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The Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This two-part series uses biblical scriptures to prove the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon, gives a summary of 1 Nephi, and discusses plates (who wrote them, what language was used, their size and description). Sleight explains how Joseph Smith found the plates in the Hill Cumorah, and gives a history of the founding of the LDS church. The second part concludes the series.

wailing, and fiendish torments in the flesh. Their idols, Moloch and Vishnu, were demoniacal monsters of most horrid cruelty. They were hollow metal furnaces of a human female shape. Inside their iron breasts were packed holocausts of little children and innocent babes, and then the fires were ignited and the idols were heated to a fierce, glowing red heat. Drums were beaten, horns blown, and hideous demoniac noises were made to drown the shrieks of agony and appealing cries of the helpless victims. Thousands of victims, old and young, were sacrificed yearly to gratify the lust for spectacles of misery and suffering. The pagan rites and mysteries used at the installation of candidates into the priestly office, were most frightful and diabolical orgies. They were performed underground, in dark, dismal caverns and subterranean galleries, where the novitiate was made to pass through a most appalling ordeal of artificial and supernatural horrors and sufferings.

It is this same spirit that gloats over murder and torture, and which inspires the fire and brimstone sermons of Christian pulpits. It is these frightful details and ghastly descriptions of future punishments that drive sensitive people crazy, and have been known to frighten timid souls to death. In any other department than religion such pernicious harangues and literature would be condemned as dangerous and obscene.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE BOOK OF MORMON

BY ELDER THOS. SLEIGHT:

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THE WAY THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS WRITTEN, AND THE MATERIAL IT WAS WRITTEN ON.

THE man who wrote the Book of Mormon was a prophet, and he made an abridgment of records that were written by inspired men of his nation from the time they left Jerusalem to his day, which was in the fourth century of the Christian era. Nephi was the first writer; he wrote on various

plates, but he says the sacred writings were kept apart from other history. He was the first king of the Nephite nation. Jacob followed Nephi and wrote on his plates, and gave them to his son Enos. Jarom received them from Enos, and gave them to his son Omni, who gave them to Amaron, and he placed them in charge of his brother Chemish. The latter gave them to Abinadom, who gave them to Am-

aleki, who had no seed, but lived in the days of king Benjamin. The king being a righteous man, Amaleki gave him the plates, which were full. Mosiah received the records from Benjamin and gave them to Alma, who was the first chief judge over the people of Nephi. He entrusted them to his son Helaman, who gave them to Shiblon, after which Nephi II. came in possession of them, and he bequeathed them to Nephi III., who also made plates of his own. Amos next took charge of them, after which Amos II. was honored with the sacred treasure. Ammaron obtained them from his brother Amos and hid them in the earth, and informed Mormon where he laid them, and requested him at the expiration of fourteen years to take possession of them, which he did; and he wrote his own book and abridged and compiled all the sacred writings of his predecessors. His son, Moroni, sealed them and was commanded of the Lord to hide them in the earth with the Urim and Thummim, to come forth in the due time of the Lord.

This was the way the history of a mighty people was kept for one thousand years. I will quote a little from Moroni's writings: "And now behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters, which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfections in our record. But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof" (Book of Mormon, chap. 9, verses 32, 33, 34). Moroni, the son of Mormon, wrote a short account of a people who inhabited America previous to the arrival of Nephi and his colony, which account was translated from plates that came into the hands of one of the prophets in the reign of king Limhi. It is a thrilling account, and some portions of it

are sublime. Mormon wrote setting forth his own situation, thus causing the volume to be called by the Latter-day Saints the Book of Mormon.

Why should any one sneer at the assertion that this record was engraved on gold plates? This metal was known and used for various purposes prior to the aborigines of America using it, and skilled hands among every civilized nation have engraved upon it.

The size of each plate was not far from seven inches in width by eight inches in length, and not quite so thick as common tin, and they were filled with engravings on both sides, the whole making a volume nearly six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The plates were fastened together at the end by three rings, making it convenient to unfold or carry. Many of the writers in the Book of Mormon make mention of records on plates containing the political history of the two nations, which no doubt were very voluminous. If they should be discovered by some society looking after antiquities, the world will look and wonder.

WHY THE PLATES WERE DEPOSITED IN THE EARTH.

The animosity that always existed between the Nephites and Lamanites became intense in the fourth century. Notwithstanding they had agreed that the Lamanites should possess South America up to the Isthmus, and the Nephites North America, when the Lamanites made war on their neighbors and gained a victory; they destroyed their cities and continued to pursue their foes, driving before them all they did not kill. There was continual war or preparation for it from the three hundred and sixtieth to the four hundredth year of the Christian era, which witnessed the entire destruction of the Nephites as a nation, Mormon, and his son Moroni, surviving one of the most sanguinary battles on record, in which two hundred and thirty thousand fell on one side. Mormon, who was commander-in-chief of the Nephites, hid up all the records which had been entrusted to him by the hand of the Lord, save it were the few plates with the Urim and Thummim and other things which he gave his son Moroni, having with

his predecessors guarded some of them for one thousand years. Mormon was afterward slain by his relentless foes. Moroni, the last surviving prophet of the Nephites, wrote twenty years after the destruction of his people and sealed up the record of his father and hid it in the earth, and testified of wars among the Lamanites, and how they killed every Nephite they found who would not deny the Christ, and because of his fidelity he had to wander wherever he could to save his life.

Now why should this generation ridicule the testimony of Joseph Smith when he said he possessed those records? There can be nothing remarkable about ore plates being found with engravings on them. During the present century many persons in America testify of finding the like.

But an objection is generally raised to the way Joseph Smith said he discovered these plates. I am aware it sounds marvelous to all who hear. It is something new, but it is so reasonable that all objections after a careful examination should be dropped. We learn from his history that when he was between fourteen and fifteen years of age his mind was much exercised about religion, and as there were different denominations in the village where he lived, each having his own peculiar views as to what people should do to be saved, and no two agreeing, he resolved to ask the Lord for wisdom. Selecting a secluded spot in the woods on a beautiful morning in the spring of 1820, he kneeled down to ask the Lord to tell him which sect of religion he should join. His prayer was answered by the appearance of a pillar of light descending upon him, far brighter than the sun, and two glorious personages stood in the air, one calling him by name, and pointing to the other said: "This is my beloved Son, hear him." He was told not to join any of the sects, for they were all wrong in the sight of God. Satisfied beyond doubt that the God of heaven had spoken to him, he continued to seek Him for wisdom to know how to serve Him. On the eve of September 21, 1823, after retiring to rest for the night, he supplicated the Lord for a forgiveness of his sins. While thus engaged a

light appeared in the room and it grew brighter than noonday, and a personage appeared at his bedside, standing in the air, having on a loose robe of exquisite whiteness. His hands, and his arms a little above the wrists, as also his feet and his legs a little above the ankles, were naked. His head and neck were also bare, and his whole person was glorious beyond description. He called Joseph by name, and said he was a messenger sent from the presence of God—that his name was Moroni, and that the Lord had a work for him (Joseph) to do. He told him of a book deposited in the earth written on gold plates, and giving an account of the former inhabitants of the land, the source from whence they sprang, and the fullness of the Gospel as taught by the Savior; and also that there were two stones in silver bows, and these stones fastened to a breastplate constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim. These were deposited with the plates, and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted seers in ancient times, and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. He told him when the time came that he should take possession of the plates and the Urim and Thummim, he should show them to no one but the chosen witnesses, and warned him of having any other object in view than the glory of God.

The following day he repaired to the place where the treasure was, for he had seen in vision the spot. It was near the village of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, on the west side of the largest hill in that neighborhood, near the top. A stone box, the top of which was visible, contained the precious treasure. He beheld with wonder and was about to lay hold of them, when the heavenly messenger who had previously visited him stood in his presence and forbade him to take them until after the expiration of four years. He invited Joseph to meet him there one year hence, and so on each year until the time came when he should take possession of them. Accordingly, on the 22nd of September, 1827, the heavenly messenger delivered the plates into

his hands, and the Urim and Thummim, by which to translate a portion of the book, holding him responsible for them, and telling him to use his utmost endeavors to preserve them until he should require them of him.

On the 17th of April, 1829, Joseph Smith commenced to translate from the plates by the Urim and Thummim, and Oliver Cowdery acted as scribe. He also copied a number of characters from the plates, which fell into the hands of a gentleman named Martin Harris, who took them to the city of New York and presented them to Professor Anthon, a man noted for his learning, who said they were translated correctly. The copies not translated he said were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyrian and Arabic. Mr. Harris showed them to Dr. Mitchel, who endorsed what Professor Anthon had said. The ensuing month (May), while Joseph and Oliver were translating, they came to where it referred to baptism for the remission of sins. They went into the woods to pray and enquired of the Lord concerning that ordinance. While thus engaged a heavenly messenger appeared in a cloud of light, and conversed with them and laid his hands upon them and ordained them to the Aaronic Priesthood. He told them his name was John, the same who was sent to prepare the way for the Savior, and called in the Scripture John the Baptist. Subsequently Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris had visitations of an holy angel who brought the plates with the breastplate and laid them before their eyes, commanding them to bear witness of them to all the world. Eight more witnesses gave their names to all the world that they did see and handle the plates. Here then are eleven men who have given their names to the world, testifying in all soberness that they have seen the plates and

the engravings thereon, and three of these testify that an angel of God did show them, and they did hear his voice saying they were true and had been translated correctly, and they should bear testimony of what they had seen and heard. The three chief apostles who were with the Savior when sojourning on earth—viz., Peter, James and John, came and laid their hands upon the head of Joseph Smith and ordained him to the apostleship. Why should the sceptic denounce the Book of Mormon when twelve men testify to the truth of the existence of the plates and that they saw them with their eyes. We have not as many written testimonies of the personal acquaintances of the Savior on earth in the New Testament. This record had lain in the ground about fourteen hundred years, and the man who placed it there revealed to Joseph Smith where it could be found.

Now let all the world give heed to the proclamation sent from the heavens, and learn of truths that have sprung from the earth to enlighten the inhabitants thereof, that they may come to a knowledge of a race of people that flourished when they kept the commands of God, and fell when they dwindled in unbelief; and also learn of the great blessings that shall be given to the remnant that are left if they will repent and turn unto the Lord, and also the Gentiles who shall inhabit the western hemisphere, for the word of the Lord is, "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come." And the day will come when that part of the record which is now sealed will be unfolded, giving greater light and further information as to what the Father has in store for those who are willing to hear His voice and do His will, that His purposes may be brought about as He has predicted through His great Prophet, Joseph Smith.

ECONOMY OF TIME.—The easiest way to economize time is to know what one wants to do with it, and to begin the day's work at the same hour each morning. It is not necessary to do the same thing at the same hour. Even the sun takes the liberty of rising at different times; but the hours are compelled by the universe itself to get up at the proper moment. To begin the day at a certain hour gives a standard by which to measure the rest of the day's doings; we find how long each thing takes to accomplish, and we do not expect to finish more than is possible in the time; nor will we undertake what is beyond our powers, and there need be no running after lost half-hours, for no hour need be lost at all.