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"The Fifth Gospel"

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Abstract: This series discusses the major contribution of 3 Nephi: the appearance of the risen Christ on the American continent. His ministry was not limited to the eastern hemisphere, He also visited the lost tribes of Israel and raised up prophets in the Americas who foretold His appearance. Roberts notes the distinction made between the Savior's remarks to the twelve and those to the multitude, and points out that 3 Nephi specifies the proper mode of baptism and the sacrament. The second part considers some Native American traditions and calendars.

"A successful and well attended tea and social was given by the Rawtenshall branch on Saturday afternoon and evening, December 24th, 1904. There were nine traveling Elders present, including President Brinton of the conference, and about seventy-five in all, Saints and friends. The hall had been decorated for the occasion, and the tables were spread with the good things of life. Prizes were given to all the smaller Sunday school children, and manuals to the Mutual Improvement association workers. The main feature of the program was an original recitation given by Brother Richard Eatough about the Elders."

"THE FIFTH GOSPEL."

BY ELDER B. H. ROBERTS.

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ONE other thing, which, however, I can only throw in sight, is this. The traditions held by the native American races prove the fact that something like the events described in the Book of Mormon—these cataclysms and the darkness which followed—were vividly remembered by the ancients and are apparent in the traditions of the native Americans. For example, Mr. Bancroft, the great compiler of native traditions and myths, after speaking concerning native traditions about the flood, the creation, the building of the Tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of mankind, and of a certain revision that took place in the native calendar, says:

"One hundred and sixty years after this regulation or invention of the Toltec calendar, the sun and the moon were eclipsed, the earth shook, and the rocks were rent asunder, and many other things and signs happened. This was in the year Ce Calli, which, the chronology being reduced to our system, proves to be the same date that Christ our Lord suffered"—33 A. D.

Again, speaking of a certain division made in the Quiche kingdom, Bancroft, quoting from the History of Guatemala by the native author, Juarros, says:

"This division was made when three suns were seen, which has caused some to think that it took place on the day of the birth of our Redeemer, a day on which it is commonly believed that such a meteor was seen."

The day when three suns appeared would doubtless figuratively and very clearly express the time when they had two days and one night of continuous light on the continent.

Again, Nadaillac, in his Prehistoric America, after speaking of certain creation and flood traditions, adds:

"Other traditions allude to convulsions of nature, to inundations, profound disturbances, to terrible deluges in the midst of which mountains and volcanoes suddenly rose up."

I now turn to a passage I shall read to you from III Nephi, describing the appearance of Jesus on this land. After these cataclysms had taken place, a company of men, women and children in the land Bountiful, numbering some 2,500 souls, were assembled together near a temple that had escaped destruction, and they were speaking of the great events of the recent past and the

change that was apparent in the whole face of the land. As they were speaking of these signs that had been given of Messiah's birth and death, and conversing concerning Messiah Himself, they heard a voice. What was said they could not at first determine, and whence the voice came they could not tell. It grew, however, more and still more distinct, until at last, they heard the voice say: "Behold My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified My name: hear ye him."

"And it came to pass as they understood, they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them, and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.

"And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people saying:

"Behold, I am Jesus, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world;

"And behold I am the light and life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, the whole multitude fell to the earth, for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show Himself unto them after His ascension into heaven."

This reverend gentleman complains that III Nephi, or the fifth gospel, adds no new parable to the collection we have in the four gospels. But can any man read this simple yet sublime account of Messiah appearing to the inhabitants of this western world, and then say the fifth gospel adds nothing to the treasury of Christian knowledge? Is there, I ask you, any parable, or any hundred parables, that could be given that would be equal to these grand revelations concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and His mission to this western hemisphere? Complaint is also made that in His subsequent teachings Messiah merely repeated the ideas, and for that matter the words of His sermon on the mount; so wanting in originality, claim those who object to the Book of Mormon, were the authors of the book that they could not trust themselves to give Jesus the opportunity of preaching an original discourse to the inhabitants of this western part of the world. I ask these Christian objectors to consider just this: Suppose the Book of Mormon were not in existence at all; suppose that we begin to reflect on the empires and nations which beyond all question did occupy this land of America in ancient times, and were civilized intelligent people—God's children; suppose that it began to occur to some of our Christian friends that it would have been a grand idea if the Son of God had come and made proclamation of the Gospel to a people who were destined to be for so many centuries separated from the eastern hemisphere, where the Gospel had been planted. Now then, suppose these conditions, and suppose further that Jesus came here, what would be the nature of His mission? What should He first do? What truth

do these Christian critics hold to be the most important truth to mankind? Would it not be the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the One who is to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel? Would not that be the most important thing to have declared? I believe all Christians must necessarily say, yes. Well, that is just what happened. The voice of God broke the stillness of this western world, and said to a multitude of people, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." Then Jesus stands forth and declares Himself and His mission. The most important truth that the Christian mind, at least, can conceive! The fifth gospel starts with that sublime, important truth. Then, after that, what would be the next most important thing? Would it not be to teach man his moral duty? His relationship to God and to the Savior having been fixed by the first revelation, what next? Why, the ethics of the Gospel of Christ, the moral law, which is to take the place of the old law, Christian principles for right living. And so Messiah starts out with the same doctrines that He taught upon the mount. Now, there are not wanting respectable Christian authorities for the assertion that that discourse called the sermon on the mount was not a single discourse, but that into it was crowded for the recollection of the Apostles, all the great ethical truths that Jesus had taught from time to time, and that here they are grouped together and appear as one discourse. Moreover, the Savior declared to the Nephites while He was yet with them that these truths which He had been teaching them were the same as He had taught in Judea. "Behold," said He, in the course of His explanations, "ye have heard the things which I have taught before I ascended unto My Father."

But in answer to these complaints that the Book of Mormon adds nothing new to the treasury of our Christian knowledge, I want to show you, though I shall have to do it briefly, that the Book of Mormon version of these ethical doctrines of Jesus Christ does throw some additional light upon this sermon on the mount.

Right here I must complain just a little of the gentleman, notwithstanding I believe he intended to be fair. Speaking of this version of the sermon on the mount in the Book of Mormon, I think he sneeringly asserts that there is "one new beatitude added," and that is, the first verse in the Savior's discourse to the Nephites opens with this statement—which was given to the multitude after He had chosen twelve special disciples to be teachers of His Gospel:

"Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of the twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you and to be your servants." The gentleman says that is a new beatitude. Well, is there any proper complaint to be made against that? Suppose Jesus had said to a multitude in Judea, when He presented the Twelve Apostles before them, since He was going to bestow upon them not only divine authority to act in His name, but was going to accompany them always by the presence of His Spirit—would it have been out of place or an improper "beatitude" if he had said to the multitude. "Blessed are ye if ye shall hearken unto the words that these Twelve shall say unto you?" It is scarcely becoming in a Christian minister to make light of God's request of a multitude that they shall have respect

unto the teachings of His servants, and tells them that they shall be blessed if they hearken unto them.

But to continue. The first beatitude as given in Matthew is as follows:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”

A very beautiful, terse expression, and no doubt true; but in III Nephi it stands thus:

“Blessed are the poor in Spirit who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

It is not enough for men to be poor in spirit. Not on that hinges salvation. A man can be poor in spirit and still fail of salvation. But “Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

I think that throws a little light upon the sermon on the mount that is worthy the consideration of this Christian clergyman.

Another expression is:

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

Filled with what? Well, the Book of Mormon version of it is:

“Blessed are those who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

That is more definite, is it not?

[TO BE CONTINUED]

CURRENT COMMENT.

A Literary Curiosity.

THE so-called “Jefferson Bible” is now a public document. The old book prepared by Thomas Jefferson, once president of the United States, consisting of a large number of verses of the Scriptures cut out and pasted in the blank book, was falling to pieces, and on the way to complete loss. After some difficulty, a bill was passed by Congress providing that a reproduction of the original should be made. This has been accomplished by photographic plates, and the “Bible” is now a public document of Congress. There are four columns—one in Greek, another in Latin, another in French and the fourth in English. It is a literary curiosity.

An Interesting Race.

THE Hamburg-American liner *Graf Waldersee* and the North German Lloyd liner *Cassel* arrived at New York together the other day, after a most remarkable race across the Atlantic. During the whole of the voyage, which lasted ten days, the vessels were never more than five miles apart. The race began when the ships sighted each other in the English Channel. During the voyage each steamer took the lead four times. Captain Kreck, of the *Graf Waldersee*, in an interview, said it was absolutely unprecedented for two liners to pass and repass each other four times, and always be within signalling distance, for a period of ten days.

Noah's Ark Rebuilt.

A DANISH engineer, M. Vogt by name, has built an exact model of Noah's Ark, taking as his plan the Biblical descriptions. It is of 200 tons burthen,