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The Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This series discusses the origin of the Book of Mormon. It includes topics such as the Hill Cumorah, Joseph Smith's first vision, the visit of the angel Moroni, the description of the gold plates, the translation and historical importance of the Book of Mormon, the testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses, Native American traditions that correspond with concepts in the Book of Mormon, legends from Tongan Islanders that are similar to those of Judaism, and the prophecy of no kings in America and its fulfillment. The fourth and final part discusses the prophetic lack of kings in America and gives Jenson's testimony.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'
MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840.]

“If thou wouldst find favor and peace with thyself and thy fellow men be very low in thine own eyes. Forgive thyself little and others much.”—LEIGHTON.

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THE BOOK OF MORMON.

(Concluded from page 839.)

NO KINGS IN AMERICA.

In the Book of Mormon (II. Nephi 10: 11, 12) we read: “And this (America) shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land who shall raise up unto the Gentiles, and I will fortify this land against all other nations.”

Any of you, my brethren and sisters and friends, who are acquainted with the history of America and know something of the Monroe doctrine and other American principles can find many things in evidence of the Book of Mormon. You who are acquainted with the history of the Spaniards in America, know how they wrote their history in blood and desolation, and how they have finally lost all their American possessions. A number of attempts have been made to give the lie to that part of the Book of Mormon which refers to the establishing of kingdoms in America. Spain, as the discoverer of the western world, conquered many of the countries here and tried to exercise monarchical control; but one section after another, as stated, revolted and set up republics of their own. Brazil was to have been an exception to the rule. It was made a kingdom in 1815 under Portugal. When Brazil proclaimed its independence in 1822, Dom Pedro, son of the first king, became constitutional emperor. He was followed on the throne, in 1840, by his son, who succeeded in maintaining a monarchical form of government till 1889, when a republican form of government was proclaimed and has obtained ever since.

A few other unsuccessful attempts to establish kingdoms on American soil have been made. Napoleon the Third, of France, for instance, offered Mexico to the Austrian Archduke Maximilian, who in 1862 was declared emperor, but after the withdrawal of the French troops from the country, the republican troops under Juarez defeated the army of the emperor, who was taken and shot in 1867.

AMERICA A LAND OF LIBERTY.

America was set apart by the Almighty as a land of freedom; there is no room here for an emperor; there is no room for a king nor even a duke. The Spaniards lost their grip on this land; England had to give up the contest to maintain her kingly rule here; and thus this has become a free country. Canada to-day, ruled in one sense by England, is as free as any of the states of America. In this regard then the Book of Mormon is again proven true; no king has ever prospered in America.

One peculiar circumstance, somewhat associated with our own people, I must refer to briefly. Perhaps some of you remember the story of James J. Strang, an apostate Mormon, who with other apostates tried to set up a church and a kingdom of their own. Strang organized his church in Pittsburg, Pa., April 6th, 1845, and established himself at Voree, Michigan. He soon went further and declared he was going to set up a kingdom. With this in view he crossed over to Beaver Island, in Lake Michigan, where he allowed himself to be crowned king of that island; but he did not last very long in that capacity. Some of his associates rose up against him and slew him. No king in America! And if James J. Strang had had the least spark of truth in him, and if he had remembered anything at all in regard to the Book of Mormon, he would not have attempted to set up a kingdom, even of that kind, in free America.

There will never be kings in America, according to the belief of the Latter-day Saints, until Christ shall reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords, and we certainly will have no objection to His rule. God has said that the people in the western world should be a free people, and that this land would be a choice land above all other lands.

A FRENCHMAN'S OPINION.

The Book of Mormon, as I said before, is a most remarkable book. In conclusion, I want to quote the language of one of our brethren, Elder Louis A. Bertrand, a scholarly Frenchman, who accepted the gospel when President John Taylor labored as a missionary in France in 1850. Elder Bertrand wrote a book in the French language, at a time when the publication of such a work would almost seem impossible among the people who had not accepted "Mormonism." Elder Bertrand sums up his opinion of the Book of Mormon in these words: "Our conversion (to 'Mormonism'), the fruit of a sincere and persistent conviction, declares better than all we

could say, our opinion upon the authenticity, the social and religious importance of this book. No other book, since the Koran, has given birth to a people. The Book of Mormon, in the midst of the blaze of the nineteenth century, has served as foundation to a new people in America. Who can explain this strange social phenomenon of a religious novel accomplishing such a wonder, in presence of the unheard of progress of our age? Giving birth to a people is not such a common thing. From the time of Luther the interpreters of the Bible in both worlds have been able to create sects only, and the philosophers, only systems of philosophy; Joseph Smith is the only one who has laid the foundation of a new society. In the midst of the anarchy of opinions sensible men of all parties must judge of a work only by its results."

PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

In conclusion, I desire to bear my own testimony in regard to the Book of Mormon. Perhaps I have had as much to do with the reading and studying of that book as most people in the Church. It has fallen to my lot on two different occasions to assist in revising the book in the language of my mother tongue. I have spent years and years, off and on, reading and revising it. The last time I did this, I labored in connection with my esteemed brother and friend, President Anthon H. Lund. During a year and a half we spent our spare time in making a thorough revision of the book, so that it might be read in as good Danish as possible. In doing such a work, my brethren and sisters, a man who is conscientious, a person who believes that man's eternal salvation depends upon the acceptance or rejection of the book, can not go through it in the manner that we did without a prayerful heart. There are indeed many passages in the book that cause people to think most profoundly, and we cannot read much of it before we come to the same conclusion that Willard Richards came to when he first read it in the early days of the Church. Said he: "Man never wrote this book. Either God or the devil produced it; men could not." That is the testimony that we bear, who have had so much to do with it. We can't do otherwise.

My dear brethren and sisters and friends, I testify to you in the name of Jesus Christ that I know the Book of Mormon is true. I know this independent of the Three Witnesses, independent of the Eight Witnesses, independent of all the testimonies that have come to us from the Spanish world or the antiquities of America. I know this independent of what I learned in Polynesia and of everything else that I saw and heard while I circumnavigated the globe. I know, by the inspiration of heaven, that the Book of Mormon is true. It was written by holy prophets and inspired men who lived on this continent. They wrote it as they were moved upon by the Spirit of God; and when their work was completed they sealed up their records and hid them in the earth to

come forth in the due time of the Lord. Eighty years ago to-day that sacred record was delivered into the hands of the Prophet Joseph Smith that it might be translated and come forth in this dispensation. May the gospel of Jesus Christ and the grand and glorious truths contained in the Book of Mormon spread over the whole world, and may the knowledge of God finally cover the earth as the waters cover the mighty deep, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SIX REASONS WHY I AM A LATTER-DAY SAINT.

I HAVE been accused—and I expect that many of the saints have also—of joining this Church without giving its tenets a thorough investigation; else, I am told, I would have had more sense and would have had nothing more to do with this people and their religion. But the very opposite to this is the case. I have studied many works on theology. The result was I was confounded in a maze; but when I had thoroughly entered into an investigation of the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints I knew it to be the truth and I received light upon light. I would like to set forth my reasons for becoming a Latter-day Saint.

1. I am a Latter-day Saint because I have within me the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church of God, again established in these the last days, never to be overthrown nor given to another people.

2. I am a Latter-day Saint because, apart from the doctrines promulgated by the Latter-day Saints, there is not one creed in Christendom wide enough to embrace both the justice and mercy of God.

3. I am a Latter-day Saint because my views on religion, in many cases, prior to becoming a Latter-day Saint, were synonymous to those held and taught by this Church.

4. I am a Latter-day Saint because I believe that the Creator of all things is a God of order and not confusion. And I recognize the contention and confusion that exist in the so-called Christian churches of to-day, through the doctrines of Jesus Christ having been supplanted by the doctrines of men.

5. I am a Latter-day Saint because I believe that the Church of Christ should be one in spirit and in doctrine.

6. I am a Latter-day Saint because I believe that the fount of revelation has not dried up. There is nothing secret that shall not be revealed: therefore I have a desire to be guided of the Spirit into all truth.

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AUBREY PARKER.