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The Book of Mormon

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Abstract: Roberts affirms the need for a “New Witness” to confirm the divine nature and authenticity of the Bible. The Book of Mormon is the new witness and was translated by the “gift and power of God.”.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 1888.

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

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In these days of skepticism and doubt respecting the great and solemn fact of revelation from God to man, a new volume of Scripture has been brought to light, which confirms beyond all question the divine authenticity and truth of the Jewish Scriptures—the Old and New Testaments.

This announcement should be hailed with delight by Christian people of all sects and shades of opinion: for the irreligion of the times; the steady progress of infidelity; the confused state of the religious world; the absence of a living, active faith even among professing Christians—all prove that mankind are in need of a New Witness for God and Christ.

We now offer to the people of these lands this NEW WITNESS FOR GOD, in the new volume of Scripture above spoken of—the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon was translated from metallic plates, taken from a stone box hidden in a hill, in the western part of the State of New York, called by the ancient inhabitants of America, CUMORAH.

The existence of this record was first revealed to Joseph Smith in 1823, by the angel Moroni, one of the prophets among the ancient people of America, who had been raised from the dead, and sent of God to make known to Joseph Smith the existence of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.

In 1827 the said plates were given into the possession of Joseph Smith, and he, by the gift and power of God, translated the characters upon them into the English language, and the Book of Mormon was published to the world in the winter of 1829-30.

The Book of Mormon, in the main, is an abridgment from more extensive records kept by the ancient peoples of America, the abridgment being made about the close of the fourth century of the Christian era, by one of their prophets named Mormon, who to his abridgment gave the name—the Book of Mormon. This book was hidden in the hill CUMORAH by his son Moroni, the same who was sent to reveal its existence to Joseph Smith, as before stated.

The Book of Mormon is a brief history of the peoples who have inhabited

America, and contains an account of their origin and migration to that continent, and of the rise and fall of nations among them: from it, too, may be learned something of the growth, decay, and final loss of the civilization of those people, the ruins of which to this day fascinate while they puzzle the understanding of the learned antiquarians.

But what is of more importance, the book contains the inspired writings of prophets of God, who spake as moved upon by the Holy Ghost.

One colony that left Jerusalem for the western continent, took with them a copy of the writings of Moses and the prophets, many passages of which they transcribed into their records, and these passages found in the Book of Mormon confirm the authenticity of many books of the Bible.

This book also gives an account of the visit of Messiah to the American continent after His resurrection; of His ministry in that land; how He taught the Gospel just as He did to the people of Palestine; how He organized His Church among them with apostles and prophets, etc.; how He conferred upon them the same spiritual gifts and graces; delivered the same moral precepts, healed their sick, blessed their children, made the dumb to speak, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk—in short, how He manifested all the strong love of His divine nature for the people on the American continent as he had done for those living in Judea—showing indeed that He gave to the people of the western continent the same privileges and advantages to find out God as had been granted to those living in the east.

Thus was fulfilled those words of Jesus to His disciples in Judea, found in St. John x, 15, 46: "I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

Since Jesus taught the Gospel to the people of America as he had done to those in Judea, and as the Book of Mormon contains an account of those teachings, in it is found the Gospel of the Son of God in its fullness and purity; and therefore when the angel Moroni revealed the existence of the Book of Mormon, the prophecy of John—"I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, kindred, tongue and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea and the fountains of water" (Rev. xvi, 6, 7)—was fulfilled.

Nearly everybody has heard of the Book of Mormon. It is widely known, yet unknown. The wildest absurdities have been circulated respecting it. It has been much abused, but seldom understood; men in this matter having judged without investigating, and condemned without knowing why. Yet we testify most solemnly that it is a divine record, brought to light by the ministration of an holy angel sent from God; it is a testimony for God from an entire continent of people now sleeping in the dust, but who have left behind them the evidences of their civilization and enlightenment. And now this wonderful book—this NEW WITNESS FOR GOD—is offered to you, reader, for your personal examination; and inasmuch as you will investigate it prayerfully, you are promised a testimony of its truth—the following is in the book itself, and is a test by which you may effectually prove its truth or falsity:

"And when ye shall receive these things [*i. e.*, the things written in the book], I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni x, 4, 5).

The new cheap edition that we promised some time ago of this book is now completed, and we are ready to fill orders. The new edition is printed from the electrotype plates used in the preceding editions. It is printed on good paper, bound in neat cloth covers, and will be mailed to any address at the remarkable low price of *two shillings*. It may be obtained, also, from Conference Presidents, Traveling Elders, or any of our book agents. R.

SUGGESTIONS TO THE READER OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

THE reader of the Book of Mormon will do well to remember that it is a translation of a record inscribed on gold plates, which was an abridgment made from more extensive records kept by the ancient civilized peoples of America—chiefly by the people known in the Book of Mormon as Nephites. The abridgment, for the most part, is made by one Mormon, a Nephite prophet who was born 311 A.D., and slain by his enemies in the year 400 A.D. The parts which are not his abridgment are the first 157 pages (N.E.), which brings us to the "Words of Mormon," page 158; and from page 563 (N.E.) to the end of the volume—60 pages.

This latter part of the record was made by Moroni, the son of Mormon, who was also the one who hid up the plates containing his father's and his own abridgment, in the year 421 A.D.; and who having been raised from the dead, revealed the existence of these plates to Joseph Smith, on the 21st of September, 1823. The first 157 pages are a verbatim translation from what are known as the "smaller plates" of Nephi—we will explain.

The first Nephi, who left Jerusalem with the small company of colonists led out from that city by his father, Lehi, 600 B.C., and who afterwards became the leader, prophet, and their first king on the American continent, made two sets of plates on which he purposed engraving the history of his people. On the larger of these two sets of plates, he engraved an account of his father's life, travels, prophecies, etc., together with his genealogy; and upon them also he recorded a full history of the wars and contentions of his people, as also their travels, and an account of the cities they founded and colonies they established. These larger plates were preserved in the care of succeeding kings; and, in a word, upon them was written a full history of the rise and fall of the nations which existed in America from the landing of this colony from Jerusalem to 400 A.D., a period of nearly 1000 years.

It is quite evident that as these plates were transmitted from king to king, or from one ruling judge of the republic to another, or given into the possession of a prophet, that they each recorded the historical events of his own day, and gave to such account his own name—hence Mormon found in these "larger plates" of Nephi—the Book of Mosiah, the Book of Alma, the Book of Heleman, etc.