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## Book of Mormon Facts

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sonal ambition of Amulon. "The idea may appeal to you, but you are not yet so wise that you need not be governed by those who are wiser. Besides, there is no time now to consider whether you need to be placed in the front ranks. There will probably be little difference tomorrow in the danger of the front and rear. We have important matters to discuss and cannot waste time on you now. You may go." And with this summary dismissal Zeniff turned to the more important matters.

"Well, they cannot expect us to do our best after that!" exclaimed Noah, petulantly, when they had resentfully withdrawn.

"Perhaps we may devise some way

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to get into the front yet," suggested Amulon, "Have you any suggestions, Gideon?"

"I am not quite sure, yet," he replied, "but I should like to lead our company behind the camp of the Lamanites while it is still dark, and then fight them in the rear tomorrow while the rest of the army engages them here in front."

"A soldierly scheme," applauded Amulon, "but how can we get to the rear tonight; we are shut into this narrow valley, and the Lamanites are not deaf."

"I am going now to see," responded Gideon, and he vanished in the darkness, while the others stared after him in surprise.

## Book of Mormon Facts

*By J. M. Sjodahl*

President George A. Smith tells us that, shortly after the establishment of the Church, certain "prophets" appeared among the members and pretended to know more about the principles of the Gospel than did the Prophet Joseph, and that he made a mistake when he published the Book of Mormon as an inspired volume. It was, they said, perfectly correct to preach repentance, faith, baptism, authority, etc., if only the Book of Mormon were put to one side. On that condition it would even be permissible to preach that Joseph Smith was a great prophet of God.

Elder Erastus Snow did not belong to this school of false prophets, who considered the Book of Mormon as an obstacle to the diffusion of the Gospel in the world. He was anxious that all men should have an opportunity of reading it. Consequently, he and his collaborators had not been very long in Denmark before they began a translation of the book, which appeared in print in 1865, and shortly after its pub-

lication a copy was presented to Frederick VII. The king, it is said, sent it to the dowager queen, and she, it is further said, was so impressed by reading it, that she became almost sick. Be this as it may, the Book of Mormon has been given to us as an essential part of the Gospel. We ought to read it more than we do.

The Book of Mormon contains a brief history of the ancient Americans during a period of about 2600 years, counting from the building of the Tower of Babel to about 240 A. D. During all these centuries historians recorded some of the leading events of the day, and the records were carefully preserved. Finally, Mormon, and his son, Moroni, made an abridged copy of the historical material that had accumulated, and, when the evening shadows of the national existence of the Nephites and the Lamanites fell, and their sun was setting ominously in a sea of blood, Moroni deposited his precious historical work in the Hill Cumorah, and from there he, himself,

took it and delivered it to the Prophet Joseph, on September 22, 1827.

But what useful purpose did this serve? Why were these documents hidden so carefully? What are they to us, who have the Bible as an infallible guide to life eternal?

The book called "Doctrine and Covenants" answers these questions.

In Section 3: 16-20 we are given to understand that the descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites were to receive knowledge of the life and work of our Savior, through the testimony of their forefathers, as the peoples of Christendom had received their knowledge through the testimonies recorded in the Bible. For that reason the scribes, called and inspired to write, recorded what the people experienced and what they taught. And they prayed incessantly that their patient labor might not be in vain, but that through it the Gospel light might in a future day come to their descendants and dispel the darkness from their minds. (Compare Sec. 10: 48-51.)

The Book of Mormon is, then, a message of joy to the now living descendants of the ancient Americans. It is a document, by means of which once mighty nations have bequeathed a great inheritance to their wandering, destitute children. It is a last will and testament, sealed with the blood of martyrs, which proves that these, their heirs, have the right of heritage to this western part of the world—the consecrated land of Zion; and it tells them how they may come into possession of their heritage, namely, by embracing the gospel and practicing the precepts of Christ, our Lord, and especially those which he promulgated in his Sermon on the Mount, and which he reiterated here among the Nephites, as the very corner stones of Christianity. This, I say, is the mission of the Book of Mormon to our brethren of the so-called "red" race, and there are millions of them, scattered over North

America, Mexico, Central America, South America, the Sandwich Islands, Polynesia, and Australia.

Nor has this mission been in vain. In the Hawaiian Islands a glorious civilization is flourishing among the natives, and this is, largely, the result of the acceptance by many Hawaiians of the Book of Mormon. The Maories in Australia are discovering that their genealogies and wonderful sagas are in harmony with the historical facts of the volume, and many of them accept it joyfully. Some of our Indians also have embraced the Gospel and it is found that they make very rapid strides forward in civilization when they become Church members. The Book of Mormon is a means whereby they are being lifted up. "Mormonism" satisfies their hunger for spiritual nourishment. They understand its principles when these are explained to them. The day is, therefore, probably not far away, when they will, in larger numbers than hitherto, accept the inheritance bequeathed to them by great and glorious forefathers.

But the Book of Mormon has also another mission:

In the Doctrine and Covenants, 10: 52, we read that the book has been given to the Christian world, to confirm the authenticity of the Bible. In that book, though ignored and almost held in contempt by the majority of Bible students, we have the best possible shield and protection against the bombs and poisonous gases that in our day are being directed against the Christian lines of defence from behind the sand-bags of so-called "higher" criticism. This "higher" criticism, it is understood, has discovered that the Bible is, mainly, a collection of myths, poetic compositions, and loosely connected, distorted historic data. But now comes the Book of Mormon and proves that Isaiah, for instance, was a true prophet of the Lord, when he predicted that the Book



of Mormon would come forth from the ground in the latter days, preliminary to the performance of a great and marvelous work. (Isa. 29.) It proves that Ezekiel was a true prophet when he foretold that two sacred records would be united in the latter days, previous to the re-union of Israel and Judah under one king (Ezek. 37: 15-28). It proves that John the Revelator was a true prophet when he (Rev. 10) recorded that an angel with a "little book" in his hand would come in the last days with an important message.

This "little book," according to Doctrine and Covenants, 77: 14, is "a mission and an ordinance for him to gather the Tribes of Israel" and the angel is, according to the same divinely-inspired explanation, Elias. Parley P. Pratt (*Key to Theology*) tells us:

"That great prophet, apostle, and martyr, Joseph Smith, was the Elias, the Restorer, the presiding messenger, holding the keys of the dispensation of the fulness of times \* \* \* to prepare the way for the Lord."

According to this, Joseph Smith is the angel, the messenger, whom John saw, the Elias mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 77: 14. What is the book he holds in his hand? The Pro-

(To be continued)

## Your Empty Place

"I don't think I will go to Church this evening; my head aches, and it looks like rain. Anyway, I do not think that anything worth while is likely to take place." said Hilda.

"I guess Thomas did not think that there was going to be anything special, or he would not have been absent from the meeting when Christ appeared. Of course, in His infinite goodness Jesus again appeared a week later when Thomas was present, and blessed him. But I feel pretty sure that Thomas had a lifelong regret over his absence the first night. Especially when he would recall his Master's

phet Joseph says concerning the Book of Mormon:

"By it we learn that our Western Indians are descendants of that Joseph who was sold into Egypt, and that the land of America is a promised land unto them, and unto it all the tribes of Israel will come, with as many of the gentiles as shall comply with the requisitions of the new covenant. But the tribe of Judah will return to old Jerusalem. The City of Zion, spoken of by David in the 102nd Psalm, will be built upon the land of America, and the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads (Isa. 35: 10), and then they will be delivered from the overflowing scourge that shall pass through the land."—Hist. of the Church, Vol. 1, p. 315.

From this it appears that the Book of Mormon contains the instructions necessary for the gathering of Israel. Without it, neither the location of the gathering place, nor the identity of the descendants of Joseph would have been known. In this sense it is a "mission and an ordinance"—a commission and authority—to gather the scattered remnant. In this sense we may well say that the "little book" in the hand of the angel seen by John in a vision has found its corresponding reality in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph.

words, 'Be not faithless, but believing,' " quietly replied her aunt.

"You make me feel that I will miss something if I stay away," said Hilda.

"Yes, I truly think that God has a blessing waiting for us in every service, if we have the faith to receive it, and we never know when He has something special."

If we were to believe and act on this advice, we would receive far greater blessing, and there would be fewer empty seats at our church services.—*Ex.*