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Review of "Our Book of Mormon"

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ON THE Bookrack

METAL RECORD PLATES IN ANCIENT TIMES

(Ariel L. Crowley, LL.B. Published privately, but on sale in bookstores. 1947. 33 pages. No price available yet.)

THE Book of Mormon, translated from engraved plates of gold, states that records of Israelitish history, doctrine, and prophecy, were carried from Palestine to the new world. In this pamphlet are gathered from tradition, archeology, non-Israelitish and Israelitish history, a host of evidences of the practice of engraving records on metal plates of brass, bronze, silver, and gold. The information is so extensive and well documented that the pamphlet is a definitive answer to the question whether metal record plates were used in ancient times. "The Book of Mormon record is sustained," by this excellent study.—*J. A. W.*

CUMORAH—WHERE?

(Thomas Stuart Ferguson. Kolob Book Company, 1612 Spruce St., Berkeley 9, California. 64 pages. \$1.50.)

EVERY reader of the Book of Mormon would like to know just where the events described actually occurred. This has led many to a study of Book of Mormon geography. Many books and periodical articles present the views of the authors. The chief difference of opinion has been as to where the later tremendous events of the book took place. Some hold to the traditional view that they happened in or near New York State. Others feel that the evidence places them in middle America. Here the evidence for the two views, both strong and weak, is presented in a scholarly and temperate manner. The discussion will be of interest to all readers and lovers of the Book of Mormon.—*J. A. W.*

THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL

(Ernest L. Whitehead. Zion's Press, Independence, Missouri. 1947. 589 pages and chart. \$3.00.)

LATTER-DAY SAINTS claim to be of Israel by blood and adoption. The destiny of Israel is the destiny of the Church. Therefore any serious study of ancient Israel through the ages is of interest to present-day Israel. A vast amount of labor has gone into the writing of this book which attempts to fol-

low Israel over the world, from Jacob to the present day. After the connected Bible story has been told, with many interesting comments, a search is made for the history of the Israelites, who in small or large groups settled in other places than the promised homeland, Palestine. Much of the necessary information—persons, dates, places, and other usually accepted as convincing data—lies in historical twilight. Often resort was had to legendary remnants of history. Despite all this, the conclusion is fully acceptable: that the blood of Israel is scattered over the earth on every continent, in the lands of Europe, the American continents, and the islands of the sea. That has long been believed by Latter-day Saints and has given courage to the proselyting efforts of the Church. The book, written in an easy, familiar style on a most interesting subject, will be a welcome addition to the story of Israel. It will be good faith-promoting reading. Three missing things would please the reader: A further study of Israel in Asia, especially in the far east, and in Africa; footnotes showing sources of statements made; and, what is necessary in so voluminous a book dealing with numerous persons, places, and opinions, a good index.—*J. A. W.*

TOWARD CERTAINTY

(R. H. Gearhart, Jr. Association Press, New York. 1947. 92 pages. \$1.50.)

THIS is a good attempt to answer the questions, some of doubt and unbelief, that too often beset young people. It affirms Christian tenets and avoids fairly well sectarian claims.—*J. A. W.*

WHAT OF THE MORMONS?

(Gordon B. Hinckley. Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. 222 pages. \$1.50.)

THIS book is brought into being primarily for interested inquirers who have little acquaintance with the Church. It promises to replace some of the previously published brief histories used extensively in the missions. It deals with the Church historically, and doctrinally, and in its contemporary setting. Of the Mormons it asks and answers: Who are they? What do they believe? What is their program? What is their organization? The

book is beautifully illustrated with fresh pictures of subjects that are pertinent to the Church. It is printed in easily readable type on paper that makes every page inviting, and with contents that are a fitting match to the book's fine physical appearance. *What of the Mormons?* is the product of the able pen of Gordon B. Hinckley, executive secretary of the Church Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee, and is published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It will find much usefulness for distribution among non-members who want background material in brief on the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.—*R. L. E.*

OUR BOOK OF MORMON

(Dr. Sidney B. Sperry. Stevens & Wallis, Salt Lake City, Utah. 287 pages. \$2.50.)

PROFESSOR SPERRY has written a forthright, methodical study of the Book of Mormon that hews to the line and never flinches. With refreshing directness the author raises and answers searching but simple questions one after another that surprise the reader by their obviousness and almost alarm him with the sense of his own ignorance. The strange story of the wandering Moroni, the fate of the Urim and Thummim, the nature of the Nephite Church, God's dealings with the world at large, to which he vouchsafes revelation of a sort—point after point of long-neglected lore is put on display, much of it for the first time, by the researches of Dr. Sperry. No one is better qualified to handle such material than he. The last man in the world to "go overboard" for any one theory, Professor Sperry never temporizes and never quibbles; the tricks and pitfalls of rhetoric he avoids like the plague. The result is a plain, almost blunt take-it-or-leave-it classroom discourse which for all its simple honesty exercises a strange fascination on the reader. Perhaps the principal reason for this is the way the book is interlined with quotations from the Book of Mormon itself: no mere hints and phrases but whole pages to remind the reader again and again of the weight and power of that great and compelling book—a mighty revelation which we neglect at our peril. Dr. Sperry's persistent campaign in its behalf deserves nothing but praise. The value of *Our Book of Mormon* is enhanced by the welcome addition of a scripture index, a substantial aid to the student that is all too rarely met within our Church writings.—*Dr. Hugh Nibley, Assistant Professor of History and Religion, Brigham Young University.*