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American Antiquities: Corroborative of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This 47-part series provides evidence to confirm the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It describes the contents of the Book of Mormon and archaeological findings and discoveries, such as ancient cities, temples, altars, tools, and wells. Each part contains several excerpts from other publications that support the Book of Mormon.

AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES,

CORROBORATIVE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

(Continued from page 175.)

(From Ada's "*History of the American Indians*," published in London in 1775.)

"All the various nations of Indians seem to be of one descent. They call a buffalo, in their various dialects, by one and the same name, 'Yanasa.' And there is a strong similarity of religious rites and of civil and martial customs among all the various American nations of Indians we have any knowledge of on the extensive continent, as will soon be shown. Their language is copious and very expressive, for their narrow orbit of ideas, and full of rhetorical tropes and figures, like the orientalisists. . . . From the most exact observations I could make in the long time I traded among the Indian Americans, I was forced to believe them lineally descended from the Israelites, either while they were a maritime power or soon after the general captivity: the latter, however, is the most probable. This descent I shall endeavour to prove from their religious rites, civil and martial customs, their marriages, funeral ceremonies, manners, language, traditions, and a variety of particulars. . . . As the Israelites were divided into tribes, and had chiefs over them, so the Indians divide themselves. Each tribe forms a little community within the nation; and as the nation hath its particular symbol, so hath each tribe the badge from which it is denominated. The sachem of each tribe is a necessary party in conveyances and treaties, to which he affixes the mark of his tribe, as a corporation with us doth their public seal. If we go from nation to nation among them, we shall not find one who doth not lineally distinguish himself by his respective family. . . . Every town has a state-house, or synedrion, as the Jewish sanhedrim, where, almost every night, the head men convene about public business. . . . These Indian Americans pay their religious devoir to *Loah-Ishtohoollo-Aba*, 'the great, beneficent, supreme, holy spirit of fire,' who resides (as they think) above the clouds, and on earth also with unpolluted people. He is with them the sole author of warmth, light, and of all animal and vegetable life. They do not pay the least perceivable adoration to any images, or to dead persons, neither to the celestial luminaaries, nor evil spirits, nor any created being whatsoever. . . . Agreeable to the theocracy or Divine government of Israel, the Indians think the

Deity to be the immediate Head of their state. . . . They flatter themselves with the name *hottuk oretoopah*, 'the beloved people,' because their supposed ancestors, as they affirm, were under the immediate government of the Deity, who was present with them in a very particular manner, and directed them by prophets, while the rest of the world were aliens and outlaws to the covenant. . . . When any of their relations die . . . [they believe in their] return at some certain time to re-possess their beloved tract of land and enjoy their terrestrial paradise. As they believe in God, so they believe that there is a class of higher beings than men, and a futura state and existence. . . . The Indian language and dialects appear to have the very idiom and genius of the Hebrew. Their words and sentences are expressive, concise, emphatical, sonorous, and bold, and often, both in letters and signification, synonymous with the Hebrew language. . . . The Indian nouns have neither cases nor declensions: they are invariably the same through both numbers, after the Hebrew manner. In their verbs, they likewise sometimes use the preterperfect instead of the present tense of the indicative mood. . . . Like the Hebrews, they have no comparative or superlative degree: they express a preference by the opposite extremes. . . . There is not, perhaps, any one language or speech, except the Hebrew and the Indian American, which has not a great many prepositions. The Indians, like the Hebrews, have none in separate and express words. . . . The Indians, for want of a sufficient number of radical words, are forced to apply the same noun and verb to signify many things of a various nature. . . . The Jewish rabbins tell us that the Hebrew language contains only a few more than a thousand primitive words, of which their whole language is formed; so that the same word very often denotes various, though not contrary things; but there is one radical meaning, which will agree to every sense that word is used in. . . . The Hebrew nouns are either derived from verbs, or both of them are one and the same. . . . The Indian method of expression exactly agrees with that Hebrew mode of speech. . . . According to the usage of the Hebrews, they always place the accusative case also before the verb. . . . The Hebrew and Indian words which express

delineating, writing, deciphering, marking, and painting convey the same literal meaning in both languages. . . . The Indians, according to the usage of the Hebrews, always prefix the substantive to the adjective. . . . They use many plain religious emblems of the Divine names, YOHÉWAH, YAH, AND ALE; and these are the roots of a prodigious number of words through their various dialects. . . . In conformity to, or after the manner of the Jews, the Indian Americans have their prophets, high priests, and others of a religious order. As the Jews had a *sanctum sanctorum*, or most holy place, so have all the Indian nations. . . . The Indian tradition says that their forefathers were possessed of an extraordinary divine spirit, by which they foretold things future, and controlled the common course of nature; and this they transmitted to their offspring, provided they obeyed the sacred laws annexed to it. . . . As the prophets of the Hebrews had oracular answers, so the Indian magi (who are to invoke YO HE WAH and mediate with the supreme holy fire, that he may give seasonable rains,) have a transparent stone of supposed great power in assisting to bring down the rain. . . . The Hebrews offered *daily sacrifice*. . . . The Indians have a similar religious service. . . . The Indians have among them the resemblance of the Jewish *sin-offering* and *trespass-offering*. . . . The Indians observe another religious custom of the Hebrews in making a *peace-offering*. . . . They always celebrate the annual expiation of sins in their religious temples. The red Hebrews imagine their temples to have such a typical holiness, more than any other place, that if they offered up the Annual Sacrifice elsewhere, it would not atone for the people. . . . The Hebrews had various *ablutions* and *anointings*, according to the Mosaic ritual, and all the Indian nations constantly observe similar customs from religious motives. . . . In the coldest weather, and when the ground is covered with snow, against their bodily ease and pleasure, men and children turn out of their warm houses or stoves, reeking with sweat, singing their usual sacred notes, Yo, Yo, &c., at the dawn of day, adoring YO HE WAH, at the gladsome sight of the morn; and thus they skip along, echoing praises, till they get to the river, when they instantaneously plunge into it. . . . This law of purity (bathing in water) was essential to the Jews, and the Indians to this day would exclude the men from religious communion who neglected to observe it. . . . 'Tis well known that oil was applied by the Jews to the most sacred as well as common uses: their kings, prophets, and priests, at their inauguration and consecration, were *anointed with oil*. . . . The Indian priests and prophets are initiated by unction. . . . The Indians have customs consonant to the Mosaic laws of *uncleanness*. They oblige their women, in their *lunar retreats*, to build small huts at as considerable a distance from their dwelling-houses as they imagine may be out of the enemies' reach, where, during the space of that period, they are obliged to stay at the risk of their lives. . . . The non-observance of this separation, a breach of the marriage-law, and murder, they esteem the most capital crimes. When the time of the women's separation is ended, they always purify themselves in deep running water, return home, dress, and anoint themselves. . . . Correspondent to the Mosaic law of women's purification after *travail*, the Indian women absent themselves from their husbands and all public company for a considerable time. . . . At the stated period, the Indian women's impurity is finished by ablution, and they are again admitted to social and holy privileges. By the Levitical law, the people who had *running issues* or *sores* were deemed unclean, and strictly ordered apart from the rest, for fear of polluting them; for everything they touched became unclean. The Indians, in as strict a manner, observe the very same law. . . . The Israelites became unclean only by *touching their dead*, for the space of seven days; and the high priest was prohibited to come near the dead. 'Tis much the same with the Indians to this day. . . . Like the Jews, the greatest part of the Southern Indians *abstain* from most things that are in themselves, or in the general apprehension of mankind, loathsome, or *unclean*. . . . They reckon all birds of prey and birds of night to be unclean and unlawful to be eaten. . . . None of them will eat of any animal whatsoever, if they either know or suspect that it died of itself. . . . They reckon all those animals to be unclean that are either carnivorous or live on nasty food, as hogs, wolves, panthers, foxes, cats, mice, rats. . . . The Indians, through a strong principle of religion, abstain in the strictest manner from eating the *blood* of any animal. . . . The Indian *marriages*, *divorces*, and *punishments* of *adultery* still retain a strong likeness to the Jewish laws and customs in these points. The Hebrews had *sponsalia de presenti* and *sponsalia de futuro*: a considerable time generally intervened between their contract and marriage; and their nuptial ceremonies were celebrated in the night. The Indians observe the same customs to this day. . . . Many other of the Indian *punishments* resemble those of the Jews. . . . The Indians strictly adhere more than the rest of mankind to that positive, unre-

pealed law of Moses, 'He who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' . . . There never was any set of people who pursued the Mosaic law of *retaliation* with such a fixed eagerness as these Americans. . . . They forgive all crimes at the Annual Atonement of sins, except murder, which is always punished with death. . . . The Indian Americans are more eager to revenge blood than any other people on the whole face of the earth. . . . The Israelites had *cities of refuge*, or places of safety, for those who killed a person unawares and without design. . . . According to the same particular divine law of mercy, each of these Indian nations have either a house or town of refuge, which is a sure asylum to protect a manslayer, or the unfortunate captive, if they can once enter

into it. . . . Before the Indians go to war, they have many preparatory ceremonies of *purification* and *fasting*, like what is recorded of the Israelites. . . . The Indian *ark* is deemed so sacred and dangerous to be touched, either by their own sanctified warriors or the spoiling enemy, that they durst not touch it upon any account. . . . The warriors consider themselves as devoted to God, apart from the rest of the people, while they are at war accompanying the sacred ark with the supposed holy things it contains. . . . When they return home victorious over the enemy, they sing the triumphal song to Yo HE WAH, ascribing the victory to him, according to a religious custom of the Israelites, who were commanded always to attribute their success in war to Jehovah, and not to their swords and arrows.

(To be continued.)

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH OF A WIFE.

BY ELDER JAMES GALLACHER.

The change has come, and with it all its train
Of sad reflections. Melancholy thought
Pervades my soul, and lets me feel the pain
And anguish of my present earthly lot.
The hour has come, the "silver cord is loosed,"
And Death presents itself before my eyes.
That spirit, once so noble, now is bruised;
The object of my love now stiffened lies.
Thou hideous monster, Death! what hast thou done?
My chiefest joy is torn from my embrace!
Hast thou accomplished thy design, and won
New laurels to adorn thy horrid face?
My wife, my love, why didst thou steal away,
Unseen by me, to sleep the sleep of death?
Was I unkind, or did I hard words say,
To sink thee 'neath November's chilling breath?
Ah, no! Thou knowest that I have loved thee well,—
Yea, almost worshipped thy virtuous soul:
No mortal scribe could write, no tongue could tell
To what extent I loved thee, on the whole.
I look upon that lifeless form of thine;
Its stillness makes the house and all things dead.
Could these lips move and speak, and yet be mine,
I'd strive to put in practice what they said.
But no; it cannot be. These lips are sealed,
And eyes, and ears, and all thy senses gone.
Now I must trust alone in what's revealed
To bring thee back, and get thee all my own.
Thou art away now, mingling with thy friends,
To talk to them of things on earth, and bear
The joyful news of life that never ends,
That they may also in that glory share.
Faithful, devoted wife, how calm and still!
Is it indeed thy very self I see?
Ah, yes! It seems to be our Father's will
That thou should'st leave thy little ones and me.
Come, children, come, witness the wearied form
Of her who gave you birth, now lain at rest.
'Tis well for thee thou canst not feel the thorn
That makes me sigh so heavily, and tears my breast.
Ten changing years have passed since first we met:
We've lived and loved, and loved and lived, and
fought
Life's struggles through, and had no need to fret;
But make a heaven in our lowly cot.

We've walked together in the clear moonlight;
We've stolen to ourselves a secret kiss;
We've talked together in the dark midnight,
And dreamed of happiness and future bliss;
We've sat so fondly in each other's arms,
That cares and troubles disappeared to view:
We thought of wedlock, with its many charms,
And sacred pledges given to be so true,
That angels might have smiled and blessed us there,
Portraying all the scenes of future life.
But no: 'twas wisely hid—reserved with care,
Till we disclosed them all as man and wife.
These sacred spots of earth shall ever leave
Impressions on my heart while life shall last.
Murmuring rivulets will make me cleave
To early love, and joys and sweets now past.
O Memory! thou canst keenly play thy part,
And keep those living images before my eye,
Eating my vitals, spirit, and my heart,
Till I could almost long and wish to die.
Can these days not return, that I could spend
And realize a life's such holy love?
Man cannot make the circumstances bend,
Or I would bring thee back, e'en from above.
'Tis better far 'tis thus, though thou hast left
Five lovely children now to sit and mourn,
A husband kind, and happy home bereft
Of queenly virtue, which must home adorn.
And I must say adieu, and wonder when
Those hands again shall comb and brush my hair.
Death must give up her dead, and hell; and then
Return to me in beauty, fresh and fair.
Farewell, then, love! One look, and then 'tis o'er,—
A last fond look, till time and space shall bring
Another change, beyond that distant shore
Where sorrows, death, and hell can have no sting.
Roll on, roll on, ye wheels of time, and speed
That day when all shall be restored, now lost.
Hail, resurrection! friends, relations, freed
From Satan's power, his glory, and his boast!
Pour down thy Spirit, Lord, that I may know
To act and feel aright, and see thy will.
Preserve my peace and virtue till I go
From this dark world, another place to fill.