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The Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This article is a testimony of the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon is not superior or inferior to the Bible—it contains the will of the same God. Many truths lost from the Bible are restored in the Book of Mormon. Through prayer a sincere person can know if it is true.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1912.

EDITORIAL.

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

THERE is no sacred book in the world that in proportion to its intrinsic worth has received such scant consideration as has been accorded the Book of Mormon. While other books that are held sacred by various peoples have been carefully reviewed and analyzed by learned critics, and judged on their merits with a reasonable degree of fairness, yet the Book of Mormon has never received the consideration of which it is worthy. If Joseph Smith had merely claimed that he discovered the plates without any Divine aid or manifestation, the book would doubtless have been considered on its merits. But the claim that he received it under the direction and through the medium of an angel of God will not be entertained for a moment. To recognize such a claim would instantly belittle the theological leaders and literature of the world. These are held in high esteem, and learned critics and professors will not imperil their prestige and influence by giving any favorable consideration to a book the origin and nature of which is not acceptable to the world.

The most absurd and erroneous ideas prevail as to the real nature of the Book of Mormon. It is commonly regarded as part of a colossal imposture that has been foisted upon the world in the name of religion. Nearly every encyclopædia says that it is founded on the Spaulding manuscript, although the absurdity of the contention has been demonstrated so often and so conclusively. It is claimed by some that it was written in imitation of the Bible, in order to impose upon the ignorant and credulous by representing it as a revelation from God. Others, again, insist that the Latter-day Saints regard it as superior to the Bible, and take their teachings from it instead of the Bible. Those who oppose their doctrines, being ignorant of the facts, often say that they are founded on the "Mormon' Bible." Such views, of course, are all entirely erroneous.

The Book of Mormon is not an imposture. It was not written by man and palmed off on the world as a sacred record, in order to support the claims of the founders of the Church that they had received a new revelation from God. Neither does it supercede the Bible in any way. It is a sacred record, written by men who were inspired by God. It contains a history of two distinct races of people who successively occupied the land of America. The

first of these became separated from their brethren on the eastern hemisphere at the time of the confusion of tongues, when the Tower of Babel was being built. This colony was led from thence, under Divine direction, to the western continent. They crossed the ocean in eight vessels, reached their destination in safety, and in the course of time became a great nation. Their history covers a period of about fifteen hundred years. They were mainly of the house of Israel and descendants of Joseph. This people were known as Jaredites. Through following the inspired counsels of their leaders they became great and prosperous, but gradually fell into decay, through corruption and iniquity, until they were ultimately destroyed by a fierce internecine war. Their destruction took place at about the same time that the second colony of Israelites reached America. The history of the Jaredites was written by a prophet called Ether, who gives a faithful record of the causes which led to their destruction.

The other race whose history is contained in the Book of Mormon is known as the Nephite nation. The records concerning this people are much fuller than those of the Jaredites. This second colony was led from Jerusalem, about 600 B.C., by a prophet named Lehi, who was of the tribe of Manasseh. They journeyed near to the borders of the Red Sea, thence crossing the peninsula of Arabia, they built and provisioned a vessel on the shores of the Arabian Sea. Under Divine direction, they set sail, crossing the Indian Ocean, then over the South Pacific Ocean, to the west coast of America, where they landed, about 590 B.C. America was to them a land of promise; they made their homes there, and through their faithfulness and industry, became mighty and prosperous. On the death of their leader, Lehi, the people became divided, some accepting the leadership of Nephi, who had been duly appointed to the prophetic office, while the others chose to follow Laman. In subsequent history, their followers were respectively known as Nephites and Lamanites.

The relations of the two peoples were for a time friendly, but as time went on they were often opposed to each other, till at length their feuds became bitter and destructive. Nephi was a man of great faith and integrity, and he strove earnestly to lead his people to keep the commandments of God. They prospered exceedingly and advanced rapidly in the arts of civilization. Laman, on the other hand, was self-willed and disobedient, and his people, following the example of their leader, were unmindful of the laws of God. They thus incurred the Divine displeasure, so much so that they were cursed with darkness of skin. They lived a wild, nomadic life, and rapidly degenerated as a race. The American Indians are their lineal descendants. After many and serious contentions, the final struggle between the Nephites and Lamanites took place near the hill Cumorah, in what is now the State of New York. This occurred about 400 A.D., and resulted in the de-

struction of the Nephites. The last representative of their race was Moroni, who wrote the concluding parts of the Book of Mormon and hid the record away in Cumorah, a short time before his death. The record lay there concealed from that time until September 23rd, 1823, when it was found by Joseph Smith, who had previously beheld the place in vision and was directed thither by an angel of God.

The Book of Mormon tells of the appearance of the Savior to the Nephites, of the establishment of His Church among them, the principles and doctrines He taught, and contains a fulness of the everlasting gospel. The virtues and the vices of men are faithfully recorded, and the workings of the principles of obedience and disobedience in the lives of men and nations are accurately traced by its inspired writers. It is full of moral and spiritual lessons, and contains many beautiful expressions of the mind and purposes of God. Indeed, all those distinguishing characteristics which have given the Bible its unrivalled eminence among the sacred books of the world are possessed equally by the Book of Mormon. It is an expression of the same Divine mind of which the Bible has been the supreme revelation to the world. The Divine mind being infinite, it is absurd to suppose that it gave within the confines of one volume—rich and varied though it be—a full and final expression of the Divine will and purpose in the life and destiny of man. The Book of Mormon is, therefore, neither superior nor inferior to the Bible, but is a further revelation from God, by the same means and for the same purpose. The same Divine informing Spirit therein gives expression through other chosen servants of the Lord to those unchangeable principles a knowledge of which is necessary to the happiness and salvation of mankind.

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon in this dispensation has brought much light and knowledge to the world. It gives the origin and history of the ancient inhabitants of America and the hand-dealings of the Lord with them. It has shed a flood of light upon the principles of the gospel of Christ. Many truths that had been rendered obscure through repeated translations of the Bible by uninspired men are made absolutely clear in this sacred record. It was translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith under the direct guidance and inspiration of God, and can be relied upon as the sure and infallible word of the Lord. It agrees entirely with the Bible in its teachings, and is in very truth another witness for God. Any one who will read the Book of Mormon with an unbiassed mind and a sincere desire and prayer to know if it be of God, will surely receive a Divine witness of the same. The spirit that pervades the entire book, the wealth and beauty of its teachings, and the light and peace it brings to the minds and hearts of all who thus read it—all these combine to attest its truth and Divinity.