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Divine Origin of the Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This series presents historical evidences to prove the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Thatcher quotes from the *Popol Vuh* to show that the Quiche's creation account is similar to that of the Bible; he also refers to the *Works of Ixtlilxochitl* to argue that the accounts of the flood are similar. The third part relates the work of Boturini.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.—MAT. x, 15.

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DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

BY APOSTLE MOSES THATCHER.

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 372.]

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES CONSIDERED.

II.

Boturini, to whose single remaining work we referred in our previous article, says, on page six, in speaking of the knowledge possessed by the American Indians, regarding God's dealings with man during the earlier ages, that, "there is no Gentile nation that refers to primitive events with such certainty as the Indians do. They give us an account of the creation of the world, of the deluge, of the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, and of all other periods and ages of the world, and of the long peregrinations which their people had in Asia, representing the specific years by their characters; and in the Seven Conejos (rabbits) they tell us of the great eclipse that occurred at the death of Christ our Lord."

This eminent and reliable author, whom nearly all that have written on

the subject of American antiquities have honorably mentioned, having come to this country commissioned to search its history and not to propagate Roman Catholicism, may be considered as having been in his researches possessed with but little religious bias. His statements, because of his qualifications and for the reason above given, have been generally received with more than ordinary credence by other writers. We may, therefore, regard his testimony as very strong, and his historical collection as positive proof that the early inhabitants of this continent did have a comprehensive knowledge of facts contained in the Mosaic record.

When we realize that the Book of Mormon (which we have very good circumstantial evidence for believing to be the original, from which, no doubt, portions were at different times copied direct, and other portions, retained in the memory of the learned,

transmitted and afterwards written and compiled into that book now spoken of as Teoamoxtli, the lost book of divine things) was hidden in the earth, with other valuable inspired records, by the prophet Moroni, in the early part of the fifth century of the Christian era, we have reason, I think to wonder at the remarkable preservation, for a period of a thousand years, and that among a migratory and warlike people, of so many well connected facts relating to very remote times, rather than to be surprised that the early Spaniards should find mixed up with these divine truths, fables and mythological traditions, of a later origin.

Boturini, on page one hundred and twenty-nine, clearly indicates the manner in which this knowledge was preserved and handed down from generation to generation. He says: "during the reign of Yittilcuexahuac, in Tula, about the year of our Lord 660, Huimatzin, a celebrated astronomer of the Toltecs, called together all the wise men, with the approval of the monarch, and painted that great book which they called Teoamoxtli, that is, "divine book," in which with distinct figures account was given of the origin of the Indians; of the time of the separation of the people at the confusion of the language; of their peregrinations in Asia; of their first cities and towns that they had in America; of the foundation of the Empire of Tula (Jerusalem); of their progress until that time; of their monarchs, laws and customs; of the system of the ancient calendars; of the characters of their years, and symbols of their months and days; of the signs and planets, cycles and series; of the first day of new moon; of the transformations, in which is included moral philosophy; as also the arcana of the vulgar wisdom hidden in the hieroglyphics of their gods, with all that pertains to religion, rights and ceremonies; for which cause the book was called, a *magori analagato*, "Divine Book," and from this cause the Indians called the sacred Bible "Teoamoxtli;" that is to say "Divine Book;" and in imitation of said Teoamoxtli, each one of the historians kept in his house parti-

cular maps (picture maps) of the things of which they took note in their time."

Now what is indicated by the calling together of these wise men of a nation, to compile, under the approval of the Monarch, a "divine book," containing knowledge reaching back to the dispersion which occurred at the Tower of Babel? Can anyone suppose for moment that it was done for the purpose of reducing to writing, traditions which had been held, as such, handed down from father to son for nearly three thousand years? Can anyone suppose that facts so clearly showing that the Indians knew of the creation, flood, confusion of language, &c., as already demonstrated in these articles, could have brought this knowledge by means of tradition only, down to the year 660? At this time their wise men are brought together and compile a book so remarkable that their descendants a thousand years later, on becoming acquainted with the contents of our Bible (probably the Vulgate rendering), called it, also Teoamoxtli, and declared it to be "in imitation" of their sacred and "Divine Book," which, judging from their intimate knowledge of its contents, could not long have been out of their hands. It was probably destroyed in one of the many bonfires kindled by fanaticism and fed with native records, which were burned by cords. The Book of Mormon was buried in the hill Cumorah, (Ontario County, State of New York, United States,) in the year of our Lord 420. Now it is not only reasonable to suppose, but the most natural thing to expect, of an intelligent people, on finding themselves deprived of records containing matters of such vital importance, would be to call their "wise men" together and again, and as far as they could, restore in written form those great truths. This we have seen is just what was done by the Indians, and, as only two hundred and forty years had elapsed between the loss of the Book of Mormon and the writing and compiling of "Teoamoxtli," we can easily understand how they succeeded in producing a work so like our Bible as to induce the Indians later on to call ours an "imitation"

of theirs. For, as before observed, those "wise men" no doubt had other material than mere tradition from which to draw their information, for if, as stated by Boturini, "each one of the historians kept in his house particular maps of the things of which they took note in their time," they must have possessed many very authentic records. Let any person read the Book of Mormon, particularly as to its religious teachings, and he will easily understand how the Indians could say that the Bible was but an imitation of their "Divine Book."

Prof. Short, in his *North Americans of Antiquity*, page two hundred and thirty-eight, quotes from the native writer, Ixtlilxochitl, as follows: "It is found in the histories of the Toltecs, that this age and first world, as they call it, lasted seventeen hundred and sixteen years; that men were destroyed by tremendous rains and lightnings from the sky, and even all the land, without exception of anything, and the highest mountains were covered up and submerged in water 'caxtolmoletli' or fifteen cubits, and here they add other fables of how men came to multiply from the few who escaped from this destruction in a 'toptlipetlacali,' this word signifies a close chest."

No one who reads the Mosaic account can fail to recognize the analogy, which in these cases approach almost to exactness. Who fails to recognize their common origin, must be skeptic indeed. But that all and every doubt may be, if possible, removed, we make further citations. The one that now presents itself is so interesting that we reproduce it in full, although not all pertaining to the deluge. It is from the work last above quoted and is found on page four hundred and sixty, as follows: "Lord Kingsborough is, no doubt, warranted in holding that the Nahuas

were of old world origin, at a very remote period prior to their having developed any special tribal characteristics, because of their singular and, we think, certain knowledge of the Mosaic deluge; but he is not justified in claiming for them any particular relationship to the Jewish or any Shemitic people." (Here the author, in a note, inserts an extract from Kingsborough's work, which we give below).

"It is impossible on reading what Mexican mythology records of the war in heaven, and of the fall of Zontemoque and other rebellious spirits; of the creation of light by the word Touacatecutli, and of the divison of the waters; of the sin of Yztlacohuqui, and his blindness and his nakedness; of the temptation of Suchiquecal and her disobedience in gathering roses from a tree, and the consequent misery and disgrace of herself and all her posterity, not to recognize scriptural analogies. But the Mexican tradition of the deluge is that which bears the most unequivocal marks of having been derived from a Hebrew source. This tradition records, that a few persons escaped in the Ahuehueti, or ark of fire, when the earth was swallowed up by the deluge, the chief of whom was named Patecatle or Cipaquetona; that he invented the art of making wine; that Xelua, one of his descendants, at least one of those who escaped with him in the ark, was present at the building of a high tower, which the succeeding generation constructed with a view of escaping from the deluge, should it again occur; the Tonacatecutli, incensed at their presumption, destroyed the tower with lightning, confounded their language and dispersed them; and that Xelua led a colony to the New World."—*Mex. Antiq.*, tom vi. p. 401.—*From the "Salt Lake Contributor."*

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

He who makes a baseless insinuation against a neighbour's integrity or honor, is guilty of an injustice which is atrocious and monstrous in comparison with the petty depredation of the despicable thief who breaks into his granary and surreptitiously carries away his corn.