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Remarks on the Foregoing Article (Mansfield's 'Jacob's Isle')

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Abstract: This article discusses the meaning of the word "isle" as contained in biblical and Book of Mormon geography. Roberts agrees with Mansfield that Jacob's reference to the lands of the Book of Mormon as an "isle of the sea" means a body of land (however large) reached by crossing an ocean

This remark was made describing conditions as they were before the great storm and upheavals, at the time of the Savior's death. This is the same condition that exists today, as the lands of Nephi and Zarahemla comprised the land south, or South America. This is one of the great evidences, that the land north and south were joined by the narrow neck or isthmus, as is the case today, which the Book of Mormon affords.

It will not do to say that at the time of Zenos' prophecies, and when Nephi received his vision, that this country of North and South America was broken into small or large islands, and subsequently connected by the disturbances at the time of the Savior's crucifixion, because there is no evidence on which to base the statement; but, on the contrary, much to support the opposite contention of unity. "Isles of the sea," in prophetic language, simply means, "countries of the sea." Modern geographical terms do not fully explain terms used by prophets and historians thousands of years ago, even after the translation into English of those terms, but they must be understood in the sense in which they were used at that time.

The continents of Europe, Asia and Africa constitute the main land on the earth, and all other lands, in the light of prophecy, are "isles," or countries of the sea.

The small islands near the land of North and South America no doubt constituted part of the isles referred to by Zenos, and no doubt some of the isles of the Pacific were included also.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING ARTICLE.

BY ELDER B. H. ROBERTS.

The ascertainment of truth, not the maintenance of personal opinions, I take it, is the attitude of every true student and teacher. This principle I have endeavored to make my guide in all research; and have sought to avoid the pride of opinion which would tempt one at times, to be slow to accept the truth when discovered, because contrary to views already entertained. There-

fore, while not accepting everything set forth in the preceding paper, nor taking time to comment on minor points, I desire to say that the writer of it has contributed a very important idea concerning "Jacob's Isle," and one which will call for a modification of the views set forth in chapter XI of our present Manual, on that subject. By further research, after reading the preceding article, I discovered that the Jews in their scriptures speak of isles in three senses:

"First," (following Kitto) "that of dry land in opposition to water, as, 'I will make the rivers islands' (Isaiah 42: 15), i. e., dry up the rivers, converting their courses into land. In Isaiah 20: 6, the isle of Ashdod means the country, [i. e. of Ashdod] and is so rendered in the margin. In Isaiah 23: 2, 6, 'the isle,' means the country of Tyre, and in Ezekiel 27: 6, 7, that of Chittim and Elisha. See also Job 22: 30.

"Second, it is used both in Hebrew and English, according to its geographical meaning; for a country surrounded by water, as in Jeremiah 47: 4, 'the isle (margin) of Caphtor,' which is probably that of Cyprus. 'The isles of the sea' (Esther 10: 1), are evidently put in opposition to 'the land,' or continent. In Psalm 97: 1, 'the multitude of the isles' seem distinguished from the earth or continents, and are evidently added to complete the description of the whole world.

"Third: *The word is used by the Hebrews to designate all those countries divided from them by the sea.* In Isaiah 11: 11, after an enumeration of countries lying on their own continent, the words, 'and the islands of the sea,' are added in order to comprehend those situated beyond the ocean. The following are additional instances of this usage of the word, which is of very frequent occurrence: Isaiah 42: 10; 59: 18; 66: 19; Jeremiah 25: 22; Ezekiel 27: 3, 15; Zephaniah 2: 11. It is also observed by Sir Isaac Newton (commenting on Daniel, p. 276), '*By the earth the Jews understood the great continent of Asia and Africa, to which they had access by land; and by the isles of the sea they understood the places to which they sailed by sea, particularly all Europe.*'"

Substantially the same views as the foregoing are maintained in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible (Hackett's edition), art. "Isle."

It is this third sense in which the Hebrews used the term

“isle,” “isles,” or “isles of the sea,” that is contended for by Mr. Mansfield. And while the Jews at times used the term as we use it in English, meaning a small division of land surrounded by water, it is a fact that it was frequently used in this latter sense, viz., as referring to all those lands distant from Jerusalem, that had to be reached by crossing the sea, without reference to their being either islands or continents, as we understand the terms; that is the literary sense or use of the word among the Jews. And if it was in this literary sense rather than in the physical one that Jacob used it—and it must be conceded that that is most likely,—then it would relieve us of the necessity of maintaining that the Nephites, in the days of Jacob, occupied an island; that is, a small body of land—as contrasted with a continent—surrounded by water. And such, I believe, is the reasonable conclusion to arrive at, and one that may reasonably be accepted, instead of the views on that head set forth in our Manual, chapter XI. This would reduce the value of chapter XI to being merely a valuable collection of the accounts of those mighty cataclysms, in various parts of the earth, that would make it easy to believe that such cataclysms as are described in the Book of Mormon are not only possible but probable.

CIGARETTES AND CRIME.

Magistrate Crane, of Harlem, New York, police court, recently declared against cigarettes in most vigorous language. Here are some of his sayings, which have great weight because of his long experience with crime:

“Every cigarette means a dream of some future crime.

“The first cigarette a boy or man smokes is the first step in a future criminal career.

“Cigarettes mean death before it is due.”

Of everybody arraigned before him, irrespective of the charge, he inquired: “Do you smoke cigarettes?” If the prisoner admitted that he did, he was lectured, and if he said “No,” the magistrate compelled him to hold up his hands that his fingers might be examined for nicotine stains.