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"Articles of Faith," by James E. Talmage, Lesson 15 - The Book of Mormon (Continued)

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Theology and Testimony

"Articles of Faith," By James E. Talmage

Lesson 15

The Book of Mormon (Continued)

Article 8: ". . . we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God."

(Tuesday, April 6, 1943)

Condensation of Chapter XV of *Articles of Faith* by Talmage

(This condensation is placed in the Magazine in the hope that it will result in more class members familiarizing themselves with the lesson.)

The Authenticity of the Book of Mormon

The authenticity of the Book of Mormon constitutes our most important consideration of the work. Announcing to the world the message of a departed people, written by way of commandment, and by the spirit of prophecy and revelation, this book is entitled to the most thorough and impartial examination. The Latter-day Saints base their belief in the authenticity of the book on the following proofs which will be discussed:

1. The Nephite and the Jewish scriptures are found to agree in matters of tradition, history, doctrine, and prophecy which the separate records treat. In a careful comparison of the prophecies of the Bible with corresponding predictions contained in the Book of Mormon, each of the records is corroborative of the other.

2. Ancient prophecy has been literally fulfilled in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. Enoch (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 7:59-62), David (Psalms 85:11), Isaiah (Isaiah 45:8), and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37), as well as other prophets knew and prophecied of the book. Ezekiel 37:15-17, reads: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions [signifying the Bible]: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions [signifying the Book of Mormon]: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand."

3. The internal consistency of the Book of Mormon sustains belief in

its divine origin. The parts bear evidence of having been written at different times and under widely varying conditions. The book maintains consistency throughout; no contradictions, no disagreements have been pointed out.

4. Among the most conclusive proofs of the authenticity of the book is that furnished by the demonstrated truth of its contained prophecies. The predictions contained within the Book of Mormon may be classed as (a) prophecies relating to the time covered by the book itself, the fulfillment of which is recorded therein; and (b) prophecies relative to times beyond the limits of the history chronicled in the book.

Prophecies of the first class named are of minor value as proof of the authenticity of the work; nevertheless, to the conscientious reader the genuineness of the book will be made apparent in the literal realization of the numerous and varied predictions relating to the fate, then future, of the people whose history is given in the record. Prophecies of the second class are numerous and explicit. Many of them have special reference to this last dispensation—the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. Among the most remarkable Book of Mormon predictions incident to the last dispensation are those that relate to its own coming forth and the effect of its publication amongst mankind. Joseph's great prophetic utterance is to be found in part in II Nephi 3:11-13. The literal fulfillment of this prophecy in the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon through Joseph Smith is well evidenced. That the new scriptures would be rejected by the Gentiles

was known by Nephi, who recorded this: "A Bible! a Bible! we have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible." (II Nephi 29:3; read the entire chapter.)

5. The archeology and ethnology of the Western Continent contribute some corroborative evidence in support of the Book of Mormon. Among the most significant of the discoveries respecting the aboriginal inhabitants of the land, are the following: (a) that America was peopled in very ancient times, probably soon after the building of the Tower of Babel; (b) that the continent has been successfully occupied by different peoples, at least by two classes, or so-called races, at widely separated periods; (c) that the aboriginal inhabitants came from the East, probably from Asia, and that the latter occupants, or those of the second period, were closely allied to, if not identified with, the Israelites; (d) that the existing native races of America form a common stock.

It is very apparent that each of these discoveries is fully sustained by the Book of Mormon record.

Let not the reader of the Book of Mormon content himself with such evidences as have been cited concerning the authenticity of this reputed scripture. There is promised a surer and more effectual means of ascertaining the truth or falsity of this volume. Like other scriptures, the Book of Mormon is to be comprehended through the spirit of the scripture, and this is obtainable only as a gift from God. But this gift is promised unto all who shall seek it. Then to all let us commend the counsel of the last writer in the volume, Moroni, solitary scribe who

sealed the book: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with

real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (Moroni 10:4-5)

LESSON PLAN

Lesson Aim: To prove the authenticity of the Book of Mormon

Suggested Material Outline

I. Proofs of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon

A. Agreement of the Bible and the Book of Mormon

1. Records agree in matters of tradition, history, doctrine and prophecy (See Appendix 14:5)

B. Prophecies concerning the Book of Mormon

1. Ezekiel's vision most significant (Ezekiel 37)
2. Isaiah's prediction literally fulfilled (Isaiah 29:11-12)

C. Internal construction of the Book of Mormon

This concerns the doctrinal unity of the book, its consistency of language, its general harmony and Joseph Smith's inability to compose such a work without divine help.

D. Book of Mormon predictions

1. Prophecies fulfilled in the Book of Mormon
2. Future prophecies not yet fulfilled (See II Nephi 3:11-13; II Nephi 29)

E. Archaeology of the Western Continent

1. Value of external evidence

Sometimes we are inclined to lay too much stress on external evi-

dence, as if it were conclusive, whereas it only shows a tendency in the direction of the truth of personal testimony.

2. Evidence of American antiquities

- a. Civilization here before discovery of America by Columbus
- b. This civilization comparable to that which existed in the Old World
- c. Monuments are found where Book of Mormon requires them to be
- d. Evidences of successive civilizations in ancient America

F. The classes of American aborigines

- (1.) Archaic
- (2.) Toltec-Mayan
- (3.) Aztec

Suggested Method Outline

- I. It is suggested that class members who are capable and who do research well, be assigned, at least a month in advance of presentation, the five major sections of this lesson outline. In making such assignments, it is suggested that the class leader

bear in mind the following procedure:

- A. Enough time should be spent with the class member assigned the task to make the assignment very clear. If necessary, the assignment should be written out by the class leader, and then the member should be given time to ask questions concerning her assignment.
- B. Class leaders should make the time limit explicit. This is very important if the lesson is fully covered in the time allotted.
- C. Class leaders should be responsible for seeing that material for use in the preparation of assignments is available.
- D. Some follow-through on the assignment should be made by the class leader to check

on the progress of each assignment, and this should be done before the actual day of presentation.

- II. Class leaders should allow themselves time to summarize the major points of the lesson in order to make a unified whole and to increase learning. Part of this summary could be gathered from the class by skillful questioning. (Consult any book on teaching methods for help on how to formulate questions. If a blackboard is available, it would be helpful to list thereon the major points covered in the lesson.)

References

- Roberts, B. H., *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. I.
 Talmage, James E., *Sunday Night Talks*.
 Thompson, E. H., *People of the Serpent*.
 Talmage, James E., *Articles of Faith*, "Appendix" 15, Notes Relating to Chap. 15

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Visiting Teachers'

Messages to the Home

Lesson 7

Care of the Body as an Expression of Faith

(Tuesday, April 6, 1943)

LATTER-DAY SAINTS attach great importance to the proper care of the body. No one can attain his highest usefulness, happiness, or intelligence, who injures his body by improper living.

In the Doctrine and Covenants there are many revelations regarding the human body and its importance as an instrument of the mind. "The

spirit and the body," we are informed, "are the soul of man." (Section 88:15) And in another place we read that the spirit manifests itself through the body. Therefore, the physical condition of the body either facilitates or hampers expression of the spirit.

Such things as food, clothing, proper housing and living conditions