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Tests of the Truth of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: The four fundamental tests that may be used to determine the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon are science, history, doctrine, and prophecy. Moore gives an example of each of these four tests.

Church under direct ministrations by the Apostles, we may profitably make comparison with the Latter-day Church now among men. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only organization extant corresponding in essential features with the Lord's Church, founded by Himself in the period of the meridian of time. In further presentation it shall be shown that the profession and claim of the Latter-day Church are thoroughly attested, not alone by its history as to the circumstances of its establishment by divine command and bestowal of authority, but by its works whereby the actuality of its possession of the holy Priesthood is beyond disproof. It is the living Church, showing forth not alone the form, but also the power of godliness. It has no contention with other churches nor with religious sects, societies, cults, or organizations of any name or nature. It is no twig, branch, or offshoot of any other institution among men. It recognizes no "Mother Church" as having given it birth. It came into existence as did the Primitive Church, under the personal command and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name it bears. It is the Church of olden days, come again! Amen.

TESTS OF THE TRUTH OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

JUNE A. MOORE

WHY DO I BELIEVE in the Book of Mormon?

My reply must be: "Because its teachings and statements are true." I do not wish to believe anything that is not true.

How is the Book of Mormon true?

There are four fundamental tests to determine the truthfulness of a book such as the Book of Mormon is claimed to be. These are science, history, doctrine and prophecy.

The Book of Mormon is not a text book on science, which deals with the phenomena of nature. Yet there is a definite scientific test. That book says that nearly nineteen centuries ago, at the time of the crucifixion of the Saviour in Palestine, for three days upon a portion of the American continent "there was darkness upon the face of the land." (3 Nephi 8: 19). This darkness was peculiar. It did not cover the whole earth like the ordinary darkness of night, but the "face of the land" in a restricted portion of America. That portion may have been two, or three or four hundred miles in diameter, in Central America, this being the area of country described at that time. It was so intense that the people living there "could feel the vapor of darkness." What could be the cause of that unusual and peculiar darkness? The book says that preceding it there was a frightful disturbance of nature, earthquakes, whirlwinds, tempests, thunders, lightnings, etc.—a

terrific storm by which the face of the earth in that section "became deformed." Could that awful storm have produced the darkness? In June, 1912, an earthquake and volcano occurred in Alaska, at Mount Katmai; midnight blackness in the daytime lasted "for sixty hours at Kodiak, one hundred miles from the volcano" (*National Geographic Magazine*)—three days and two nights, the exact time given the similar event recorded in the Book of Mormon. History further tells us that on one occasion in the island of Sumbawa, east of Java, "darkness lasted for three consecutive days at a distance of over three hundred miles," following a terrific storm and upheaval. There are other similar instances. Scientists tell us that the awful storms caused the darkness by filling the air for hundreds of miles with the fine dust and ashes produced.

The Book of Mormon is true to this fundamental scientific fact. At his age and condition Joseph Smith did not know, and could not have known, this scientific truth. It was a fact stated in the Book of Mormon. That is test number one of the four I have set out.

Book of Mormon history tells of two great civilizations on this continent, then a destruction of civilization. When the Book of Mormon was first printed, nobody knew of the great Aztec and Maya civilizations in Central and South America. These are discoveries of more recent years. Now, the existence of these two ancient separate civilizations, followed by a destruction of both, is familiarly and conclusively established by modern archæological research, just as the Book of Mormon says.

Historically, that is test number two, proving the truth of Book of Mormon history in that respect.

Again, in doctrine, as compared with the Old and the New Testaments, the Book of Mormon is in strict accord with the Bible. Even in the matter of baptism, which the Bible says is to be administered to those who have repented of their sins, but which modern Christianity generally has distorted into the sprinkling of mere babies who are not intelligently capable of repentance; the Book of Mormon is more specific than the Bible, yet in strict harmony therewith, saying: "He that saith that little children need baptism denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the atonement of him and the power of his redemption." (Moroni 8:20).

Doctrinally, therefore, the truth of the Book of Mormon is proven by the Bible doctrines. That is test number three.

The Bible advances the direct and positive maxim: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19:10). The Book of Mormon has many specific instances of prophecy, some fulfilled and some yet to come, but not a prophecy in which there is a record of failure. At the very outset, it said that its adverse critics would call it "A Bible" and say "there cannot be any more

Bible." (2 Nephi 29:3). This was fulfilled almost as soon as the Book of Mormon was first off the press. The book also said of the United States, that it should be "delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations" (1 Nephi 13:19), and that it should be free "from all other nations under heaven" if "they would serve Jesus Christ" (Ether 2:12). With all the faults of the people, by its leaders and the masses of its population the United States is still a Christian nation, and for the past hundred and fifty years has received the fulfilment of this prophecy. These instances are a type of many that can be cited, of the spirit of prophecy, which is the Divine testimony of Jesus Christ, being a notable characteristic of the Book of Mormon.

Thus test number four, prophecy, bears witness to the truth of the book.

So, on every line of fundamental inquiry covered within the scope of the Book of Mormon, the truth of that record is conclusively established.

Of necessity, then, I believe the Book of Mormon because its teachings and statements are true.

MISSIONARY LABOURS IN SOUTH AFRICA

DURING the thirty-two months mission of President Samuel Martin and family in South Africa, much good was accomplished. The hand of the Lord was manifest countless times in their behalf and in behalf of the mission.

President Martin and family landed in South Africa on June 22nd, 1926, and proceeded directly to the mission headquarters at "Cumorah," Mowbray. A very cordial reception was tendered them by Elders, Saints, investigators, and a number of prominent business men, who knew them previously. The fine spirit of friendship then shown was continued throughout the whole period of their missionary service, proving that the Lord magnifies His servants in the hearts and minds of all.

President and Sister Martin entered into the work of the mission at once. Many new problems had arisen; and serious and careful thought was required to meet prevailing conditions. Yet as one problem after another arose, each seemed to naturally adjust itself without difficulty and without serious consequences. However, each new incident clearly showed the great truth that the Lord guides the affairs of His Church and people, and that He will not permit sin or unrighteousness to lie concealed for any length of time.

An endeavour was made to get in touch with every member of the Church on record; and with but few exceptions, President Martin was able to visit the homes of all Saints and investigators, throughout the whole mission. Many members whose names had