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## The Book of Abraham - Its Genuineness Established, Chapter X

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**Abstract:** Abraham as a Pyramid Builder. Philition. The uses of the Pyramids. The Coffin a Baptismal Font, Symbolism in baptism for dead.

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THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'  
MILLENNIAL STAR.

"HEAR THE WORD OF THE LORD, O YE NATIONS, AND DECLARE IT IN THE ISLES AFAR OFF, AND SAY, HE THAT SCATTERETH ISRAEL WILL GATHER HIM, AND KEEP HIM, AS A SHEPHERD DOTHS HIS FLOCK."—*Jeremiah xxxi, 10.*

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THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM—ITS GENUINENESS ESTABLISHED.

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

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CHAP. X.

*Abraham as a Pyramid Builder. Philition. The uses of the Pyramids. The Coffin a Baptismal Font. Symbolism in baptism for dead.*

The next task which we have assigned ourselves, is to show from the ancient pyramids of Egypt that the true system of astronomy, as taught by God to Abraham, was known to those who raised these mighty structures. To do this we desire to draw attention and consider separately three points.

1st. The historical reasons we have for believing that Abraham superintended the erection of the pyramids, or more particularly the first, or great pyramid of Cheops.

2nd. The reasons why these vast structures were built, and the uses for which they were designed.

3rd. The direct evidences from the dimensions, form, etc., of the pyramid of Cheops, that tend to prove that its

builders were acquainted with the laws that govern the starry worlds.

The Pharaoh, or King of Egypt, who is generally regarded as the builder of the first pyramid, is known to secular history by the name of Cheops. To him and his actions in closing the idolatrous temples of Egypt, we have referred in a previous chapter, as well as to the statement of Herodotus, that the Egyptians so detested his memory that they would not even mention his name. Hence he states, "they commonly call the pyramids after Philition,\* a shepherd, who at that time fed his flocks about the place." Remarkable on the above statement, Mr. Procter, the celebrated astronomer, writes: "The mention of the shepherd Philition, who fed his flocks about the place where the great pyramid was built, is a singular feature of Herodotus' narrative. It reads like

\* It is worthy of note that the root of the name Philition or Philitis signifies a lover of truth, a most appropriate name for Abraham.

some strange misinterpretation of the story related to him by the Egyptian priests. It is obvious if the word Philition did not represent a people, but a person, this person must have been very eminent and distinguished—a shepherd king—not a mere shepherd. Rawlinson suggests that Philition was probably a shepherd prince from Palestine, perhaps of Philistine descent. Prof. Smyth comes to the conclusion that some Shemite prince, 'a contemporary of, but rather older than the Patriarch Abraham,' visited Egypt at this time, and obtained such influence over the mind of Cheops, as to persuade him to erect the pyramid. According to Smyth, the prince was no other than Melchizedek, King of Salem, and the influence he exerted was supernatural. \* \* It seems tolerably clear that certain shepherd chiefs who came into Egypt during Cheops' reign were connected in some way with the designing of the great pyramid. It is clear, also, that they were men of a different religion from the Egyptians, and persuaded Cheops to abandon the religion of his people."

If Josephus be correct, Professor Smyth's deductions regarding Melchizedek are wrong, for the former says that the Egyptians were taught astronomy by Abraham; without Melchizedek followed Abraham into Egypt, instead of preceding him, which, though possible, we have no account of in any of the sacred writings.

Mr. Procter further writes: "In the first place, the history of the pyramids shows that the erection of the first great Pyramid was in all probability either suggested to Cheops by wise men who visited Egypt from the east, or else some important information conveyed to him by such visitors caused him to conceive the idea of building the pyramid. In either case we may suppose, as the history indeed suggests, that these learned men, whoever they may have been, remained in Egypt to superintend the erection of the structure. \* \* The

astronomical peculiarities which form so significant a portion of the great pyramid, were probably provided for entirely under the direction of the shepherd chiefs who had exerted so

strange an influence upon the mind of King Cheops. \* \* It is certain, in any case, that they (the shepherd chiefs) were opposed to idolatry; and we have thus some means of inferring who they were, or whence they came. We know that one particular branch of one particular race in the East was characterized by a most marked hatred of idolatry in all its forms. \* \* And the Bible

record shows that members of this Chaldean family visited Egypt from time to time. They were shepherds, too, which accords with the account of Herodotus. \* \* But having formed the opinion on grounds sufficiently assured, that the strangers who visited Egypt, and superintended the building of the great pyramid, were kinsmen of the Patriarch Abraham, it is not very difficult to decide what was the subject respecting which they had such exact information. They, or their parents, had come from the land of the Chaldeans, and they were doubtless learned in all the wisdom of their Chaldean kinsmen. They were masters, in fact, of the astronomy of their day, a science for which the Chaldeans had shown, from the earliest ages, the most remarkable aptitude. \* \*

It is highly probable that the astronomical knowledge of the Chaldeans in the days of Terah and Abraham, was much more accurate than that possessed by the Greeks in the time of Hipparchus." Mr. Procter ultimately comes to the conclusion that "the stranger called Philition by Herodotus, may, for aught that appears, have been Abraham himself."

Our next enquiries are, with regard to the causes, or reasons, that led to the erection of the pyramids, and to the purposes for which they were used.

Various theories have been advanced on these points. Some have supposed that these vast structures were associated with the religious rites of the ancient Egyptians; others have suggested that they combined the purposes of tombs and temples; again, that they were astronomical observatories; also, that they had primarily astrological import. It has also been argued that they were defences against the sands of the great desert, or places



of refuge during the excessive overflows of the Nile. The idea has also been advanced that they were granaries, somewhat after the manner of those erected under the direction of Joseph, the Israelite.

A very little reflection will manifest that some of the suggestions are entirely untenable. Take for instance the notion that they were granaries. If so, what a vast waste of material. How entirely does their structure and form unsuit them for such a purpose. As wise a people as their builders must have been, would scarcely have constructed a mountain of masonry, with two or three relatively small rooms therein for such a purpose. There is some show of reason for believing that some of them were tombs and temples combined, but this will not hold good with regard to the pyramid of Cheops. Nothing found therein has given the least groundwork for the supposition that it was used for sepulchral purposes. In what is called the king's chamber was found an empty stone chest or coffer without a lid; but in form, ornament and material, it is entirely different to the usual sarcophagus used by the ancient Egyptians for the reception of the embalmed dead.

Two of the reasons advanced above, as applied to the pyramids of Cheops, are worthy of our consideration.

1st.—That it was an astronomical observatory.

2nd.—That it was associated with the religion of the ancient Egyptians.

The reasons for believing it to have been built as an observatory are cogent and numerous. There can be no doubt that in many respects it was intended by its builders to typify astronomical truths; evidence in proof of which will be hereafter adduced. It has been suggested that the granite coffer found in what is now called the king's chamber (simply that it may have a distinctive name) was filled, in whole or in part, as circumstances required, with water, and that the face of the heavens was reflected therein, through the slanting passages that pointed directly to the polar star. That this coffer was used as a receptacle for water is highly probable, from the fact that a well tapping the waters of the Nile is found in the chamber. In this inner cham-

ber, surrounded by this vast mass of masonry, removed as far as possible from the atmospheric and electric perturbations existing on the earth's surface, it is argued that using the water in the coffer as a mirror, the most accurate observations could be taken that were then possible. According to certain Arabian historians "there were placed in the great pyramid divers celestial spheres and stars, and what they severally operate in their aspects, and the perfumes which are to be used to them, and the books which treat of these matters."

The evidences that it was an edifice erected for sacred purposes are not so strong as those that can be brought forward in favor of its astronomical uses. We incline to the opinion that it combined both purposes; but we are scarcely willing to admit that if it was a temple, it was erected by a believer in the faith that looked upon Osiris and associate deities as the true gods. The style of this vast structure and the temples erected by the followers of that faith are the antipodes of each other. The perfect purity of the pyramid from every idolatrous ornament and references as well as all attempts to glorify the wealth, might or wisdom of its human builders, makes it differ entirely, generically and radically from all ordinary Egyptian temples, pictured from top to bottom with the praises of their false gods. Besides, it is asserted, as before shown, that the man who built this pyramid, shut up the temples, a very inconsistent act, if he were a worshipper at their shrines. We hold the opinion that if this pyramid was used for religious purposes at all, it was in connection with the doctrines taught by Abraham, and if the Lord permitted the patriarch to preach to the Egyptians, that principle of the gospel known to us as baptism for the dead, we can well imagine the use to which the coffer in the king's chamber was applied. Indeed the idea that the coffer was a baptismal font has been suggested by more than one gentile writer, † but if it were used especially in the ordinances for the salvation of those who had passed from this sphere

† Bryant, Faber, Goodsir and others.



of action the symbolism would be almost perfect; for we have here a font enshrined in the heart of an artificial mountain, that could be reached only through a straight stony gate and by a long, narrow and mysterious passage. How accurately these typify the valley of the shadow of death, and the grave, and how perfect the imagery of going into the heart of this solid mountain to act for those who had been laid away in the sepulchre.

There is one thing that greatly strengthens the idea that if its uses were religious, they were Abrahamic. It is that this very coffer is of the exact capacity of the ark of the covenant of Moses' day, also that an originally marked off portion of the chamber in which the coffer stands is of the exact capacity of the brazen sea, or baptismal font, in Solomon's Temple. Surely there is something more than a mere coincidence in this.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL SALVATION.

BY ELDER WILLIAM BUDGE.

¶ The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation, both temporal and spiritual, and, as such, is being taught by the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

While the children of this world have been separating their temporal from their spiritual interests, the Saints have been combining and consolidating theirs, with the understanding that all the interests of man should, of necessity, be under the control of our Allwise Father. It never was his intention to limit his instructions and requirements regarding his children to what might be understood to be the principles and duties pertaining to religion, leaving them in ignorance of all the other important interests of human life. The temporal prosperity and happiness of God's people has always been a matter concerning which he has manifested much solicitude and care, and the revelations of his will, given to his Saints anciently, contained many promises of earthly blessings. Israel, his chosen people, when faithful, enjoyed national independence and great temporal prosperity, because they were willing to be instructed by him in all their affairs.

The ministers of God in those days were looked upon as teachers of both temporal and spiritual things, and they were very successful when their advice was taken, as God gave them much wisdom and foresight, qualify-

ing them, in every way, for the work. There was no real interest of man, when the people were guided by revelation, but had, in its time and season, the attention of the Divine Father. When faithful and obedient, it did not enter into the thoughts of God's people that he should be limited in his jurisdiction over them by saying, "God's servants may teach and regulate strictly religious matters, but we, without him, will set up, by election or otherwise, such men as we choose to take care of our temporal concerns." When they were rebellious they sometimes tried to substitute their own wisdom, but the experiment always ended disastrously. The God of Israel was formerly, among his people, the acknowledged source of wisdom in regard to social, religious and political affairs; all society was regulated by his instructions and Spirit, and as they were willing, so were the people blessed. There is no perfect way but the Lord's, and he alone can tell the people how to adjust and regulate all their conflicting interests, and establish peace on earth and good will among all men.

We look forward to a time of general harmony, the Scriptures promise it. But how can it come to pass unless God reveals the means? We need a religion taught by revelation, and administered by divine power. It may be said that Jesus did not set up a temporal system, which is true, but