



Type: Magazine Article

American Antiquities: Corroborative of the Book of Mormon

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Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 22, No. 22 (2 June 1860)

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Page(s): 349–350

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.

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The character of this sculpture added to the interest and wonder of all that was connected with the exploration of these American ruins. . . . From the great terrace a large structure is seen at a distance indistinctly through the trees. . . . It was about ninety feet in front; the walls were cracked, and all along the base the ground was strewn with sculptured stones, the carving of which was equal to any we had seen. . . . Before reaching the door, I crawled through a fissure in the wall into an apartment; at one end of which, in the arch, I saw an enormous hornet's nest; and, in turning to take a hasty leave, saw at the opposite end a large ornament in stucco, having also a hornet's nest attached to it, painted, the colours being still bright and vivid, and surprising me as much as the sculptured beams. A great part had fallen, and it had the appearance of having been wantonly destroyed. The engraving below represents this fragment. The ornament, when entire, appears to have been intended to represent two large eagles facing each other. On each side are seen drooping plumes of feathers. . . . Beyond this was the great building which we had set out to find. The front was still standing, in some places, particularly on the corner, richly ornamented; but the back part was a heap of ruins. In the centre was a gigantic staircase leading to the top, on which there was another building with two ranges of apartments, the outer one fallen, the inner one entire. . . . Beyond this was another building. . . . This building had but one doorway, which was nearly choked up; but on passing into it I noticed sculptured on the jambs, nearly buried, a protruding corner of a plume of feathers. This I immediately supposed to be a head-dress, and that below was a sculptured human figure, . . . and determined immediately to excavate the parts that were buried. . . . The subject consists of two figures, one standing, and the other kneeling before him. Both have unnatural and grotesque faces, probably containing some symbolical meaning. The head-dress is a lofty plume of feathers, falling to the heels of the standing figure; and under his feet is a row of hieroglyphics. While toiling to bring to light these buried stones, I little thought that I was raising up another witness to speak for the builders of these ruined cities. . . . We saw at some distance before us a great

tree-covered mound, which astonished us by its vast dimensions, and, but for our Indian assistants, would have frightened us by the size of the trees growing upon it. The wood commenced from the road side. Our guides cut a path; and, cleaving the branches overhead, we followed on horseback, dismounting at the foot of the Casa Grande. It was by this name that the Indians called the immense pile of white stone buildings, which, buried in the depths of a great forest, added new desolation to the waste by which they were surrounded. . . . Our direction was south-west from the Casa Grande; and at the distance of about a mile, the whole intermediate region being desolate and overgrown, we reached a terrace, the area of which far exceeded anything we had seen in the country. We crossed it from north to south, and in this direction it must have been fifteen hundred feet in length, and probably was quite as much in the other direction. . . . In several places the platform is strewn with ruins. . . . The next morning we set out for the ruins of Labna. . . . At the distance of a mile and a-half we reached a field of ruins, which, after all we had seen, created in us new feelings of astonishment. . . . Ruins were increasing upon us, to explore which thoroughly would be the work of years. . . . In an hour we saw in the woods on our right large mounds, indicating that here, too, had once stood an ancient city. I rode in to look at them, but the buildings which had crowned them were all fallen and ruined. . . . On setting out, our direction was again south, and again our road was over the supulchres of cities. . . . Again passing "old walls" on each side of the road, at the distance of two leagues, we reached Xampon, where stand the remains of an edifice, which, when entire, must have been grand and imposing, and now, but for the world of ruins around, might excite a stranger's wonder. . . . Beyond we saw at a distance two other places, called Hiokowitz and Knepak, ruined and difficult of access, and we did not attempt to reach them. . . . We came to a broken stony ascent, climbing up which I discovered that we were upon the top of an ancient terrace. . . . In a few moments I found myself ascending the side of a lofty stone structure, on the top of which were the remains of a large building, with its walls

fallen, and the whole side of the mound strewn with sculptured stones, a scene of irrecoverable ruin. . . . Coming down into a thickly-wooded valley, after the longest half league we ever walked, we saw through the trees a large stone structure. On reaching it, and climbing over a broken terrace, we came to a mound faced on all sides with stone, which we ascended, and crossing over the top, looked down upon an overgrown area, having on each side a range of ruined buildings, with their white façades peering through the trees; and beyond, at a distance, and seemingly inaccessible, was the high hill, with the ruins on the top, which we had seen from the terrace of the first building. Hills rose around us on every side; and, for that country, the scene was picturesque, but all waste and silent. The stillness of the grave rested upon the ruins. . . . Leaving the camino real, we turned again into a milpa path, and in about an hour came in sight of another ruined city known by the name of Ytsimpte. . . . Turn which way we would, ruin was before us. . . . From the extent of these remains, the masses of sculptured stones, and the execution of the carving, this must have been one of the first class of the aboriginal cities. . . . It was but another witness to the desolation that had swept over the land. . . . The ruins of Chichen lie on a hacienda called by the name of the ancient city. . . . The ruins are nine leagues from Valladolid. . . . The whole circumference occupied by them is about two miles, which is equal to the diameter of two-thirds of a mile, though ruined buildings appear beyond these limits. . . . [In one of these buildings is a sculptured tablet.] This tablet and the

position in which it exists have given the name to the building, which the Indians call Akatzeeb, signifying the writing in the dark; for, as no light enters, except from the single doorway, the chamber was so dark that the drawing could with difficulty be copied. It was the first time in Yucatan that we had found hieroglyphics sculptured on stone, which, beyond all question, bore the same type with those at Copan and Palenque. . . . Physical force may raze these buildings to the ground, and lay bare all the secrets they contain; but physical force can never unravel the mystery that involves this sculptured tablet. . . . At the distance of 420 feet north-west from the Caracal stands the building . . . called by the Indians Chichanchab. . . . Above the cornice it was richly ornamented; but the ornaments are now much decayed. It has three doorways, which open into a corridor running the whole width of the building; and along the top of the back wall was a stone tablet, with a row of hieroglyphics extending all along the wall. . . . Great vestiges exist of mounds, with remains of buildings upon them, and colossal stones and fragments of sculpture at their feet, which it would be impossible to present in detail. . . . These American ruins . . . stand alone, absolutely and entirely anomalous,—perhaps the most interesting subject which at this day presents itself to the inquiring mind. I leave them with all their mystery around them; and in the feeble hope that these important pages may in some way throw a glimmer of light upon the great and long vainly-mooted question, Who were the peoplers of America? I will now bid farewell to ruins."

SUMMARY OF NEWS AND PASSING EVENTS.

GENERAL.—When everybody was looking upon the "Paper Duty Repeal Bill" as being virtually passed, the House of Lords suddenly startled the country by rejecting it. This act is considered unconstitutional; and this usurpation by the Lords of the power to decide taxation of the country is generally condemned; and the jealousy of the people over the rights of their representatives is aroused. Perhaps no serious political crisis may directly result from this unconstitutional act of the Lords; but it is not improbable that startling consequences may yet spring from it, and not improbable that it will inaugurate a long and fierce struggle between the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The Government recently published a proclamation against foreign enlistment, which was called forth by the designed formation of an Irish brigade for the service of the Pope. The proclamation, it is said, has only given impetus to the cause of his Holiness in Ireland, and a feeling of enthusiasm is seizing the Irish catholic youths. It is treated with indifference by the poorer classes, and with contempt by the richer. The Pope's brigade is the leading topic of the day with them. It is suggested to evade the proclamation by emigration of Irishmen to Rome to enlist under the banner of the Pope. Shrewd persons,