of the lost ten tribes of Israel, others that they are of Phœnician origin, etc.

While all this doubt and uncertainty exists among the scientific men of the world, the Latter day Saints alone have an assurance not only of the origin and past history of these people, but also of their future destiny. They have in their possession the early history of this race, and know that notwithstanding the low, degraded condition in which they are found at present, they have the blood of Israel in their veins. The Book of Mormon, revealed by an angel from heaven to the Prophet Joseph Smith, tells us this. And it also tells us that the Lord will yet accomplish a mighty work with this people; that a remnant of them will be brought to a knowledge of the truth concerning the gospel and the promises made to their fathers, and that they will become a white and delightsome people.

Knowing these things, the Latter-day Saints do not regard these poor natives as others generally do. They do not seek their lives and try to rob them of all their rights. But instead, they help them with means, they teach them how to earn a livelihood, to be industrious, honest and moral, to live peaceably, and take a course to prolong their lives.

When America was first colonized by Europeans, the Indians were very numerous. Since then they have been wasted away by wars and other causes until there are comparatively few

left. According to the census of the United States taken in 1860, there were 44,021 civilized Indians (or Indians under governmental supervision, supposed to be learning the arts of civilization) in the United States. In 1870 there were only 25,731, there having been a decrease in one decade of 18,290. Whisky and disease introduced among them by white men are understood to be the principal decimating causes among them. In all probability the next census will show a still greater decrease.

Looking at it naturally we might expect the total extinction of the race to be the result; but we know that such will not be the case. Already the Almighty has commenced to work upon the hearts of these poor down-trodden people. Dreams and visions have been given to many of them, and they have been led to seek counsel and baptism at the hands of the Latter-day Saints; and the time is close at hand when thousands of them will embrace the gospel and claim and receive of the Lord the blessing promised to their fathers in ages past.

Biography.

JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET.

(Continued.)

AFTER the occurrences related in the last number, the Twelve Apostles, who had been called by revelation from the Lord to go on a mission, to cross the great waters to England, began to make preparations for their journey. The revelation in which they were called to take this mission was given at Far West, July 8th, 1837, and read as follows:—

QUESTION.

“Show unto us thy will, O Lord, concerning the Twelve?”

ANSWER.

Verily thus saith the Lord. Let a conference be held immediately, let the Twelve be organized, and let men be appointed to supply the place of those who are fallen. Let my servant Thomas remain for a season in the land of Zion, to publish my word. Let the residue continue to preach from that hour, and if they will do this in all lowliness of heart, in meekness and humility, and long-suffering, I, the Lord, give unto them a promise that I will provide for their families, and an effectual door shall be opened for them, from henceforth; and next spring let them depart to go over the great waters, and there promulgate my gospel, the fullness thereof, and bear record of my name. Let them take leave of my Saints in the city of Far West, on the 26th day of April next, on the building spot of my house, saith the Lord.

Let my servant John Taylor, and also my servant John E. Page, and also my servant Wilford Woodruff, and also my servant Willard Richards be appointed to fill the places of those who have fallen, and be officially notified of their appointment.

Sickness had again seized upon nearly all of the Twelve. It seemed as if the adversary was exerting himself to hedge up their way to prevent them from accomplishing their mission. President Brigham Young had such poor health when he started that he was unable to go thirty rods to the river Mississippi without assistance. He started September 14th, 1839, and left his wife sick, with a babe only ten days old, and all his children sick and unable to wait upon each other. He lived at Montrose, which was on the opposite side of the river from Nauvoo. He crossed the river, and succeeded in reach-