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Ancient American Races

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Abstract: This article is a report of Professor Chad H. Robinson's lecture on the ancient American races. At a Salt Lake City theatre he displayed five mummified Olmec people that were discovered in Arizona. These mummies are of a white race that existed in ancient America. The article describes the discovery of manuscripts and artifacts in Central and South America that support the Book of Mormon.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."—ISAIAH viii, 20.

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ANCIENT AMERICAN RACES.

PROF. Chas. H. Robinson recently delivered a lecture on the Ancient American Races in the Theatre at Salt Lake City. Much interest was aroused in the lecture through the exhibition of five mummies which were unearthed not long since in Arizona. The following is a report of the lecture taken from the *Deseret News*:

THE matter of the lecture was principally compiled from the works of various writers on the antiquities of America. The speaker held that the preserved bodies which had been found on the Rio Gila, near the eastern border of Arizona, in a sealed cave, were the remains of Olmecs, the oldest of the Nahua nations, which had lived in the region embracing Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Northern Mexico. This conclusion was drawn from the fact that the bodies were not those of Indians, but of a white race, and the cement with which the cave where they were found was sealed was identical with that which belonged to the age of the Olmecs, prior to the advent of the Toltecs, who preceded the Aztecs. He cited their tra-

ditions of having come from the north to Mexico, their former capital city being, as near as it could be located, in the vicinity of the Great Salt Lake. Mr. Robinson also stated that within the past month Prof. Cushing, who had been sent out by the Smithsonian Institute, had discovered a city in the region where the mummies had been secured, and had found therein about 2,000 skeletons of the ancient inhabitants.

The remains, which are evidently ancient, are among the greatest curiosities it has ever been the fortune of the people of this city to have an opportunity to inspect. The bodies are five in number, and have never been subjected to the process of embalming, the evidence that they had not been disembowelled, and that the brain had not been removed, being indisputably present. The fact that they are the remains of white people is self-evident, the contrast between their appearance and the arm of a red man, also exhibited, was most striking.

The bodies are five in number, two men, two women, and a female child, the latter having reached the age of probably four or five years. They

bear the evidences, so far as their physical structure can afford it, of having been intelligent and cultivated. A person conversant with the theory of phrenology, and who believes in it, would not hesitate to so assert. One of the men must have been over the average height, broad shouldered and powerfully built. His head is lofty, what is termed the intellectual lobe being unusually high above the ears, and the latter are set well back. There is on the head a quantity of brown hair, of fine texture, the color indicating that this ancient person had died at but a little beyond middle age, while the quality of the hair is indicative of a refined physical organism.

The other male is of very different appearance, but the head is well balanced, and its possessor was very likely a man of more than ordinary abilities.

One of the females is in a sitting posture, with the head bent forward. The appearance of the other woman is much less repulsive, the head being beautifully formed, and the observer may almost imagine that he can yet catch a faint glimpse of an expression of gentleness remaining upon the parched and withered, half-destroyed face. The child retains no trace of the countenance, but the form or the basic part of it is more or less perfect.

It is easy for a cold and unimaginative person, who is destitute of the mental constructive faculty, to see nothing but ugliness in these remarkable relics. Such people make comparisons according to their strictly realistic dispositions. If they could but reflect and consider how much beauty their forms would exhibit under similar conditions, probably many centuries after death, their criticisms upon these remains would perhaps take a milder form. The idealistic observer can gaze upon such relics and, in his mind's eye, clothe them with life and beauty. To such fruitful minds these bodies are a source of absorbing interest, for they can link them, by the same process of mental creation, with scenes and circumstances of a bygone age.

The *News* also has the following re-

marks in its editorial columns on the subject:

The recent exhibition in this city of the mummified remains of five white people of an alleged prehistoric race lately discovered in Arizona, is connected with a subject in which the Latter-day Saints particularly have a deep interest—the history of the ancient inhabitants of America. Sixty years ago the Book of Mormon was brought forth, and a short time later published to the world through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith. That work was issued as a history of the ancient inhabitants of this continent down to about A.D. 420. It sets forth the origin of the people, their character, the high state of civilization to which they attained, their religion, and the history of their migrations and civil wars, until finally the record closes with an account of how the few believers in Christ were destroyed by the multitudes who had fallen into wickedness.

When the Book of Mormon was first published to the world, a howl of ridicule went up at the idea that America had ever been peopled by a white or a civilized race. It was in 1822 that the first work on the antiquities of America was published in England, and so general and strong was the belief that only savage nations had ever occupied this continent, that it received little credence. The civilized world had accepted as final the conclusion of Dr. Robertson, the historian, that it was "a certain principle that America was not peopled by any nation of the ancient world which had made considerable progress in civilization."

In 1834-35 Captain Dupaix's account of his explorations in Mexico and Central America first saw the light. It then began to dawn upon the minds of scientific men that perhaps, after all, the new world had a history of its own, and scientific research commenced. Following Dupaix came Lord Kingsborough, whose investigations convinced him that America had been peopled by a branch of the House of Israel. When he presented his ideas on this subject to the world, explorers saw in the coun-

tries of North and Central America a field for their highest ambition. Colonel Galendo, Waldeck, Rosny, Squier, Larrouza, Stephens, Catherwood, Powell, Jackson, Charnay and a host of others have since that time made comparative rapid progress in bringing to light the fact that centuries before Columbus lived there had flourished on the then unknown continent a civilization rivaling if not surpassing anything known in the old world.

When the discovery of these facts was made public, the spirit of inquiry was increased, and the public mind began to be convinced, as is said by the historian Bancroft, that "the tendency of modern research is to prove the great antiquity of American civilization as well as of the American people; and if either was drawn from a foreign source it was at a time probably so remote as to antedate all Old World culture now existing."

Stephens and Catherwood did more, perhaps, than any others, in their two visits, to bring to our knowledge the ruins of Central America, where they discovered upwards of forty ruined cities, besides making careful examinations of the great cities of Uxmal, Copan, Palenque and Quiche. Their labors, added to those of the others, have placed beyond doubt the ancient occupation of America by a civilized race.

These researches have developed more than the fact that there existed a knowledge of astronomy, architecture, mechanics, etc., among these peoples. Their ideas of religion and their traditions of their origin are brought to light in such plainness, that the connection with the religion of the Bible, at some remote period, can be distinctly traced. It is true that no one has yet been found to decipher their hieroglyphics, and give to the world the history contained on parchment and engraved on metal or stone. But sufficient has been obtained to enable scientists to agree that one of these hypotheses is correct regarding them: Either — first, that the American races were autochthonic, as claimed by Agassiz, in accordance with his doctrine of multiple centres of creation; second, that they

are of one blood with the races of the eastern continent, from whom they were separated by the subsidence of the intervening land; or third, that they represent a migration from Asia *via* Behring Straits, or across the Pacific in lower latitudes. The first two of these theories are rapidly losing ground in the face of the development of facts. Of the third, the advocates of the Behring Straits course of migration point to the linguistic theory, or the existence of language similar in construction to the Aztec along the northwest coast of America; while those who believe the migration came direct across the Pacific in lower latitudes, point with a reasonable degree of certainty to the traditions of all the Maya and Nahua races, that their forefathers made a long journey by land and by sea, from "toward the setting of the sun." The Nahuas also claim that in this migration the company that came over in ships numbered seven families.

While all these developments have been going on, the Book of Mormon history has not been taken into account, except in a spirit of jest, by those engaged in this work. But how strange and marvelous is the authentication which it has received from this source. The gorgeous palaces, sacred temples and half-buried cities that have been unearthed slowly but surely, are increasing the indisputable proofs of the correctness of the historical statements in that sacred record, and as each successive year rolls round some new discovery is made, some new fact brought to light, as supplemental and external evidence of its truthfulness.

The idea of a belief in the doctrines of Christianity among the progenitors of the present Indians was, a few years ago, looked upon as too absurd for consideration, for how, it was asked, could the teachings of the Savior be brought across the ocean when His disciples had no knowledge of the existence of another continent? This difficulty seemed insurmountable, and as a result the accounts of the natives concerning the Crucifixion were cast aside, and the analogies between the religion of the Mayas and Nahuas and that of the Jews

adjudged to be the result of accident. The traditions of the deluge, among the Mexicans and Yucatecoes, were interpreted to refer to some local inundation, the destructiveness of which had made a deep impression on the minds of the people. The story told of the terrible visitations of storms and earthquakes at the time the "White God" was slain, was characterized as an exaggeration of some minor event or as a myth, the object of which was to awe the unbeliever into an acceptance of religion. But with the historic knowledge given by the Book of Mormon is an explanation of these otherwise mysterious traditions. True, they are interwoven with a legendary lore that is of itself inexplicable, but the principal facts stand out in such bold relief as to make them easily recognizable from the mass of incongruities with which they are surrounded.

Up to the present time there has been found no key with which to unlock the mysteries of the written language of these ancient people, as they appear on their sculptured tablets.

They have been compared with the Greek, Hebrew, Basque, West African and North European languages, and have some features in common with each, but none furnish a sufficient rule for translation. But it is not too much to hope that, in the development of scientific research, these records will yet yield up their secrets to the world. When this is done the history therein contained will doubtless be found to accord, in respect to the same period, with that which has been revealed by the power of God to the people of this generation. And as the architectural ruins and preserved remains of a people who existed in America centuries ago bear silent but incontrovertible testimony to the existence of an intelligence and a civilization to a high degree, so also will their history, carved in stone, tell to later generations the story of their toils and triumphs in life's battle; and being thus united, all will corroborate the voice of revelation, and bear faithful witness to the accuracy of the history compiled and abridged by the Nephite Prophet.

OUR BODIES, AND HOW TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.

CHAP. II.

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OUR BODIES.

THE best informed physiologists, men who, assisted by the learning accumulated by others during many centuries, have given intense study to the structure and functions of the human body, have to acknowledge that there are numerous facts connected with its construction and powers that are yet mysteries. They tell us that the substances of the body consist of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, silicon, chlorine, fluorine, potassium, sodium, calcium, magnesium, iron, etc. They can show that those elements are elaborated from the food we eat, the liquids we drink, and the air we breathe, but they can not tell *how* it is done. They say that the conversion of food into all the various parts of the bodily organization is a vital process, caused by spe-

cial attributes of protoplasms diffused through the body and in the blood, but they can not tell how it is that those cells, and the blood, possess such life-like qualifications of selection and distribution. The truth is, they can very clearly describe the effects of life in the body, but can not, by their own wisdom, tell what life is. Considering that learned men have yet much to learn in relation to the human body, it is not to be wondered at that dense ignorance pervades the minds of most people concerning this subject; but it does seem strange that we know so little about that which personally concerns us so much.

It has been well said that "the proper study of mankind is man," and this applies not only to the intellectual portion of our being, but to the material organization as well. An acquaintance with the wonderful