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The Book of Mormon: What the Record Contains

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Abstract: A brief description of the Book of Mormon and its people, and a discussion of its purpose as a witness for Jesus Christ.

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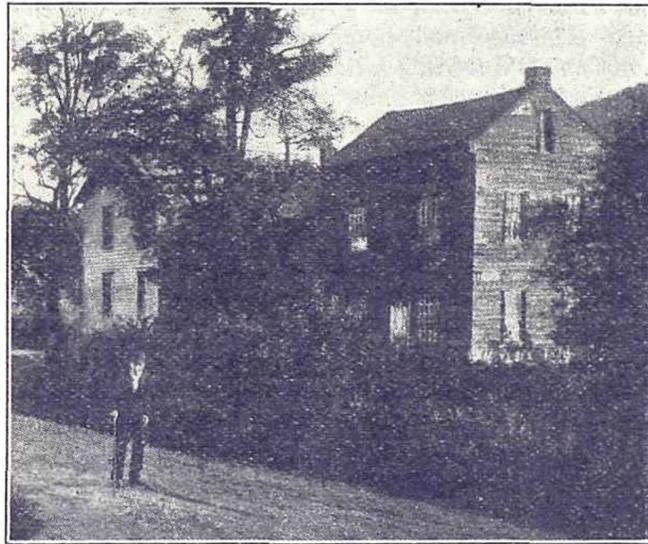
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THE BOOK OF MORMON

WHAT THE RECORD CONTAINS

In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a colony that came from the Tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian Era. We are informed by these records that America in ancient times had been inhabited by two distinct races of people. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the



*Home of Mr. Isaac Hale, Harmony, Pennsylvania,
where most of the Book of Mormon was translated*

Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country, came from Jerusalem. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country. This book also tells us that our Savior made his appearance upon this [the American] continent after his resurrection; that he planted the gospel here in all its fulness, and richness, and power, and blessing; that

they had apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists; the same order, the same Priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessings, as were enjoyed on the eastern continent; that the people were cut off in consequence of their transgressions; that the last of their Prophets who existed among them was commanded to write an abridgment of their prophecies, history, etc., and to hide it up in the earth, and that it should come forth and be united with the Bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days.—Joseph Smith.

WHY THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN

First, to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord has done for their fathers.

Second, to teach them the covenants of the Lord made with their fathers, that the remnants may know that they are not cast off forever.

Third, that this record may convince both Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, and that he manifests himself to all nations.

Fourth, that the knowledge of a Savior might come especially to the remnants of the house of Israel on the western hemisphere, through the testimony of the Nephites and Lamanites as well as through the testimony of the Jews, that they might more fully believe the Gospel.

Fifth, that the Jews might have the testimony of the Nephites as well as that of their fathers, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Sixth, to be a witness for the truth of the Bible, to establish its authenticity, and its credibility by bringing other witnesses to testify to the same great truths that are contained in the sacred pages of the Bible; to restore to the knowledge of mankind many plain and precious truths concerning the gospel which men have taken out of the Jewish scriptures, or obscured by their interpretations; for which cause many have stumbled and fallen into unbelief. In a word, it is the mission of the Book of Mormon to be a witness for Jesus, the Christ; for the truth of the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation; for that purpose it was written, preserved from destruction and has now come forth to the children of men through the goodness and mercy and power of God.

THE SPIRIT OF THE BOOK

The experiences of a host of believers may be properly appealed to as evidence for the effect of the book upon their minds, and an evidence of its truth. Men have gone to the Book of Mormon in despondency, and have come away cheered; they have gone to it in sorrow, and have come away comforted; they have gone to it at times when overwhelmed for the moment by the mists which the speculations of men sometimes throw over truth, and have come away from it enlightened—with faith and hope and charity renewed. It created for them a firmer faith in God. In the presence of its spirit doubt took wings. Its moral and spiritual standards they find to be the highest and noblest. Indeed so perfect is its morality that no one has yet been able to bring a complaint against it on the ground of moral defect; and it was doubtless a consciousness of its moral excellence that led the Prophet Joseph Smith himself to declare on one occasion, when in council with the Twelve Apostles, that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and that a man could get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than by following any other book whatsoever. If in its historical parts believers find it dealing with events that exhibit selfishness, unholy ambitions, and all the follies and crimes common to all times and all nations and races of men, they never find its treatment of such things of the kind that blazons evil deeds, or consecrates crime, much less of the kind that canonizes the vicious. In its pages they see things in their true light. There is no shuffling, but evil deeds receive their proper condemnation in the simple, straightforward language of its inspired men. For believers the Book of Mormon differs from the books of men as the works of nature differ from the works of men. All this and more believers find in the pages of the Book of Mormon, and the book that breathes such a spirit must surely have somewhat of divinity in it; and the existence of the divine spirit in the book must be somewhat of evidence that its claims are honest, and its contents true.—B. H. Roberts.