



Type: Magazine Article

The Book of Abraham - Its Genuineness Established, Chapter XIV

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Source: *The Latter-Day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. XLI, No. 14 (Apr. 7, 1879),
pp. 209–211

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

Abstract: Samples of Ancient Languages in the Book of Abraham — Word Roots. Lack of Chronologic Sequence. Conclusion.

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.*

No. 14, Vol. XLI.

Monday, April 7, 1879.

Price One Penny.

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM—ITS GENUINENESS ESTABLISHED.

BY ELDER GEORGE REYNOLDS.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 195.]

CHAP. XIV.

Samples of Ancient Languages in the Book of Abraham.—Word Roots. Lack of Chronologic Sequence. Conclusion.

Exceptions are taken by M. Deveria to some of the proper names that appear in the Book of Abraham, and which our martyred prophet informs us were Egyptian. Messrs. Remy and Brenchly apply the word gibberish to certain portions of the book, which we suppose must relate to such words, as the English portion is plain enough, and gibberish means senseless or unmeaning talk or gabble. To enter into a detailed account of the root of each Egyptian or Chaldean word given in the book, would be very tedious to the most of our readers, we shall therefore simply summarize by saying, that so far as we have been able to trace through the authorities at our disposal, which are very meagre three things are evident.

1st. That the words given by Joseph have true roots.

2nd. That these roots are from the languages of the countries known to Abraham.

3rd. That the meanings of these roots are consistent with the meanings of the words as translated by Joseph Smith.

All of which proves that they are not gibberish.

As an instance of how far M. D. goes out of his way to attack these words, he remarks on the statement of Abraham that this earth was by the Egyptians called Jah-eh-eh, that "the word Jah-oh-eh has nothing Egyptian in it, it resembles the Hebrew word Jehovah badly translated." If it has nothing Egyptian in it, how does it happen that the word Jehovah itself has been claimed by many to be an Egyptian and not a Hebrew word? With regard to which, see Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. It is also positive that this sacred word was known to other nations as well as the

covenant people of God, as it is to be found, in its exact form, and applied to the God of the Hebrews, on line 18 of the Moabite stone, lately translated by Sir Henry Rawlinson.

There are other words that are objected to as not being Egyptian. In reply, we ask, how can M. Deveria or any one else, at the present stage of Egyptology, tell whether a word was Egyptian or not? Joseph has undoubtedly written the word in the English characters that best represented the actual sound of the word in ancient Egyptian. Scientists know nothing positive of those sounds; they know that certain hieroglyphics form certain words with a certain supposed meaning, but for the sounds they have to rely on the language of the modern Copts, basing their theory on the slender foundation that the sounds of words in Egypt are the same to-day as they were four thousand years ago. We well know that customs, habits, etc., change but little in the stagnant lives of the inhabitant of Egypt, Canaan, and kindred nations, but it is almost too great a stretch on our credulity to ask us to accept as definite the assumed sound of a word in Abraham's day, because it is pronounced in that way now. For instance, who can, with certainty, assert how the ancient Egyptians pronounced the name of their own country. Was it Kham-to, or Gyp-to, or Egyptos, or indeed Ghubsi?

There are certainly some words in the record that are evidently Egyptian. Such as Kli-flos-is-es, the name of one of the stars. All Egyptologists admit that Ises relates to the moon. But it may be urged that Joseph Smith obtained these words from some Egyptian work. Not so, for the first grammar and dictionary of ancient Egyptian published in modern times (between 1836 and 1844)—those of M. Champollion—were not published until after the translation of the papyrus by the Prophet Joseph. So that objection falls to the ground.

In the word Kolob we have another instance of a word whose roots are to be frequently found in the languages of Phœnicia and neighboring nations, and the word itself appears in the languages of some of the descendants

of Abraham (certain tribes of the American Indians) at the present time. But probably this is enough on the subject of language.

There are two other points to which we will allude that are strong, internal evidence of the genuineness of the Book of Abraham. One is, that in its historical portion no reference is made, however slight, to events that occurred after its assumed date of composition. Had Joseph Smith been its author, the probabilities are strongly in favor of circumstances being mentioned therein that did not take place until after the time that the book claims to have been written. Had Joseph been a man well versed in the history of the world in Abraham's day, the probabilities would not have been so great, but ignorant as he was, so far as book-learning is concerned, of ancient history, this simple circumstance alone is strong evidence in favor of its authenticity.

The other point to which we wish to draw attention, is the lack of chronological sequence in the historical portions of the book, a trait manifested in the writings of many of the patriarch's descendants, and which we believe to have been general with the writers living in the early ages of the world. Chronological accuracy in the writers of personal or historical narratives, appears to have been the outgrowth of a later age.

The concluding portions of the Book of Abraham are mainly historical, and relate to circumstances that occurred in the heavens in man's pre-existent state, and at the creation of the world. These subjects have been so ably handled by others, that we shall not attempt to treat upon them here. Besides, they are somewhat foreign to our subject, and directly have no bearing on the truth of the Abrahamic record, having been made plain in other revelations of God's word. We shall therefore with this chapter conclude our review of the Book of Abraham, but, before doing so, must acknowledge the aid we have received from many wise suggestions and valuable information afforded us by President John Taylor, Elders Franklin D. Richards, Jos. L. Barfoot, John R. Howard, David McKenzie and others.

In conclusion we would say, that we believe that those who have carefully followed us through this inquiry must be satisfied that the Abrahamic record is genuine. We have appealed to ancient historians and modern scientists, and they have not failed us; we have called to our aid the monuments of ancient Egypt, and they have borne unequivocal testimony; we have examined the glorious system of astronomy advanced in its pages, and find it is being substantiated by modern research; internally we have found its unities well preserved, nor have we discovered a contradiction within its pages. It is a matter of secondary moment, in this consideration, whether Abraham himself, or some other divinely inspired man, was the actual architect of the

Great Pyramid; it is sufficient to know, which it itself testifies, that whoever that builder was, he was acquainted with the same grand astronomical truths that the Book of Abraham states the Lord revealed to that patriarch, and which, at the time Joseph Smith translated the papyrus, were unknown to modern scientists. As with the Book of Mormon, so with the Book of Abraham, we feel fully assured, that every day as it passes, every new discovery that has a bearing on its statements, will increasingly vindicate its truthfulness, and bear united testimony that Joseph Smith was indeed and of a truth a prophet, seer, and revelator inspired by the Spirit of Jehovah, the mighty God of Jacob.

ON WHAT IS YOUR RELIGION FOUNDED?

BY ELDER E. F. CUMMINGS, JR.

"Is the religion of the Latter-day Saints founded on the Bible?" "No it is not." "Not founded on the Bible? You surprise me. It cannot then be termed a Christian religion." "There, my friend, is where you are mistaken. Any religion which has no better foundation than a mere *book*, cannot be the true Christian religion."

The writer has often had conversations to the above effect, with persons ignorant of the true Gospel of Christ.

The religion of the Latter-day Saints is founded precisely where Noah's religion was, and we have no knowledge of there having been a Bible in existence in his day. Certain it is that Noah never saw our present Bible, for the oldest books it contains were not written till centuries after his death. Nevertheless the religion of Noah was true, and his worship highly acceptable with God.

Then there was Abraham, the friend of God, and the father of all faithful Christians, whose religion was indisputably true and of saving potency. But it was not founded on the Bible. He, like Noah, never saw our Bible, nor any other that we know of, as he

too, died centuries before Genesis was written.

And then there was Moses, a man who preached a true religion, and who converted an entire nation. This man Moses had no Bible to read or quote from in his preaching, neither had his disciples, the nation whom he converted, any Bible by which to test the truth of his doctrines, so far as we know. How then did they know whether he preached the truth or not? What test did they apply to ascertain if his teachings were sound and trustworthy?

At length, many years after he had converted the Israelitish nation, and after he had, for many years, been their spiritual head, Moses wrote the first five books of our Bible. Was his religion founded on his own writings? Was the religion of his followers founded on the books which he wrote? No. Both Moses and his followers had possessed a true religion many years before the Pentateuch came into existence. The latter was founded on the religion, instead of the religion being founded upon it; a distinction of great importance.