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The Stick of Ephraim

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Abstract: This article addresses the question, “Why is the Book of Mormon called the stick of Ephraim when Lehi descended from Manasseh?” It recounts Ezekiel’s prophecy that the sticks of Judah and Joseph would come together. The blessings given to Joseph and Ephraim by the Patriarch Jacob show that as the birthright tribe, Ephraim is nearly always referred to in the Bible instead of Manasseh. Zoram and Ishmael were descendants of Ephraim, and in the latter days the Book of Mormon is being used primarily by descendants of Ephraim. For all of these reasons the Book of Mormon is referred to as the stick of Ephraim.

extent, but I am afraid that they have suffered greatly in Tuamotu islands, for there has been three islands reported flooded, but no loss of life, and the rest of the islands have not been heard from yet.

"We have two Elders in these islands now (Charles A. Brewerton and S. A. Bunker). The last time I heard from them they were at Fakarava, and it is reported that everything was washed off that island, but the brethren left there before the storm for Montutunga via Faaite, and both of these islands, according to reports here, were in the storm belt. A vessel has been sent into that group with food for the people in case they are in need of it, and everything that can be done for the welfare of the brethren will be done. There are only two Elders in the mission that I have not heard from, and they are on a high island, and were in no more danger than we are.

"The land which I talked to you of buying for the mission to colonize on was not hurt at all. The work on the new buildings is prospering nicely, and the Elders and sisters are all well."

THE STICK OF EPHRAIM.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE TERM AS APPLIED TO THE BOOK OF MORMON.

WE have been requested to explain why the Book of Mormon is called "The Stick of Ephraim," when Lehi, who was at the head of the colony that came upon the American continent six hundred years before Christ, was a descendant of Manasseh. This question arises from that which is written in Ezekiel xxxvii: 16-20, and also Doc. and Cov. Sec. 27, verse 5.

The prophet Ezekiel, according to his writings, was commanded of the Lord to take a stick and write upon it "For Judah and for the children of Israel his companions," and then take another stick and write upon it "For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions." He was to join them one to another, and was told that they should become one in his hands. When the people to whom he was to present these sticks should ask what was the meaning of them, he was to say:

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him even with the stick of Judah and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes."

The succeeding verses in that chapter show that not only were the two "sticks" or records to be made one, but that the seed of Judah and the seed of Joseph, with all the other tribes of Israel, were to be brought together and made one nation to serve the Lord in the latter days. It is well known that writings were made in the time of Ezekiel upon parchment which was rolled upon a stick; so that the "stick of Judah" evidently meant the record of Judah, which is understood among the Latter-day Saints to be the Bible, containing the history and prophetic writings of the prophets of the house of Judah. The other "stick," therefore, is understood to signify the record of the house of Joseph, with the writings of the prophets of that branch of the house

of Israel, spoken of in the Doctrine and Covenants, as well as in the Book of Ezekiel as "The Stick of Ephraim."

But supposing that this view of the subject is correct, that the Bible is the "stick of Judah" and the Book of Mormon is the "stick of Joseph in the hand of Ephraim," why is it thus designated and called particularly "the stick of Ephraim," when it is clear from the Book of Mormon that Lehi was a descendant of Manasseh, and that consequently Nephi and other writers who were descendants of Lehi were of course also of the house of Manasseh? (Alma x: 3).

The explanation of this will be found in the prophecy of Jacob, the father of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, in bestowing a patriarchal blessing upon Joseph's sons, as recorded in Genesis xlviii, wherein Ephraim, the younger son, was set before Manasseh, the elder, and placed at the head of the house of Joseph. To fully understand this matter it is necessary to read carefully the blessing upon Joseph in Genesis xlix, and also the special blessings upon his two sons in Genesis xlviii.

The occupancy by the seed of Joseph of a land greater in extent and value than the land of Palestine "unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills," is clearly portrayed, and the future of the two half tribes of the house of Joseph is also vividly set forth by Jacob, with the result that he "set Ephraim before Manasseh." It will be found in the writings of the Hebrew prophets concerning the tribe of Joseph that Ephraim is always mentioned as the head of the house. For example, read the book of Jeremiah and the book of Hosea. Manasseh is rarely mentioned in any prophetic reference to the house of Joseph. It is Ephraim about whom the Lord says, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." Hosea viii: 12.

In a similar way Judah is invariably spoken of in the Bible to the ignoring of Benjamin, although the two were separate tribes. But they were blended almost as one, and "the sceptre" was with Judah. So the record of those parts of the house of Israel that were with Judah was called "the stick of Judah," and that of those that were with Joseph was called "the stick of Ephraim," or "the stick of Joseph in the hand of Ephraim."

It was stated by the Prophet Joseph Smith that Ishmael and his family who accompanied Lehi and his family in coming to the American continent and helping to people the land, were pure Ephraimites, and the account of their genealogy was contained on those larger plates of Nephi, one hundred and sixteen pages of the translation of which were entrusted to Martin Harris. Mention of their loss can be found in Doctrine and Covenants, sections 3 and 10. It is also understood that Zoram, the servant of Laban, was also of the house of Ephraim. When the colony that came over with Mulek, who was a Jew, was added to the population, there were persons of other tribes with him, and therefore the saying of Ezekiel concerning Ephraim and "the tribes of Israel his fellows," is made clear.

There is another thing to be considered in connection with this subject: The people into whose hands the "stick of Joseph" is committed in the latter days are chiefly of the house of Ephraim, as is revealed in their patriarchal blessings. They are "the first-born of the Lord" in his marvellous work, as

declared in Jeremiah xxxi: 9. They are to carry it forth to every nation and tribe and tongue, and to "push the people together from the ends of the earth." Ephraim stands at the head of the house of Joseph, as predicted by Jacob and also by Moses. (Deut. xxxiii: 13-17.) It is to Ephraim that the God of Israel has committed the keys of the last dispensation, in which all things in Him are to be gathered in one.

We need not pursue this subject further. It is for the benefit of the studious among the Latter-day Saints that we touch upon it. Other people may take no interest in it, but the coming forth of the stick of Joseph, that is, the Book of Mormon, and its perfect agreement and harmony with the stick of Judah, that is, the Bible, and their blending together to establish the truth of each other, and to proclaim to all nations that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Eternal God, who was with the Father in the beginning as the Maker of heaven and earth, form a part of the great latter-day work, and are among the signs of the times heralding the approach of the coming and kingdom of the Redeemer who shall gather all tribes and nations and make them one people, with God for their everlasting King — *Deseret News*.

CURRENT COMMENT.

Smoking among Boys and Girls.

As long as men will not teach by example as well as by precept, they might as well save themselves the trouble of moral lecturing. Smoking is usually spoken of as an evil when applied to boys, but ceases to be so called when indulged in by men. There are societies to prevent boys from smoking, and there are plenty of teachers in this land who smoke their pipes up to the school room door. Dr. Macnamara, M.P., an authority on education, has replied to a correspondent who suggested flogging the juvenile smokers, that he will consider the point when re-introducing his Juvenile Smoking Bill this session. Well, if we are to flog the youngster, what is to be done to those who set them the example?

We clip from the *Christian Age* the following interesting paragraphs on this smoking subject:

"The Rev. W. Mayo, of Bristol, informed the annual meeting of the British Anti-Tobacco and Anti-Narcotic League at Manchester, that six hundred girls in his city have resolved to 'have nothing to do' with boys who smoke. The announcement was received with considerable enthusiasm."

Good for the girls of Manchester, but what about those of Leeds?

"Smoking among girls is stated by the secretary of the Leeds branch of the Anti-Cigarette League to be on the increase. The practice is particularly prevalent among factory and warehouse girls of Leeds. The League has four thousand six hundred pledged members."

Revival Scenes in Wales and America.

CONVERSIONS by wild revival methods seem not to be limited to any section of the globe. The following clipping from the *Athlison Globe* tells of how it is done in Kansas, U.S.A: