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Cumorah

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Abstract: The author describes the Hill Cumorah, saying that it is adorned by trees and a large sign containing Book of Mormon passages.

Cumorah

BY HENRY SMITH

SUMMER tourists motoring along the highway from Palmyra to the town of Manchester, in New York state, will no doubt be mystified when they find that a formerly bald hill of the region has been turned into a beauty spot by the hands of man.

This is the Hill Cumorah, the topographical character of which has probably not changed much during the past fourteen centuries.

Since the purchase of that historic spot, where the golden plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated were hidden from the eyes of the world for more than fourteen centuries, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has entered upon an active campaign to make the hill a place of beauty and an attraction to the tourist.

During the past year 20,000 evergreen and hardwood seedlings have been planted on the hill and around its base, and more than 11,000 others have been ordered for spring planting. The setting out of more than a thousand hardwood nut and other trees is also being planned, and everything will be done to make of the place a shrine worthy of its history, interesting alike to those who believe in its sacred character and those who are drawn to it out of curiosity.

At the base of the hill, facing the highway mentioned above, is a large sign, so placed that it will not obstruct the tourist's view of the hill. This sign will give the history of the finding of the plates and of the organization of the Church. It is 12 by 50 feet in size, with the pages of the book extending three feet higher than the sign proper, as is shown in the illustration.

The pages of this book will contain passages obtained from the Book of Mormon. The following have been recommended and approved:

I Nephi, 16:29. "And there was also written upon them a new writing, which was plain to be read, which did give us understanding concerning the ways of the Lord; and it was written and changed from time to time, according to the faith and diligence which we gave unto it. And thus we see that by small means the Lord can bring about great things."

II Nephi, 10:11. "And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles."

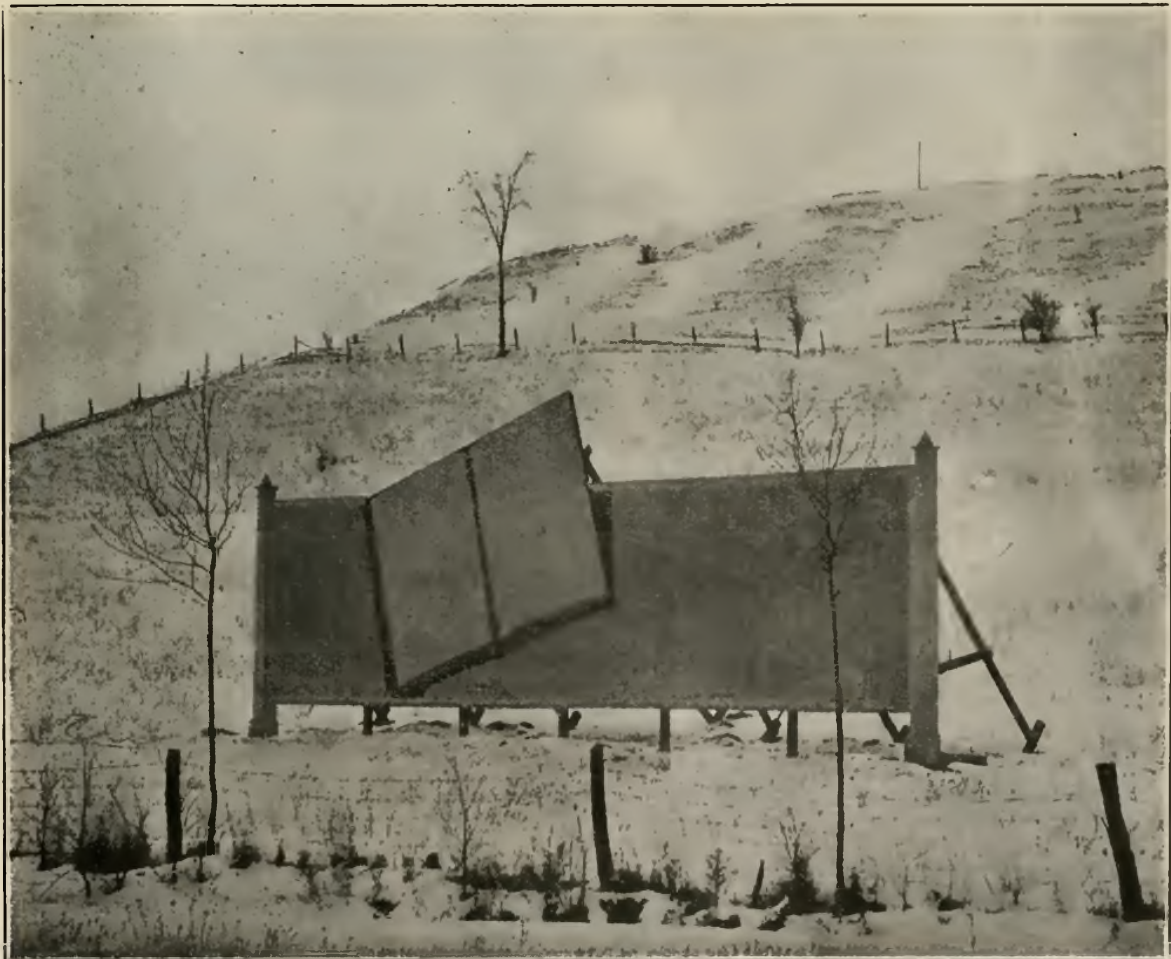
Jacob, 2:18. "But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God."

Alma, 13:28. "But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering."

Alma, 26:37. "Now my brethren, we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth. Now this is my joy, and my great thanksgiving; yea, and I will give thanks unto my God forever. Amen."

Alma, 45:16. "And he said: Thus saith the Lord God—Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue and people, unto destruction, which do wickedly, when they are fully ripe; and as I have said so shall it be; for this is the cursing and the blessing of God upon the land, for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance."

This hill has been the scene of some of the greatest events that have transpired in the history of man upon the earth. It may be



CALLING ATTENTION OF THE WORLD TO THE BOOK OF MORMON

appropriate here to review a few of these historical occurrences which have done so much toward the shaping of man's destinies on this continent.

Here, more than 24 centuries ago, the descendants of Jared and his brother fought their exterminating battle. It was in this neighborhood also that they rebelled against the Lord, killed his prophets and drove Ether, the last prophet among them, into exile. His life was spared to finish the record of his people, and his pathetic story is told in a most touching manner.

On this spot, about ten centuries later, Mormon, in the anguish of his heart over the sins of his people and for the last time, called upon them to repent. But the spirit of the Lord had ceased to strive with them; and before the close of that fatal day, Mormon's ten thousand stalwart soldiers, together with many other ten thousands whom he had led to battle against his foes, the Lamanites, lay dead on the battle field.

Moroni and a few of his followers were the only Nephites to escape. This prophet remained in hiding until he had completed the records which had been entrusted to his care. One can imagine how he stole forth, perhaps in the darkness of night, and deposited the plates in the hill where they were to remain protected by divine power for about 1400 years.

Passing over that period of spiritual darkness we again find Moroni, still the custodian of those sacred treasures. Acting under instruction, he visits Joseph Smith, and prepares him for his mission on this earth. Together they stand on this hill and, after four years of preparatory waiting, the angel turns the golden plates over to the youthful prophet for the purpose of translation.

Other and smaller signs are being placed on the grounds of three more historic spots in New York state.

A sign at the Joseph Smith home will read as follows: "Joseph Smith Home, owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Here Joseph Smith resided at the time he obtained the golden plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated."

Another small sign at the Peter Whitmer farm will contain the following: "Peter Whitmer Farm, owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The place where the Book of Mormon was translated from the golden plates. Here the Church was organized, April 6, 1830."

At the Sacred Grove will be found the following information placed there for the public: "Sacred Grove. This path leads to the Sacred Grove where Joseph Smith beheld the wondrous vision of the Father and the Son."