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External Evidences of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: External evidences of the Book of Mormon include the testimony of eleven witnesses, the fulfillment of many prophecies, and modern archaeological discoveries. The greatest evidence, however, comes from reading, praying, and pondering the message of the book.

cerned with our duties towards God, and that part has no consideration in our legislation. How would it be to make a change in this respect? How would it be to make proper provision for the observance of the Sabbath by closing all "shows" and resorts on that day, in favor of Sunday Schools and divine worship? How would it be to teach moral principles and reverence

for God in the schools? And, above all, how would it be to make all proper provisions for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is "the power of God unto salvation," and to give less prominence to that wordly wisdom which is but delusion? Only so can we hope to see peace and righteousness established among the children of men.

External Evidences of the Book of Mormon

By Horace H. Cummings

Perhaps no book ever written has had so many evidences of the truth of its claims as has the Book of Mormon. It would almost seem that our Heavenly Father foresaw the tremendous opposition it would encounter and provided an unusual amount of evidences of its divinity.

It would be impossible in the space allotted to this article to mention, even in the briefest way, all the proofs of the divine origin, but a few of the ones most commonly known are presented here for the especial use of the Sunday School classes that are studying the book.

1. The intensity of the opposition which Joseph Smith, its translator, met, especially from ministers and so-called religious people, while he was still young and obscure, cannot be accounted for satisfactorily only on the theory that it was inspired by the evil one as were the persecutions of Christ and His followers. Any one who has read the Book of Mormon knows that its teachings are all good and uplifting to mankind. It contains nothing to justify the cruel hatred and wicked treatment suffered by its believers because of their belief in it. The great work of righteousness that it has already done so much to accomplish, and the still greater work its own pages foretell it will do, is a sufficient explanation for the opposition of the enemy of all righteousness.

2. The testimony of the three and of the eight witnesses, sent out with the book, forms a most unusual and unanswerable proof of its divinity. Such proof in any judicial tribunal worthy the name, would instantly determine any question to which it related.

3. Many predictions contained in it have been fulfilled since it was printed. It might be easy for Joseph Smith or other men to imagine and write things about the future, but only God and His providence could bring them to pass, especially when they refer to great world happenings. The fulfillment of such predictions is the strongest proof of Divine inspiration. Only a few of the many are here given.

a. In many places the Book of Mormon declares this land to be "choice above all other lands." This view was not generally held in 1830 when the book was first sent out. A few appreciated America at that time because of its form of government, giving religious liberty, but there was no such clamor to enter this land as there is now. Congress did not have to restrict immigration then as it is doing now. The great West, which is fast becoming the choicest part of this "choice" land, at that time was indicated on the maps in the school geographies as the "Great American Desert" and the great orator and statesman, Daniel Webster, scoffed the idea that it had any value whatever.

b. In 3 Nephi 16:10 the prediction is made that this nation "shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations and above all the people of the whole earth," etc. Who would have thought in 1830 that this nation, which was then regarded as an uncertain experiment in democratic government and destined to failure by some of the world's greatest statesmen, would now be boasting of its power and achievements as we now hear on every hand?

c. While the prediction of Nephi concerning the discovery of America and of the war of independence had been fulfilled in 1830, the further statements that the Lamanites should be scattered and driven by the Gentiles till only a remnant should be left has been in process of fulfillment ever since. Also, that the Gentiles should be to them as "nursing fathers and nursing mothers" is now being fulfilled, for the Indians have received valuable reservations of land, and have been fed and clothed and educated by the government. Many of them are now well educated and some are exceedingly wealthy.

d. It declares that no king should rule this land. This prediction still holds good, though attempts have been made to set up that form of government.

4. Modern discoveries have corroborated many of its statements. e.g. It describes an extensive use of cement in construction work. Recent excavations of their ancient cities show that this was true. It was used almost entirely for street pavement and wall coverings, though in 1830 our builders used it very little if at all for that purpose.

For many years an argument against the Book of Mormon that found much favor among its opponents was that it mentions the horse among the domestic animals used by the Nephites, and the Spaniards found no horses here when

they first came, and the native Aztecs were so unacquainted with it that they thought the horse and rider whom they met in battling the Spaniards were all one animal. Recent discoveries, however, have shattered this argument as the actual remains of the horse as well as its image carved in stone have been unearthed.

The advanced civilization attained as well as the wars of the ancient inhabitants of this land as told in the Book of Mormon, are abundantly corroborated by excavations recently made of great cities, with temple and other public buildings, and strong fortifications.

That they once had some knowledge of the Gospel is indicated by many traditions that have been handed down among the Indians. Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, Vol. I, chap. 3, gives many such features of the traditions and myths found among them by the early Spaniards. The *Improvement Era* for last November has a remarkable legend concerning the appearance of Christ on this continent. The Aztecs, though idolators, believed in an all-wise, all-powerful Creator of the world, an evil spirit, the origin of all wickedness, and a crude system of rewards and punishments.

Their pyramids and the custom of embalming their dead indicate a knowledge of Egyptian practices, and the Book of Mormon was written in reformed Egyptian.

Perhaps the most valuable and convincing testimony of the truth of this book is the one given by the author whose name it bears. He promised that any person who would read it earnestly and prayerfully should receive a testimony that it is divine. This is a test that is so easy and has been tried so many times and found to be true that a knowledge of its origin is within the reach of all. Who, but one inspired of God, dare to make such a promise concerning his writings?