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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK NEW WITNESSES FOR GOD (VOLUME 2 OF 3) ***

NEW WITNESSES FOR GOD

II.

THE BOOK OF MORMON

* * * *

By B. H. Roberts,

Author of "The Gospel," "Outlines of Ecclesiastical History," "Mormon Doctrine of Deity," "Defense of the Faith and the Saints," "The Prophet-Teacher," etc., etc.

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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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THE DESERET NEWS

Salt Lake City

1909

PREFACE.

The following work was begun twenty-two years ago, in England, when the author was in that land on a Mission, as assistant Editor of the *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*. It was the author's design then to make the treatise on the Book of Mormon the first volume under the general title "New Witnesses for God"; but after some progress in collecting and arranging the materials had been made, the thought occurred to him that the Prophet Joseph Smith in chronological order, if not in importance, preceded the Book of Mormon in the introduction of God's Witnesses in this

last and great dispensation. The materials of this work, therefore, so far as they had been collected, were laid aside and work was begun on the treatise of Joseph Smith as a Witness for God; which, however, because of many other demands upon the author's time, was not published until 1895.

Meantime work was continued from time to time upon the treatise of the Book of Mormon; and in 1903-4-5, the materials were used, substantially as in their present form, as Manuals for the Senior Classes of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Associations. The work has undergone a thorough revision at the hands of the author, and is now to take the place in his writings designed for it so long ago.

While the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is but an incident in God's great work of the last days, and the book itself subordinate to some other facts in that work, still the incident of its coming forth and the book are facts of such importance that the whole work of God may be said, in a manner, to stand or fall with them. That is to say, if the origin of the Book of Mormon could be proved to be other than that set forth by Joseph Smith; if the book itself could be proved to be other than it claims to be, *viz.*, and chiefly, an abridged history of the ancient inhabitants of America, a volume of scripture containing a message from God to the people to whom it was written—"to the Lamanites [American Indians], who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and revelation"—if, I say, the Book of Mormon could be proved to be other than this, then the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and its message and doctrines, which, in some respects, may be said to have arisen out of the Book of Mormon, must fall; for if that book is other than it claims to be; if its origin is other than that ascribed to it by Joseph Smith, then Joseph Smith says that which is untrue; he is a false prophet of false prophets; and all he taught, and all his claims to inspiration and divine authority, are not only vain but wicked; and all that he did as a religious teacher is not only useless, but mischievous beyond human comprehending.

Nor does this statement of the case set forth sufficiently strong the situation. Those who accept the Book of Mormon for what it claims to be, may not so state their case that its security chiefly rests on the inability of its opponents to prove a negative. The affirmative side of the question belongs to us who hold out the Book of Mormon to the world as a revelation from God. The burden of proof rests upon us in every discussion. It is not enough for us to say that if the origin of the Book of Mormon is proved to be other than that set forth by Joseph Smith; if the book itself be proved to be other than it claims to be, then the institution known as "Mormonism" must fall. We must do more than rest our case on the inability of opponents to prove a negative. The security of "Mormonism" rests on quite other grounds; and, from a forensic standpoint, upon much more precarious ground; for not only must the Book of Mormon not be proved to have other origin than that which we set forth, or be other than what we say it is, *but we must prove its origin to be what we say it is, and the book itself to be what we proclaim it to be—a revelation from God.*

From these remarks the reader will observe, I trust, that while I refer to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as an incident, and the book itself as a fact subordinate to some other facts connected with the great work of God in the last days, I have by no means underrated the importance of the Book of Mormon in its relation to God's work of the last days as a whole. It is to meet the requirements of this situation that I have been anxious to add my contribution to the gradually accumulating literature on this subject, both within and without the Church, both upon the affirmative and the negative side of the question.

My treatise is divided into four parts:

I.—The Value of the Book of Mormon as a Witness for the Authenticity and Integrity of the Bible; and the Truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

II.—The Discovery of the Book of Mormon and its Translation, Migrations, Lands, Intercontinental Movements, Civilizations, Governments, and the Religions of its Peoples.

III.—Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon.

IV.—Objections to the Book of Mormon Considered.

It will be seen from the titles of these divisions that Parts I and II are really only preparatory in their nature. The more interesting field of evidence and argument is not entered until Part III is reached. But Parts I and II, if not so intensely interesting as the divisions devoted to argument, they are, nevertheless, every whit as important. It goes without saying that the success of an argument greatly, and I may say fundamentally, depends upon the clearness and completeness of the statement of the matter involved; and it is frequently the case that a proper setting forth of a subject makes its truth self-evident; and all other evidence becomes merely collateral, and all argument becomes of secondary importance. Especially is this the case when setting forth the Book of Mormon for the world's acceptance; in which matter we have the right to expect, and the assurance in the book itself that we shall receive, the co-operation of divine agencies to confirm to the souls of men the truth of the Nephite record; that as that record was written in the first instance by divine commandment, by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation; and as it was preserved by angelic guardianship, and at last brought forth by revelation, and translated by what men regard as miraculous means, so it is provided in God's providences, respecting this

volume of scripture, that its truth shall be attested to individuals by the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind. "When ye shall receive these things," says the prophet Moroni, referring to the writings of the Nephites, "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."

This must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary to this, the primary and infallible. No arrangement of evidence, however skilfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place; for this witness of the Holy Spirit to the souls of men for the truth of the Nephite volume of scripture, is God's evidence to the truth; and will ever be the chief reliance of those who accept the Book of Mormon, and expect to see its acceptance extended throughout the world; for, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so must the testimony of God forever stand above and before the testimony of men, and of things.

I confess that these reflections have a saddening effect upon one who undertakes to set forth what he must confess are but the secondary evidences to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and make an argument that he can never regard as of primary importance in the matter of convincing the world of the truth of the work in the interest of which he labors. But I trust these reflections will help my readers to a right apprehension of the importance of Parts I and II, the importance of a clear and, so far as may be, a complete statement of the incidents connected with the coming forth of the book, and also of its contents. To be known, the truth must be stated, and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true. While desiring to make it clear that our chief reliance for evidence to the truth of the Book of Mormon must ever be the witness of the Holy Spirit, promised by the prophet Moroni to those who will seek to know the truth from that source; and desiring, also, as I think is becoming in man, to acknowledge the superiority of God's witness to the truth as compared with any evidence that man may set forth—I would not have it thought that the evidence and argument presented in Parts III and IV are unimportant. Secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God's purposes. I only desire by these remarks to place the matters to be considered in their right relations.

B. H. ROBERTS.

Salt Lake City, March, 1909.

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To aid the reader in pronouncing accurately Book of Mormon names and also the difficult Spanish and Mexican proper names found in the body of this work, where it treats of American antiquities, we append, first, the rules of pronunciation of the Book of Mormon names formulated at the Book of Mormon Convention held at the Brigham Young University, Provo, May, 1903; and, second, a list of the Spanish and Mexican words—chiefly proper names—and their pronunciation in English. For the pronunciation of the Spanish and Mexican names I am indebted to Professor John M. Mills of the Latter-day Saints' University, Salt Lake City, Utah.

RULES FOR THE PRONUNCIATION OF BOOK OF MORMON NAMES

"Words of two syllables to be accented on the first syllable.

"Words of three syllables to be accented on the second syllable with these exceptions, which are to be accented on the first syllable; namely: Amlici (c, soft); Amnion; Antipas; Antipus; Corihor; Cumeni; Curelom; Deseret; Gazelam; Helaman; Joneam; Korihor; Tubaloth.

"Words of four syllables to be accented on the third syllable with the following exceptions, which are to be accented on the second syllable; namely: Abinadi; Abinidora; Amalickiah; Aminadi; Aminadab.

"Ch is always to be pronounced as K.

"G at the beginning of a name to be always pronounced 'hard.'

"I final, always to take the long sound of the vowel.

LIST OF SPANISH AND MEXICAN PROPER NAMES AND THEIR PRONUNCIATION

A

Acolhuas (ah col'wahs)
Acosta (ah cos'tah)
Acxiquat (ak he'quat)
Acxopil (ak ho'peel)
Ahahuatl (ah ha way'tl)
Ahpoh (ah'pope)
Allabahamah (ah yah bah hah'mah)
Amautas (ah mah oo'tas)
Amoxoaque (ah mo wha'ky)
Antisuyu (an tee su'yu)
Atitan (ah tee tan')
Atonatiuh (ah to nah'tee oo)
Anahuac (ah nah wak')
Aymara (i mah'rah)
Aztlan (as tlan')

B

Balam Agab (bah lam'ah gab)
Balam Quiche (bah lam kee chay')
Boachia (bwa chee'ah)
Bochica (bo chee'kah)
Boturini (bo too ree'nee)
Brasseur de Bourbonnais (brah sieur doo boor boor)

C

Caha Paluma (kah'hah pah loo'mah)

Cakixaha (kah kee hah'hah)
Calel Ahus (kah lail'ous)
Camalotz (kah mah lo'tz)
Capichoch (ka peech'och)
Carli (kar'lee)
Carreri (kah ray'ree)
Camanco kah pac')
Ce Calli (say ca'ye)
Cecumbalam (say cum bah'lam)
Chap ul tepee (cha pool'tay peck)
Chialman (chee ahl'man)
Chiapas (ehee ah'pass)
Chichen Itza (chi chen eat'sah)
Chicomoztoc (chi comb os'tok)
Cholula (cho lu'la)
Cholultecs (cho lool'tecks)
Chomeha (cho may'hah)
Cioacoatl (see wa kwa'tl)
Clavigero (cla vee hay'ro)
Colhuacan (coal wab can')
Colla (ko'ya)
Cantisuyu (cone tee su'yu)
Cortez (car teth—Mexican cortes')
Coxcox (cos'cos)
Cozas (co sas')
Cukulcan (koo kool can')
Cundunamarco (koon doona mar'ka)
Cuzco (koos'co)
Coatzacoalcos (kwats ah kwal'cos)

D

De las Casas (day las ca'sas)
Dupaix (du pay')

F

Fuentes y Guzman (fwen tes e goose man')

G

Gomara (go mah'ra)
Gregorio Garcia (grey go'rio gar see'ah)
Guanacauri (gwa'na cow'ree)
Guarani (gwa rah'nee)
Guatemala (gwa teh mah'la)
Gucumatz (goo koo matz')

H

Herrera (a ray'rah)
Hogates (o gah'tes)
Honduras (own doo'ras)
Huamantaco Amauto (hwa man ta'co ama oo'ta)
Huaves (hwah'ves)
Huehue Talapalan (way way tah la pah Ian')
Huemac (way mack')
Huitzitzilin (weet seet see leen')
Huitziton (weet see tone')
Hurakan (oo rah kan)

I

Ilocab (e lo cab')
Iqui Balam (e kee bah'lam)
Istli (east'lee)
Ixtilxochitle (east leel ho-che'etl)
Izcalli (eas ca yee)

J

Jiutemal (hugh tay mal')
Juitemal (whee tay mal)

K

Kabah (kah'bah)

L

Loak Ishtohooloo Aba (lo akish to hoo'loo ah'ba)

M

Mahucutah (mah hoo cooth)
Malinalli (mah lee naw ye)
Mama Oello (ma ma way'yo)
Manco capac (man co capac')
Mar Barrnejo (mar bar nay'ho)
Mendieta (men dee a tah)
Michoacan (me choa can')
Mictlanteuctli (meek tlan tenk tli)
Mijes (me'hays)
Mitla (me'tla)
Mizes (me says)
Miztees (meas'tecks)
Montesinos (mon tay see'nos)
Munez de la Vega (moon yes'day la vay'ga)

N

Nadaillac (nah day lac')
Nata (nah ta)
Naliuatl (na watl)
Nahuatlacs (na wat lacs)
Nimaquiche (nee ma kee chay')

O

Oajaca (oali ha'ca)
Ozaca (o sah'ca)

P

Palenque (pah len'kay)
Pamutla (pah moot'la)
Panoaia (pa no ah'ya)
Pantlan (pan tlan')
Panuco (pa noo co)
Paye Tome (pah ye to'me)
Puhua Manco (poo wha man co)

Q

Quetzalcohua (kate sal'qua)
Quequetzalcohua (kay kate sal'qua tl)
Quetzalcohuatl (kate sal qua'tl)
Quilaztli (kee las'tlee)
Quirigua (kee ree'gua)
Quito (kee to)

R

Rosales (ro sah'les)

S

Sahagun (sah hah'gun)
Sierra de Cocotl (see a'ra day co co'tl)
Suchiquecal (soo chee kay'cal)

T

Tahuantín-Suya Capac (tah whan teen'-soo-ya-ca pac)
Talma (tal'ma)
Tamoachan (ta mwa chan)
Tamub (tah moob')
Tapallan (tah pah yan)
Tecpatzin (teck pat seen')
Tehuantepec (tay wan'tay peck)
Temazcalli (tay mas cah'ye)
Teocallis (tayo cah'yees)
Teocysactli (tayo see sac'tlee)
Teotes (tayo tes)
Tezcatlipoca (tes cat tee po' ca)

Tezpa (tes'pee)
Titicaca (tee tee ka'ka)
Tlacapan (tla ca pan')
Tlaloc (tla lock')
Tlaloques (tla lo kes)
Tlamanalco (tla ma nal'co)
Tlapallan (tla pa yan')
Talascatec (tlas cal tes)
Tlatelolco (tla tay lol'co)
Teatl (tay otl)
Toltan (tol tan')
Tonacatecutli (to nali cah tay coo'tlee)
Tonacatecutle (to nah cah tay coo'tlay)
Topolitzin (to po lit seen')
Torquemada (tor kay mah'dah)
Tschudi (tchew dee)
Tuccabatches (tuc cah bah'ches)
Tulan-Zaiva (too lan-si va)
Tzontemoc (tson tay moak')
Tzununiha (tsoo noo ne'a)

U

Usumacinta (oo soo ma seen'ta)
Utatlan (oo ta tlan')
Uxmal (oox mal')

V

Vemac (vay mack')
Veytia (vay tee'a)
Viracocha (vee ra co cha)
Votan (vo tan')

W

Wixipecocha (week see pa co' cha)

X

Xecoicovach (hay coat co vach')
Xelhua (hay loo'ah)
Xibalba (he bai'bah)
Ximinez (he me nais')
Xochiquetzal (ho chee kate sal)

Y

Yaqui (ya'kee)
Yztlacoliuhqui (eats tla co lee oo'kee)
Yucatec (yu ca tec')

Z

Zaculi (sa coo'lee)
Zamna (Sam'na)
Zocheqnetzal (so chay kate'sal)
Zapotec (sa'po tec)
Zumarra (su mar ra)

FOREWORDS.

I.

NEW WITNESSES FOR THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD ASSURED.

It is a happy omen, that, while so much of the literature of our times is marked by a tone of infidelity, and especially by a disparagement of the evidences of the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures, there is in other quarters an increasing readiness to make the choicest gifts of modern science and learning tributary to the word of God. The eclipse of faith is not total. And it

is an additional cause for gratitude to the God of Providence and of Revelation, that, even at this remote distance of time from the date of the Sacred Oracles, new evidences of their credibility and accuracy are continually coming to light. How much may yet remain, buried under barren mounds, or entombed in pyramids and catacombs, or hidden in the yet unexplored pages of some ancient literature, it were vain to conjecture; but of this we may be sure, that if any new forms of evidence should hereafter be needed, to meet any new forms of unbelief, and authenticate afresh the word of truth, they will be found deposited somewhere, waiting for the fulness of time; and God will bring them forth in their season, from the dark hieroglyphics, or the desert sands, or the dusty manuscripts, to confound the adversaries of his word, and to "magnify it above all his name."—"Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records," by George Rawlinson, M. A. American Edition, 1885.

II.

THE WORLD'S HUNGER FOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHRIST.

"Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century. If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like he was, it would not matter that its colors were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have at once a solitary place amid the treasures of art."—Rev. John Watson, D. D. (Ian Maclaren) "Life of the Master," Prologue.

III.

THE BOOK OF MORMON A WITNESS FOR THE CHRIST.

"And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity, were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; and I beheld a Book, and it was carried forth among them. And the angel said unto me, Knowest thou the meaning of the Book? And I said unto him, I know not. And he said. Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew; * * * * and he said unto me, The Book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord which he hath made with the House of Israel; and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy Prophets. * * * * And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles, unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren. And after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other Books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles, unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the Prophets and of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb [the Bible] are true. And the angel spake unto me, saying. These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known unto all kindreds, tongues and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved."—I. Nephi xiii.

PART I.

The Value of the Book of Mormon as a witness for the authenticity and integrity of the Bible, and the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

NEW WITNESSES FOR GOD.

II.

THE BOOK OF MORMON.

CHAPTER I.

THE BIBLE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"The Bible in the Nineteenth Century" will yet form an interesting subject for a volume. The writer of it will recount the attacks made upon the sacred volume by unbelievers, and the defense of it by faithful Christian and Jewish scholars. He will also be under the necessity of writing the history of the betrayals of the Holy Scriptures by pretended friends; and he will say such betrayals were more mischievous than the attacks of avowed enemies. He will balance the harm done by the attacks and the betrayals, against the good accomplished by the defenses, and give the net result of gain or loss. Which will preponderate? The nineteenth century was prolific in both assaults and defenses; and much valuable material was collected from unexpected quarters for the defense of the Scriptures; but for all that it is doubtful if in what is recognized as the Christian world the faith of the Christians in the Bible, as the veritable word of God, was as sound and absolute at the close of the nineteenth century as it was at the commencement of it. This is not saying that what is regarded as old fashioned faith in the Bible has been entirely banished, or totally eclipsed. There are those, and many of them, thank God, who still revere the Bible as the word of God, and therefore hold it true, and take it as a lamp to their feet, as a guide to their path. But there has arisen within Christendom itself—and chiefly within the nineteenth century—a class of Bible scholars who have done much mischief to faith in the Bible; who make it part of their boast that in their study of the Bible they have dropped the theological attitude towards it, viz., the preconception that the Bible is the word of God, on which conception men were wont to reason: God is a God of absolute truth; the Bible is the word of God; therefore the Bible is absolutely true. This position they now abandon and take up what they are pleased to call the "literary attitude or method." That is, they approach the Bible without any preconception whatsoever. They take up the collection of books forming the Bible as they would take up any other body of literature; as they would English, French, or German literature. "This method," says one high in authority in the new school of critics, "assumes nothing. It leaves the conclusion of the questions whether the Bible came from God, in what sense it came from God, how far and to what extent it came from God, all to be determined by examination of the book itself. This I call the literary method."^[1] "This method," says another, "leads to the investigation of the origin, authorship, and meaning of the several books of the Bible, and the credibility of the history which it contains."^[2] Concerning in what those of the Literary school are agreed, and in what their method results, as to the Old Testament, I quote the following:

They are generally agreed in thinking that the book of Genesis is composed of three or four or more documents woven together by some ancient editor in one continuous narrative. They are generally agreed in thinking that the book of the Covenant,^[3] with the Ten Commandments at its forefront, is the oldest book in the Bible; that the history in which that book of the Covenant is embedded was written long subsequent to the time of Moses. They are generally agreed in thinking that the Book of Deuteronomy, embodying a later prophet's conception of Mosaic principles, was not written or uttered by Moses himself in its present form, but some centuries after the death of Moses. They are generally agreed in thinking that the book of Leviticus was written long subsequent to the time of Moses, and so far from embodying the principles of the Mosaic code embodies much that is in spirit adverse if not antagonistic to the simple principles of Mosaism. They are generally agreed in considering that we have in the books of Kings and Chronicles history and belles lettres so woven together that it is not always possible to tell what is to be regarded as belles lettres and what is to be regarded as history. They are generally agreed in the opinion that Job, while it treats of history about the days of Moses, or even anterior thereto, was written later than the time of Solomon; that very little of the Hebrew Psalter was composed by David; that most of it was composed in the time of the exile or subsequent thereto; that Solomon's song was not written by Solomon, and is the drama of a pure woman's love, not a spiritual allegory; that the book of Isaiah was written certainly by two authors and perhaps more, the later book being written one hundred years at least after the earlier and by a prophet now unknown; that the book of Jonah belongs to the series of moral instruction through fiction, and that the book of Daniel conveys moral instruction by means of, to use Dean Farrar's phraseology, one of these "splendid specimens of the lofty moral fiction which was always common among the Jews after the exile."^[4]

Another recognized authority in the same field of learning in summing up the results of the so-called "higher criticism," says:

It has thus far done an inestimable service in the removal of the traditional theories from the sacred books, so that they may be studied in their real structure and character. . . . The higher criticism shows us the process by which the sacred books were produced, that the most of them were composed by unknown authors, that they have passed through the hands of a considerable number of unknown editors who have brought together the older material without removing discrepancies, inconsistencies

and errors. In this process of editing, arranging, addition, subtraction, reconstruction and consolidation, extending through many centuries, what evidence have we that these unknown editors were kept from error in all their work?^[5]

Such dissecting as this can have but one general result—death of reverence for the Bible; death of faith in it, as the revealed word of God. The authenticity of the Bible by it is left doubtful; for while this method of criticism succeeds, with those who affect it, in proving that Moses is not the author of the five books for so many centuries accredited to him, it fails to tell us who is the author of those books. This Higher Criticism tells us that there are two and perhaps more, authors of the book of Isaiah's prophecies; that the last twenty-seven chapters were not written by the great Hebrew prophet whose name the book bears; but it fails to tell us who is the author of them. Nor can it be determined even when the unknown author lived. The same is true as to the other books of the Old Testament upon whose authenticity this system casts its shadow. The system is wholly destructive in its tendencies; it unsettles everything, it determines nothing, except that everything with reference to the authenticity, time of composition, inspiration, and credibility of the Old Testament is indeterminable. "It leaves everything hanging in the air," says one able critic of Higher Criticism. "It begins in guesses and ends in fog. At all events the result leaves us in a hopeless muddle, and, when that is the only thing settled, the proposed solution is self-condemned."^[6] And yet the Doctor of Divinity who wrote that sentence, Rev. A. J. F. Behrends, when he comes in his treatise to remark upon the extent to which the destructive criticism obtains, has to confess that in eight of the most famous German Universities^[7] possessing theological faculties, and numbering seventy-three professors in all, thirty of those professors upheld and taught the destructive criticism; while forty-three were counted conservatives.^[8]

A more significant admission, as showing the rapid increase of the radicals, or liberals, as the upholders of the destructive criticism are called, will be found in the following statement concerning the same theological faculties. "The so-called liberal wing has increased from ten to thirty during the last twenty-five years; and the conservatives have been reduced from fifty to forty-three."

Of the American universities where the destructive criticism obtains, Dr. Behrends names eight;^[9] and eighteen where "conservative criticism holds its ground."^[10] It should be remembered that these are admissions of one upholding the conservative criticism as against radical criticism. The claims of the radical school for the success of their methods are much more sweeping than the admissions allow. But taking the extent to which the destructive criticism obtains, even at the estimate of those who are opposed to it, and who for that reason reduce its triumphs to a minimum, yet it must be admitted that it has succeeded in making very marked progress. It permeates all Protestant Christian countries; and all Protestant Christian sects. It is more in evidence in the churches than in the schools; and tinctures all Protestant religious literature. There is scarcely any necessity for unbelievers in the Bible assailing it from without; the destruction of faith in it as an authentic, credible, authoritative revelation from God, whose truths when rightly understood are to be accepted and held as binding upon the consciences of men, is being carried on from within the churches who profess to hold the Bible in reverence, more effectually than it could be by profane infidels. Doctors of Divinity are more rapidly undermining the faith of the masses in the Bible than ever a Voltaire, a Paine, a Bradlaugh or an Ingersoll could do; and that may account for the singular circumstances of absolute silence at present on the part of popular infidel writers and lecturers.^[11]

It is not my purpose here to enter into a discussion of the merits or demerits of Higher Criticism; to point out what is true in it, and what false. I am merely calling attention to a condition that has been created by that method of Bible treatment, viz., a condition of rapidly increasing unbelief among the masses in the Bible as the undoubted word of God. The learned who are leaders in the new method of Bible criticism, after destroying confidence in the authenticity of almost every book of the Old Testament; after questioning the credibility of the greater part of all those same books; after retiring some of the books from the dignified realm of reliable history to the questionable station of belles-lettres; after saying, "We are obliged to admit that there are scientific errors in the Bible, errors of astronomy, of geology, of zoology, of botany, and anthropology;" after saying, "There are historical mistakes in the Christian scriptures, mistakes of chronology and geography, errors of historical events and persons, discrepancies and inconsistencies in the historians, which cannot be removed by any proper method of interpretation;" after reducing the inspired writers to the level of just ordinary historical, poetical, and fiction-writing authors, by saying that the foregoing enumerated errors in the sacred books "are just where you would expect to find them in accurate, truthful writers of history in ancient times," and that the sacred writers merely "used with fidelity the best sources of information accessible to them—ancient poems, popular traditions, legends and ballads, regal and family archives, codes of law and ancient narratives," and "there is no evidence that they received any of this history by revelation from God, there is no evidence that the divine Spirit corrected their narratives either when they were being composed in their minds, or written in manuscript;" after saying, "we cannot defend the morals of the Old Testament at all points, * * * the Patriarchs were not truthful, their age seems to have had little apprehension of the principles of truth;" after saying that "God spake in much the greater part of the Old Testament through the voices and pens of the human authors of the scriptures," and then ask—"Did the human voice and pen in all the numerous writers and editors of the Holy Scriptures prior to the completion of the Canon always deliver an inerrant word?" and, "Even if all the writers were possessed of the Holy

Spirit as to be merely passive in his hands, the question arises, can the finite voice and the finite pen deliver and express the inerrant truth of God?" After all this, then these Higher Critics propound the question: Can we, in the face of all the results of our literary and historical^[12] method of treating the scriptures, still maintain the truthfulness of the Bible? And while they are speculating how they can make it appear that "the substantial truthfulness of the Bible" need not be inconsistent with the existence of "circumstantial errors;" and are indulging in subtle refinements to show that "none of the mistakes, discrepancies and errors which have been discovered disturb the religious lessons of Biblical history"^[13]—masses who come to hear of these doubts cast upon what they have hitherto been taught to regard as the infallible oracles of God, answer off-hand:—If so much doubt exists as to the authenticity, credibility, inspiration, and authoritativeness of so great a part of the Bible, how are we to determine that the few remaining things you urge upon us are of divine appointment, or reach to any higher level than human conception and human authority? This their question; and, ever glad to meet with any excuse that will lend the lightest shadow of justification for casting aside the restraints which religion imposes upon the indulgence of human passion, and human inclination to worldliness in general, they rid themselves of their faith in the word of God, and in the religion it teaches, and walk abroad in the earth unchecked in their selfish pursuit of whatsoever may attract the fancy, please the taste or gratify the passions. For whatever may be the effect of what is left of the Bible, on minds of peculiar structure, after Higher Criticism is done with it, it must be conceded that a Bible of doubtful authenticity, of questionable credibility as to the greater part of it; with its divine inspiration and its divine authenticity remaining open questions—neither such a Bible nor any religion formulated from it in harmony with such conceptions, can have much influence over the masses of humanity.

Again I find it necessary to say that it is foreign to my purpose to enter into a consideration of the merits or demerits of Higher Criticism, or even to point out how much of that criticism merely attacks an apostate Christianity's misconceptions and false interpretations of the Bible, and not the Bible itself. It is sufficient for my purpose, if I have made clear the results that must inevitably follow this attack upon the Scriptures under the guise of Higher Criticism.

I must notice briefly the other side of the question; that is, give some account of the materials which have been brought to light in the nineteenth century for the defense of the Bible; materials which tend to prove its authenticity, its credibility, its inspiration and its divine authority. And here I am but a compiler of a very few of the principal results of researches that have been made in Egypt, in the valley of the Euphrates and in Palestine. I make no pretensions to original investigations of these researches, but accept the statements of what I consider to be reliable authorities in relation to them.

In the year 1799 a French officer named Boussard discovered a large, black basalt stone at Fort St. Julian near Rosetta, in the delta of the Nile. From the circumstances of the discovery being near Rosetta it has always been known as the Rosetta Stone. It was inscribed in Greek, in Egyptian hieroglyphics, and a third class of writing which is called Demotic. The last is the common writing of the people of Egypt as opposed to the hieroglyphic which was written by the priests. The Greek upon the stone was readily made out, and it was found to consist of a decree drawn up by the priests of Memphis in honor of Ptolemy Epiphanes, who ruled about 198 B. C. It was at once evident that the Greek inscription on this stone was the translation of the hieroglyphics upon it, and hence afforded a key to the interpretation of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. By the fortunes of war the Rosetta Stone was surrendered by the French to General Hutchinson and subsequently presented to the British Museum where it is now preserved. Accurate copies of the three-fold text were made forthwith and distributed among the scholars of Europe with the result that through the combined, patient labors of Silvestre de Sacy, Akebald the Swede, Thomas Young, Champollion, Lepsius in Germany, Birch in England, and others, the hieroglyphics were deciphered and a system of translation constructed which enabled European scholars to read many of the inscriptions upon the monuments of Egypt, and bring to light much of the history of that country which hitherto had been a mystery. This gave an impetus to research. The political representatives of the great countries of Europe made collections of antiquities in Egypt, and travelers spent much time and money in opening tombs and digging out ruins. The tombs have given up not only their dead, but with them the books which the Egyptians read, the furniture which they used in their houses, the ornaments and articles of the toilet of the Egyptian lady, the weapons of the warrior, the tools of the handicraftsman and laborer, the dice of the gambler, the toys of the children, and the portraits, statues and figures of the men and women for whom they were made. The many-lined inscriptions upon the tombs give us their ideas about the future world, the judgment of the dead, the paradise of the happy souls, the transmigration of souls, and they enable us to place a juster estimate upon the statements of those Greek writers who profess to understand and to describe with accuracy the difficult religion of the educated Egyptians. And the result of all this, as affecting the authenticity of the Bible? Simply this: the manners, customs, governments, arts, sciences, occupations and state of civilization of the Egyptians in general, are demonstrated by these monuments to be substantially what they are described to be in the book of Genesis. Also there is supposed to be the confirmation of special events in the scripture narrative. Professor A. H. Sayce, for instance, has the following upon the existence of such a line of kings ruling at Jerusalem as Melchizedek is described to be in Genesis:

"Among the cuneiform tablets found at Tel el-Amarna in Upper Egypt, are letters to the Pharaoh from Ebed-tob, king of Jerusalem, written a century before the time of Moses.

In them he describes himself as appointed to the throne, not by inheritance from his father or mother (compare Heb. 7:3), but by the arm of 'the Mighty King,' i. e. of the god of whose temple stood on Mount Moriah. He must therefore have been a priest-king like Melchizedek. The name of Jerusalem is written Ura-Salim, 'the city of the god of peace,' and it was the capital of a territory which extended southward to Kellah. In the inscriptions of Rameses II and Rameses III, Salem is mentioned among the conquests of the Egyptian kings."

The same writer sees confirmation of the history of Joseph, son of Jacob, in the following circumstance:

The "Story of the Two Brothers," an Egyptian romance written for the son of the Pharaoh of the oppression, contains an episode very similar to the Biblical account of Joseph's treatment by Potiphar's wife. Potiphar and Potipherah are the Egyptian Pa-tu-pa-Ra, "the gift of the Sun-god." The name given to Joseph, Zaphnath-paaneah, (Gen. 41:45), is probably the Egyptian Zaf-nti-pa-anekh, "nourisher of the living one," i. e. of the Pharaoh. There are many instances in the inscriptions of foreigners in Egypt receiving Egyptian names, and rising to the highest offices of state.

The story of the Exodus as related in the Bible is supposed to find confirmation in the following:

"The cuneiform tablets found at Tel el-Amarna, in Upper Egypt, have shown that in the latter days of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, when the Pharaoh had become a convert to an Asiatic form of faith, the highest offices of state were absorbed by foreigners, most of whom were Canaanites. In the national reaction which followed, the foreigners were expelled, exterminated, or reduced to serfdom; while a new dynasty, the nineteenth, was founded by Rameses I. He, therefore, must be the new king, the builder of Pa-Tum or Pithom (now Tel el-Maskhuteh, near Ismailia), as has been proved by Dr. Naville's researches, and consequently, as Egyptian students had long maintained he must have been the Pharaoh of the oppression."

The occupancy of the land of Goshen by the Israelites who, it will be remembered, were shepherds, is supposed to receive confirmation in the following:

Further excavations of Dr. Neville have shown that Goshen, the Egyptian Goshen (now Saft el-Henneh), is the modern Wadi Tumilat, between Zagazig and Ismailia. A dispatch dated in the eighth year of the reign of Meneptah, the son and successor of Rameses II, state that Bedouin from Edom has been allowed to pass the Khetam or "fortress" in the district of Succoth (Thukot), in order to feed themselves and their herds on the possessions of Pharaoh. Khetam is the Etham of Exodus 13:20. The geography of the Exodus agrees remarkably with that of the Egyptian papyri of the time of Rameses II and his son.^[14]

The search for evidence of the truth of the Bible has not been confined to Egypt. Equal interest has been awakened in those ancient empires that occupied the valley of the Euphrates; in Palestine, and the Sinaitic Peninsula. European scholars with keen interest followed the study of the cuneiform characters found on Babylonian tablets and monuments. Progress made in deciphering this ancient method of writing led M. Botta, in 1842, to begin excavations upon the ancient site of Nineveh, but he met with little success. Later, however,—1845—Mr. Henry Layard (subsequently Sir Henry Layard) undertook excavations at the same place for the Trustees of the British Museum, and succeeded in uncovering the palaces of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assur-banipal, and in bringing to light the terra cotta tablets which formed the great library founded by these kings at Nineveh, and of which some twenty-two thousand are now preserved in the British Museum. An examination of these tablets soon showed that they consisted of historical inscriptions, astronomical reports and calculations, grammatical lists, etc., and scholars began to apply Sir Henry Rawlinson's system of decipherment of the Babylonian version of the Behistun inscription to the texts inscribed upon these tablets. A large portion of the history of Babylonia and Assyria through the translation of these tablets is now revealed to us, and the knowledge of the language of these countries has thrown much light upon the language, literature, history, and learning of the Jews. The excavations which have been carried on in Mesopotamia for the last fifty years have yielded the most valuable results; and the inscribed slabs, monolithic stelae, boundary stones, gate-sockets, bricks, seal-cylinders and tablets, now preserved in the British Museum, afford an abundant supply of material from which Bible customs and language may be freely explained and illustrated. The cuneiform writing is, at least, as old as B. C. 3,800, and there is evidence to show that it was in use as late as B. C. 80.^[15]

In 1865 the Palestine Exploration fund was opened, and excavations were begun in Jerusalem, and have continued, with some interruptions, until now. Since then researches have followed in the south, east and north of Palestine. Geological investigations have been made, natural history collections have been formed, enquiries into nationalities and customs carried on, towns, villages, hills, valleys, water courses, wells, cisterns, notable trees and other land marks have been located. In 1868 a party of engineering experts left England to make a scientific survey of the Sinaitic Peninsula. This they effected, making plans and models, taking three thousand copies of inscriptions with collections of specimens bearing on the zoology, botany and geology of the country.^[16]

The results of these explorations and discoveries, in the valley of the Euphrates, in Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula, have been even more fruitful, in the production of materials which tend to confirm the truth of the Bible narrative and general credibility, than the discoveries so far made in Egypt. The confirmation of the Bible narrative of ancient events is remarkable. So, too, the confirmation of its location of cities, mountains, rivers, plains and, indeed, the whole geography of the scriptures. The confirmation given of the Bible's incidental allusions to the manners and customs of neighboring and contemporary nations is no less remarkable; together with what is said of reigning kings and dynasties, and the incidental allusions that the Bible makes to their invasions of each other's territories, their alliances, their victories, and their defeats. The following are a few of the special Bible incidents which receive confirmation from the results of these researches condensed from the article of Professor Sayce:

CREATION: One of the accounts of creation in cuneiform characters found on the tablets very nearly resembles the first chapter of Genesis. It commences with the statement that "in the beginning" all was a chaos of waters, called the deep (Tiamat, the Hebrew *tehom*). Then the Upper and Lower Firmaments were created, and the Gods came into existence. After that comes a long account of the struggle between Bel-Merodach and the "Dragon" of chaos, "Timaat," "the serpent of evil," with her allies, the forces of anarchy and darkness. It ended in the victory of the god of light, who thereupon created the present world by the power of his "word." The fifth tablet or book of the poem describes the appointment of the heavenly bodies for signs and seasons, and the sixth (or perhaps the seventh) the creation of animals and reptiles. The latter part of the poem, in which the creation of man was doubtless described, has not yet been recovered. But we learn from other texts that man was regarded as having been formed out of the "dust" of the ground.

THE SABBATH: From the tablets it is also learned that the Babylonians observed a day of rest, which is called *Sabbattu* and described as "a day of rest for the heart." On it, it was forbidden to eat cooked meat, to put on fresh clothes, to offer sacrifices, to ride in a chariot, etc. The *Sabbattu* fell on the 7th, 14th, 19th, 21st, and 28th days of the month.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN: The "plain" of Babylonia was called *Edin* in the ancient Sumerian language of the country, and the word was adopted by the Semitic Babylonians, in the form of *Edinu*. *Eridu*, the early seaport of Babylonia, was the chief center of primitive Babylonian religion and culture, and in its neighborhood was a garden, wherein, "in a holy place," according to an ancient poem, was a mysterious tree whose roots were planted in the "deep," while its branches reached to heaven. The tree of life is often represented in Assyria sculptures between two winged cherubim who have sometimes the heads of eagles, sometimes of men, and sometimes stand, sometimes kneel. *Eri-Aku* or *Arioch* (Gen. 14:1) calls himself "the executor of the oracle of the holy tree of *Eridu*." In Sumerian, wine was called *ges-din*, "the draught of life." A second tree is mentioned in Babylonian hymns on whose heart the name of the god of wisdom is said to be inscribed.

THE FLOOD: In 1872 George Smith discovered the Babylonian account of the deluge, which strikingly resembles that of Genesis. It is contained in a long poem which was composed in the age of Abraham, but the Chaldean tradition of the deluge, of which the account in the poem is but one out of many, must go back to a very much earlier date. *Xisuthros*, the Chaldean Noah was rescued along with his family, servants, and goods, on account of his righteousness. The god *Ea* warned him in a dream of the coming flood, and ordered him to build a ship, into which he should take every kind of animal so that "the seed of life" might be preserved.

UR OF THE CHALDEES: "Ur" is now identified as *Mugheir*. This was the early home of Abraham and his forefathers spoken of in Genesis (12:27-32). It was situated on the west side of the Euphrates. The name means "the city" in Babylonia. It is proven now that there was such a city, and that it is identical with *Mugheir*, the ruins of which have been thoroughly explored. It was the seat of a dynasty of kings who reigned before the age of Abraham, and was famous for its temple of the moon-god, whose other famous temple was at *Haran* in Mesopotamia.

ABRAHAM: Contract-tablets show that in the age of Abraham, Canaanites—or "Amorites," as the Babylonians called them—were settled in Babylonia, and that a district outside the walls of *Sippara* had been assigned to them. Several of the names are distinctly Hebrew, and, in a tablet dated in the reign of the grandfather of *Amraphel* (Gen. 14:1), one of the witnesses is called "the Amorite, the son of *Abi-ramu*," or *Abram*.

CAMPAIGN OF CHEDORLAOMER: The records on the tablets that this event (described in Genesis 14) is in accordance with the national movements of that age.

SHISHAK'S INVASION OF JUDAH: On the southern wall of the temple of *Karnak*, *Shishak* (*Shashang* in Egypt) the founder of the twenty-second Egyptian dynasty, has given a list of the places he captured in Palestine. Most of them were in Judea, but there are few (e. g. *Megiddo* and *Taanach*) which belonged to the northern kingdom.

THE MOABITE STONE: The Moabite stone was discovered by Rev. F. Klein, at Dhiban in the land of Moab, on August 19, 1868. It measures three feet ten inches, by two feet, by one foot two inches; and is inscribed with thirty-four lines of text. The language of the inscription hardly differs from Hebrew in vocabulary, grammar, or expression. The stone gives the Moabite account of the war of Mesha, king of Moab, about 860 B. C., against Omri, Ahab, and other kings of Israel, and confirms to quite an extent the history of the same war as given in II Kings, chapter 3. ^[17]

Very naturally those believers in the Bible who regard it as the very word of God, those believers who regard the Bible's historical statements as substantially true, allowing only for such errors as may have crept in through the carelessness of copyists, or perchance here and there an error through additions or omissions on the part of copyists or designing custodians—such believers rejoice at the confirmation the scriptures receive from the inscriptions upon monuments and tablets brought to light by the researches and scholarship of the nineteenth century. It is a pious sentiment, this rejoicing over the confirmation of the word of God; and one can only regret that the evidences supplied by these modern discoveries are not sufficiently voluminous or explicit to silence altogether the unbelief of modern times in the Bible. But they are not sufficient; for in spite of them unbelievers not only exist in Christian lands, but increase daily.

Footnotes

[1.](#) *The Bible as Literature*. A course of lectures by Dr. Lyman Abbot, in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, 1896-7. What is here called the "Literary Method," is identical with what is called "Higher Criticism;" the terms are used interchangeably. Higher Criticism may be said to stand in contradistinction to what is called Lower Criticism in this, that it concerns itself with writings as a whole, whereas Lower Criticism concerns itself with the integrity or character of particular passages or parts; and is sometimes called "Textual Criticism." "The term 'Literary' or 'Higher Criticism' designates that type of Biblical criticism which proposes to investigate the separate books of the Bible in their internal peculiarities, and to estimate them historically. It discusses the questions concerning their origin, the time and place, the occasion and object of their composition, and concerning their position and value in the entire body of revelation. . . . The 'Higher Criticism' has been so often employed for the overthrow of long-cherished beliefs that the epithet 'destructive' has frequently been applied to it; and hence it has become an offense to some orthodox ears." (*The Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch*, Charles Elliott, D. D., pp. 12, 13.)

[2.](#) *Beginning of Christianity* (Fisher) p. 392.

[3.](#) 21, 22, 23 Exodus—The Ten Commandments and amplifications.

[4.](#) *The Bible as Literature*, Dr. Lyman Abbot.

[5.](#) "Truthfulness of Scripture," a paper submitted to The World's Parliament of Religion by Professor Chas. A. Briggs, D. D. See *World's Parliament of Religions* (Barrows) vol. I, p. 563.

[6.](#) Rev. A. J. F. Behrends, D. D., *Bible Criticism and its Methods*, course of lectures, 1897.

[7.](#) These are the Universities of Berlin, Bonn, Breslau, Griefswald, Halle, Konigsberg, Leipzig and Tubingen.

[8.](#) This was the condition in 1897.

[9.](#) These Universities are Boston, Yale, Harvard, Cornell, Johns Hopkins, Union, Chicago and Andover.

[10.](#) Dr. Behrend's, *Bible Criticism*, Second Lecture, Feb. 28, 1897.

[11.](#) This is written in 1903, and since the death of Bradlaugh in England in 1891, and the death of Ingersoll in America in 1899, there have appeared no infidel lectures against the Bible of any prominence. The mantle of those noted unbelievers and revilers of the Scriptures seems not to have fallen upon the shoulders of any of their followers.

[12.](#) Historical criticism and its results were also considered in volume I of *New Witnesses*, see ch. I.

[13.](#) The quoted passages in the foregoing are all from the paper of Dr. Chas. A. Briggs, one of the foremost scholars among the Higher Critics, and was read before the World's Parliament of Religions. See Barrows' *History of the Parliament of Religions*, vol. I, pp. 650-661.

[14.](#) Professor Sayce's article from which the foregoing quotations are made, is to be found in the *Bible Treasury*, published in Nelson & Son's addition of the authorized version, p. 43.

[15.](#) *The Witness of Modern Discoveries to the Old Testament Narrative*, *Oxford Bible Helps*.

[16.](#) *Ibid.*

[17.](#) The foregoing statements of monumental testimony to the truth of the Old Testament are

condensed from an article of Professor A. H. Sayce, LL. D. The whole article—too long to be inserted here—will be found in the *Nelson Illustrated Bible Treasury*, pp. 39-44. Those desiring more specific knowledge of the interesting subject will find it in the magnificent work of Herman V. Hilprecht, *Explorations in Bible Lands, During the 19th Century* (1903). Mr. Hilprecht holds the Professorship of the "Clark Research Professorship of Assyriology" in the University of Pennsylvania; and in his great work of 800 pages is assisted by other specialists.

CHAPTER II.

THE WITNESS OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

One thing with reference to modern discoveries of confirmatory evidences of the Bible is singular. That one thing is the fact that all these modern discoveries of evidences are confined to the eastern half of the world, to Asia and Africa. Can it be that God left no witnesses for himself in the western half of the world? Did he ignore and leave to perish without spiritual enlightenment, or knowledge of any means of salvation, all those tribes of men, those nations and empires, that inhabited the western hemisphere through so many ages? It should be remembered while considering these questions that the scriptures teach that

God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.^[1]

From this it appears that all races of men have a common origin. They are all made "of one blood," and have one common Father—God. Yet if one judge the spirit of orthodox believers in the Bible, he would conclude that this Father's anxiety had all been expended in the enlightenment of those races and nations inhabiting the eastern hemisphere. That he had made ample provision for their instruction in the ways of God, and revealed to them, through his Son, the means of their salvation; but left the untold millions of his children in the western hemisphere to perish in ignorance. No prophets instructed them; no Son of God came to announce to them the means of salvation, or proclaim by his own resurrection the reality of the future life and immortality of man. And hence no one has unearthed the half-buried cities, or examined the ruined temples, or the fallen palaces—the extent and greatness of which proclaim the grandeur of ancient America's civilization—for confirmatory evidence of the Bible. The inscriptions upon their temple walls and monuments have not been deciphered for that purpose, nor their history and traditions investigated with that end in view, except in a few instances where men have been imbued with the idea that the aborigines of America might be the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel. These, with a few others prompted by a desire to solve the mystery of America's ancient civilization, have explored the ruined cities, described the crumbling pyramids and temples, and remains of splendid aqueducts. They have collected and detailed their mythologies, traditions, and history; some circumstances of which bear strong evidence to the fact that the ancient inhabitants of the western hemisphere, in some way, had been made acquainted with some of the chief events of Bible history, including some knowledge of the atonement and other doctrines of Messiah. But such evidences of these facts as have been collected are not received into the collection of modern evidences for the truth of the Bible. I do not know of a single book in which they are so received. From the profound silence enforced upon American monuments and inscriptions, one would be left to suppose that they are as silent in testimony for the revealed truth of God as the birds of the South continent, however resplendent in gaudy plumage, are silent as to song. It is just here, however, where the importance of the Book of Mormon is best exhibited. It is here where it can be proclaimed as the voice of the western hemisphere proclaiming the sublime truth that God did not leave himself without witness among the races and nations of men that inhabited the western world. It is here that its importance is felt as the voice of sleeping nations speaking as out of the dust to the whole world, not only vindicating the quality of justice in God, in that he did not leave the inhabitants of the western hemisphere to perish in ignorance of himself and the plan of life and salvation which had been ordained for the redemption of mankind; but also in that it bears witness to the world that the collection of books known as the Bible is the word of God, authentic, credible, and binding upon the consciences of men. It is a Witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of the truth of the Bible, which in value far surpasses all the evidences discovered in Egypt, the valley of the Euphrates, the Sinaitic Peninsula, and the land of Palestine throughout the nineteenth century. Let us here consider it.

First in chronological order, if not in importance, is the book of Ether, within the Book of Mormon. This book of Ether is an abridgment of a very ancient American record that was engraven upon twenty-four gold plates, by a prophet named Ether, hence the name of the book. He wrote his record most likely in the early part of the sixth century B. C. The plates were discovered by a branch of the Nephite nation about 120 years B. C., and were preserved by the

Nephites with other sacred records, which finally were placed in the keeping of a prophet named Moroni, about the close of the fourth century A. D. This Moroni is the one who translated the record engraven upon the plates of Ether, an abridgment of which he placed with the Book of Mormon. The book of Ether contained an account of the most ancient events from the creation of Adam to the confusion of languages; but as Moroni supposed the information of this part of the book of Ether would be in the possession of the Jews, he did not transcribe that part of it, but began his abridgment from the confounding of the languages at Babel. The book of Ether speaks of one Jared and his brother, the latter a most remarkable prophet, living at Babel previous to the confusion of languages, and to whom the Lord revealed his intention of confounding the language of the people. At the solicitation of Jared, to whom he had imparted the knowledge of the coming calamity, this prophet besought the Lord that the language of Jared, himself, and their families might not be confounded, and the Lord had respect unto his prayer and confounded not their language; but directed the formation of a colony consisting of Jared, his brother, and their families and friends which the Lord led forth from Babylon and finally brought to the north continent of the western hemisphere. The colony grew into a great nation, occupying at least the greater part of North America, and were known to the Nephites as the people of Jared.

The book of Ether confirms the special particulars of the Bible concerning there being in existence a record of the creation; the existence of Adam; the erection of the tower of Babel; the confounding of languages; and the scattering of the people into all the lands of the earth.

Second: Six hundred years before Christ, a prophet of the Lord named Lehi, being warned of the destruction of Jerusalem, departed with his family into the wilderness, traveling southward from the Holy City until he reached the borders of the Red Sea; and while camped on its shores he received direction from the Lord that his sons should return to Jerusalem and obtain a certain record in the hands of one Laban, containing a record of the Jews and also the genealogy of Lehi's forefathers engraven upon plates of brass. Agreeable to the heavenly commandment the sons returned, and after overcoming some difficulties finally succeeded in securing the records and returning with them to the encampment of Lehi. Finally, when Lehi's colony embarked for America, they brought those records with them. These records are thus described by Nephi, son of Lehi, who engraved the description in his record, at least as early as the first quarter of the sixth century B. C.:

And after they [Lehi's colony] had given thanks unto the God of Israel, my father, Lehi, took the records which were engraven upon the plates of brass, and he did search them from beginning. And he beheld that they did contain the five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world, and also of Adam and Eve, who were our first parents; and also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah; and also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, and also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah. And it came to pass that my father, Lehi, also found upon the plates of brass, a genealogy of his fathers; wherefore he knew that he was a descendant of Joseph; yea, even that Joseph who was the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt, and who was preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he might preserve his father, Jacob, and all his household from perishing with famine. And they were also led out of captivity and out of the land of Egypt, by that same God who had preserved them. And thus my father, Lehi, did discover the genealogy of his fathers. (1 Nephi 5:10-16.)

What a testimony we have here for the truth of the Bible! What a number of its incidents are here confirmed! The Higher Criticism questions the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but here is an entry made in an ancient record in America at least 575 years B. C., attributing the authorship of five books to Moses, specifying that they gave an account of the creation of the world and also of Adam and Eve, "who were our first parents;" so that there can be no question as to this record brought by Lehi's colony from Jerusalem to America being identical with the Pentateuch of our Bible. In addition to the incident of the creation, and Adam and Eve, this entry upon the Nephite records also confirms the Bible narrative concerning Jacob and also of Joseph, his son, who was sold into captivity and taken to Egypt. Reference is made also to the subsequent exodus of Israel from the land of Egypt. Mention also is made of the prophets and their prophecies in this record, making special mention of the name of Jeremiah. Some of the writings of Jeremiah were also included in this record. The first Nephi also makes special mention of Isaiah by name, and describes in what manner he read from his writings upon the plates of brass, to his brethren.^[2] And what is better yet, he quotes, in his record, many passages from the prophet Isaiah. At this point it is well to call attention to the fact that the Higher Criticism holds that the book of Isaiah in our Old Testament is composite; that is, it claims that it is composed by at least two, and perhaps by seven different authors; that the last twenty-seven chapters certainly were not written by Isaiah. The best answer that can be made to these claims, on the part of those disposed to defend the Isaiah authorship of the book of prophecies which bears that prophet's name, is to say that from two hundred years B. C. the authorship of the prophecies, as they now stand in the Bible, have been attributed to Isaiah. But here is testimony, in this first book of Nephi, which shows that as early as 550 years B. C., a certain collection of prophecies in a record taken from Jerusalem, are attributed to Isaiah; and what is best of all a transcription is made from these prophecies into the Nephite record, which corresponds to chapters 48, 49, 50, 51 and 59, and also fragments of chapter 29;^[3] being a very large amount of the very part of Isaiah's prophecies of which the authenticity is questioned. Here are at least five of the twenty-seven

chapters in dispute accounted for and fragments of another, while of the first part of the prophecies of Isaiah there is a transcription into the Nephite record corresponding to chapters from two to fourteen;^[4] so that so far as the authenticity of the book of Isaiah's prophecies is concerned, and the five books of Moses, the Book of Mormon is the most important of all witnesses.

Third: Since the Nephites, then, in this collection of brass plates, had the five books of Moses and the writings of the prophets down to the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, it is to be expected that in their own record-making frequent reference would be made to the brass plates and their contents, and this is the case. The first Nephi speaks of Israel's passage of the red sea, under the leadership of Moses; and the destruction of the Egyptian army.^[5] Subsequently the same writer refers to the captivity of the children of Israel in Egypt, and the grievousness of their bondage; of their escape from their slavery; their being fed with manna in the wilderness; their being miraculously provided with water from the smitten rock; the visible presence of God in the cloud by day and the pillar of light by night; the blind and rebellious spirit of the people; the judgment of God upon them in the fiery-flying serpents, and the healing provided for them by looking upon the brazen serpent erected by Moses.^[6]

The prophet Lehi, near the close of his life, when blessing his son Joseph, refers to Joseph, the son of Jacob, of Egyptian fame, and speaks of a prophecy uttered by that patriarch concerning the deliverance of the people under the leadership of Moses; and also of a future seer of the same lineage as himself, (i. e. Joseph) who would be mighty in bringing forth the word of God unto the remnant of Lehi's seed.^[7] In the book of Helaman will be found further reference to many of the same things.^[8] Special reference is made also to the prophecy of Moses concerning the future coming of the Messiah, saying, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people." Nephi follows this passage with the declaration that this prophet of whom Moses spake is the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah.^[9] The ten commandments are quoted in the book of Mosiah, substantially as they are found in the book of Exodus.^[10] And thus throughout the Nephite record frequent references are made to these ancient things of the scriptures, all of which, found as they are in an ancient record, though revealed to the world through the prophet Joseph Smith in modern times, confirm the authenticity and credibility of the Bible.

Fourth: It is the Book of Mormon as a whole, however, in which its greatest value as a witness for the truth of the Bible, and the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, most appears. I mean the Book of Mormon considered apart from any reference to an abridgment of the ancient records of the Jaredites; and the transcriptions from the ancient Hebrew scriptures carried by Lehi's colony to the western world. In the Book of Mormon, so considered, we have the record of the hand-dealings of God with the peoples that inhabited the western hemisphere. We have in it the record of those things which occurred in a branch of the house of Israel that God was preparing for the same great event for which he was training the house of Israel in the eastern world; viz., the advent of the Messiah, and the acceptance of the gospel through which all mankind are to be saved. This branch of the house of Israel, broken from the parent tree and planted in the western hemisphere, brought with them the traditions and hopes of Israel; they brought with them, as we have already seen, the Hebrew scriptures, the writings of Moses and of the prophets down to the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah; but what is more important than all this, they came to the western world with the favor and blessing of Israel's God upon them, and Israel's peculiar privilege of direct communication with God, through inspired dreams, the visitation of angels, and the voice of God. Lehi's colony was led to the western world by prophets, inspired of the Lord, their journey being marked by many and peculiar manifestations of his presence with them. After their arrival in the western world, to them a land of promise, the Lord from time to time raised up prophets among them, who instructed them in the ways of the Lord; who reproved them when overtaken in transgression; who pronounced judgments against them when persuasion was of no avail for their correction; who warned them by the spirit of prophecy of approaching disasters; and who held continually before them the hope of Israel, the advent of the Messiah, who, by his suffering and death on the cross, would redeem mankind.

It was much in this manner and for the same purpose that God dealt with his people in the eastern world; and the fact that his course with the people on the western hemisphere was substantially the same as that followed with those of the east, establishes at once his justice and mercy towards his children, and bears testimony to the great truths that God indeed is no respecter of persons, and that in every land he raises up for himself witnesses of his power and goodness.^[11]

Fifth: It is not alone as a witness for the authenticity and credibility of the Bible that the Book of Mormon is valuable. Great as is its value in that particular, it is still more valuable as a witness for the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Previous to the coming of Messiah to the Nephites,^[12] prophets testified of his coming; predicted the time thereof and the signs that would accompany his advent. The signs of his birth were, first, that on the night of his nativity there would be no darkness upon the lands inhabited by the Nephites; that is, in the western hemisphere. "There shall be one day and a night and a day," said one of the prophets, "as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun and also of its setting; therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born."^[13]

Second: A new star was to rise, "such an one as ye never have beheld," said the prophet to the Nephites, "and this also shall be a sign unto you."^[14] Third: Many signs and wonders were to be seen in heaven, but the nature of which is not stated by the prophet.^[15]

Signs of Messiah's death were predicted. First, on the day he suffered death, the sun would be darkened and refuse to give his light, and also the moon and the stars; and darkness would cover the whole face of the Nephite lands, from the time that he suffered death until his resurrection from the dead. Second, at the time of his dying there would be thundering and lightnings; earthquakes would rend the rocks, lay mountains low, and cast up valleys into mountains; the highways would be broken up, and many cities be made desolate. Third, many graves would be opened and yield up their dead, and many Saints would be raised from the dead and appear unto the living, who had not been destroyed in these judgments. These were the signs that were to give evidence to the people of the western world of the birth of the promised Christ, and of his death, and his resurrection; all of which things, in due time, came to pass, even as they had been predicted. But what is better still, after the Christ's resurrection from the dead, and after these terrible judgments had swept over the western land, destroying the more wicked part of the inhabitants, Jesus himself appeared unto the Nephite people, and this in fulfilment of his own declaration to his disciples at Jerusalem, when he said:

Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.^[16]

The Christ's appearance to the Nephites was first made to a multitude gathered about the temple in what was called the land Bountiful. He descended out of heaven and stood in their midst, announcing himself to be Jesus Christ, whom the prophets had testified would come into the world. "I am the light and the life of the world," said he, "and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning. And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, the whole multitude fell to the earth, for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ would show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven." At the commandment of Jesus, the multitude arose and came to him, and beheld the wounds in his side and in his hands. When they had all gone forth and witnessed for themselves that he was indeed the Christ, they cried out with one accord, "Hosanna, hosanna, blessed be the name of the most high God. And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus and worshiped him."

Thus Jesus continued ministering among them for some time. Just how long he remained or how many times he appeared to them cannot be determined from the Book of Mormon. Neither is that a matter of any great importance, but it is important that he chose twelve disciples and conferred upon them divine authority to administer the ordinances of the gospel. He proclaimed himself to be, as will be seen from what has been said, the Son of God. He also taught that his Father, Himself, and the Holy Ghost constituted one God-head; that men to be saved must believe in God, repent of their sins, receive baptism for the remission of sins, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost in order to establish complete fellowship and oneness between themselves and God and his Christ. The twelve were authorized to call to their assistance subordinate officers and organize those who accepted the gospel into the holy Church of Christ. In addition to these doctrinal instructions Jesus delivered also the highly moral and spiritual precepts of the gospel, delivered them, as might be expected, much in the same form as they are to be found in our New Testament scriptures. What is found in the Book of Mormon of his teaching so nearly conforms to the doctrines and moral precepts of the New Testament, that it becomes a mighty witness for the substantial correctness of what is recorded in the New Testament, so that the Book of Mormon is a witness of the truth not only of the Old Testament but very largely also of the New.

Among other things of importance which Jesus declared to the Nephites was the fact that it was his intention to visit "the lost tribes" of the house of Israel, reveal himself to them, and proclaim the same gospel he had delivered to the Nephites, and spoke of the time when the testimonies of the Nephites and the lost tribes of the house of Israel, with the testimonies of those among whom he had labored in Judea, should be brought together in one.

Jesus also administered to the sick, the maimed and the blind among the Nephites, and showed forth the great power of God in his ministrations, falling behind in nothing, in these respects, to the miraculous powers that were displayed in his ministry in Judea; but on the contrary, in consequence of the greater faith of the Nephite people, and their righteousness, the display of almighty power went beyond the marvelous works wrought in Judea; for the greater part of the wicked among the Nephites had been destroyed by the judgments of God which preceded Messiah's coming, leaving only the more righteous part of the people to meet with him, at this his glorious advent among them; and hence they were prepared to receive greater blessings at the hands of God than were the people in Judea.

The Church of Christ, thus founded by the Messiah and the twelve disciples he had chosen, reaped a rich harvest in the salvation of souls in the western world. For nearly two centuries the truth of God was almost universally accepted. A reign of righteousness was enjoyed. Peace, prosperity, fraternity and happiness prevailed, and God was worshiped in spirit and in truth:

"But man is frail, and can but ill sustain
A long immunity from grief and pain;

And after all the Joys which Plenty leads,
With tip-toe step, Vice silently succeeds."

And so it was in the experience of the Nephites. Wickedness reared its head among them; pride, born of self-love, took possession of the souls of some, and inroads were made in the unity and peace of the Church. These evils continued to spread until at last the spirit of apostasy was rampant, in the western world, as in the eastern; men departed from God and his ways until rebellion, disunion, and anarchy everywhere prevailed; civilization was overwhelmed; and people descended to barbarism, and, at last, for the most part, to savagery. In this condition they were discovered by the Europeans, near the close of the fifteenth century. But notwithstanding this decline from the religion of Jesus Christ and a high state of civilization, what had been accomplished through the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the western world was of great importance. As already stated, the harvest of souls in the periods when righteousness prevailed, was very great; and the records which had been written by prophets and holy men, and preserved with great care by the commandment of God, were destined to be of immense importance in future ages. They would proclaim with trumpet tongue the justice and the mercy of God; they would demonstrate that the Lord has in mind the salvation of all races and nations of men; they would stand forth as the most important witness for the authenticity and general truth of the Jewish scriptures, both of the Old and the New testaments; they would be the voice of sleeping nations testifying that Moses did write the Pentateuch; they would bear witness that Isaiah is the author of the prophecies ascribed to him; that Jesus is the Christ, "the very eternal God,"^[17] that he suffered for the sins of the world, therein glorifying the Father, and accomplishing the purposes of God with reference to the salvation of men; they would bear witness that there is no name given under heaven whereby men can be saved but the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and finally, those Nephite records, in the Book of Mormon, would establish the great and supreme truths that God is a reality—that he lives; that man is the child of God; that he is immortal, and accountable to God for his actions; that he may be saved through acceptance of and continued obedience to the gospel.

A writer held much in esteem by the orthodox Christian world—and deservedly so—in a noble work but recently issued from the press, said:

Were a parchment discovered in an Egyptian mound, six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, this utterance would count more than all the books which have been published since the first century. If a veritable picture of the Lord could be unearthed from a catacomb, and the world could see with its own eyes what like he was, it would not matter that its colors were faded, and that it was roughly drawn, that picture would have at once a solitary place amid the treasures of art.^[18]

If this be true, and I think no one will question it, then how valuable indeed must be this whole volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon! Containing not fifty, but many hundred words spoken by Jesus! Containing also an account of the hand dealings of God with the people inhabiting the western hemisphere, from earliest times to the fourth century after Christ. Wherein also are found his revelations to those peoples; his messages by angels sent directly from his presence to declare his word to them; his instructions, admonitions, reproofs, and warnings to them through men inspired by his Holy Spirit; and last of all, the account of Messiah's appearance and ministry among the people, his very words repeated, and rightly divided for us (as we shall see later), that we may the better understand what of his teaching is general, and what special; what universal and permanent, and what local and transient. How insignificant all the discoveries in Egypt, in ancient Babylon, Palestine, and the Sinaitic Peninsula are in comparison with this New Witness of the western world? How paltry, valuable though they are in themselves, seem the Rosetta stone, the Moabite stone, and the library of brick tablets from old Nineveh, in comparison with this Nephite record—this volume of scripture! How feeble the voice of the testimony of those monuments of the east to the authenticity and credibility of the Bible and the truth of the gospel, in comparison with the testimony found in the Book of Mormon—the voice of departed nations and empires of people speaking through their records for the truth of God—for the verity of the gospel of Jesus Christ—a voice sufficient to overwhelm unbelief and forever make sure the foundations of faith! It was mainly for this purpose that the Nephite records were written, preserved, and finally brought forth to the world, as we shall see in the following chapter.

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Acts 17:26-28.
- [2.](#) I Nephi 19:22-24.
- [3.](#) II Nephi, chapters 6, 7, 8. Mosiah 14. III Nephi 22.
- [4.](#) II Nephi, chapters 12-24 inclusive.
- [5.](#) I Nephi, chapter 4:2.
- [6.](#) I Nephi 17:23-42.
- [7.](#) II Nephi 3.

[8.](#) Helaman 8.

[9.](#) I Nephi 22:20, 21.

[10.](#) Mosiah 12, 13.

[11.](#) See reflections on the course of the Lord with reference to giving revelations to all nations and races of men, chapter 41, this work.

[12.](#) The Nephites were the followers of the first Nephi, the righteous son of Lehi, who led the colony from Jerusalem six hundred years B. C.; and the Lamanites were the followers of Laman, the oldest and wicked son of the same Lehi.

[13.](#) Helaman, chapter 14.

[14.](#) Helaman, chapter 14.

[15.](#) This was Samuel, a prophet whom God raised up from among the Lamanites. The above prophecies were uttered about five or six years B. C.

[16.](#) John 10:16. For a somewhat extended discussion of this prophecy and its fulfilment see Part III this work, chapter 35.

[17.](#) See preface in title page of the Book of Mormon.

[18.](#) *Life of the Master*, Prologue, Rev. John Watson, (Ian Maclaren).

CHAPTER III.

THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE BOOK OF MORMON WAS WRITTEN.

The several purposes for which the Book of Mormon was written are to be learned from the writers of the book itself, and from the revelations of God to Joseph Smith.

First I introduce the statement of Moroni, into whose hands Mormon's abridgment of the larger records of the Nephites, called the *Book of Mormon*, was given. On the last plate of the collection given to Moroni by his father, on the left hand side of the collection, the language of the whole book running as in the Hebrew, from right to left, Moroni engraved the following explanatory title to the record he sealed up, and therein also stated the reasons why the record was written. This Joseph Smith translated and made the title page of his translation of the Book of Mormon:

THE BOOK OF MORMON

An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken From the Plates of Nephi.

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven—which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

In the above, three reasons are given why the Book of Mormon was written and preserved to come forth among men in the last days:

First, to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord has done for their fathers.

Second, to teach them the covenants of the Lord made with their fathers, that the remnants may know that they are not cast off forever.

Third, that this record may convince both Jew and gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, and that he manifests himself to all nations.

In a revelation given to Joseph Smith in July, 1828, on the occasion of the Urim and Thummim being restored to him after it had been taken from him in consequence of allowing Martin Harris to have a portion of the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, contrary to the will of God, the Lord said to him:

My work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—and to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers—And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the Nephites, because of their iniquities and their abominations. And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promise of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved.^[1]

In this passage we have substantially the same reasons given why the Book of Mormon was written, though not stated in the same order, but as follows:

First, that a knowledge of a Savior might come unto the remnants of the house of Israel in the western hemisphere, who are called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Lamanites, etc.

Second, that the Lamanites might come to a knowledge of their fathers.

Third, that the Lamanites might know the promises of the Lord, both to their fathers and to themselves.

Mormon also left upon record his testimony as to why the book which bears his name was written, and why it would be preserved and come forth in the last days. In his own book, by which I mean that book in which he wrote the things which he saw in his own day, Mormon says:

Now these things are written unto the remnant of the house of Jacob; * * * and behold, they shall come forth according to the commandment of the Lord, when he shall see fit, in his wisdom. And behold, they shall go unto the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant; and also that the seed of this people^[2] may more fully believe his gospel, which shall go forth unto them from the Gentiles.^[3]

Again, this same writer, Mormon, addressing himself to the remnants of the Lamanites to whom, in the future, his record would come, says:

"Know ye that ye must come to a knowledge of your fathers, and repent of all your sins and iniquities, and believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, and that he was slain by the Jews, and by the power of the Father he hath risen again, whereby he hath gained the victory over the grave; and also in him is the sting of death swallowed up. And he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead, whereby man must be raised to stand before his judgment-seat. And he hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his Kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end. Therefore repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus, and lay hold upon the gospel of Christ, which shall be set before you, not only in this record but also in the record which shall come unto the Gentiles from the Jews,^[4] which record shall come from the Gentiles unto you. For behold, this^[5] is written for the intent that ye may believe that;^[6] and if ye believe that ye will believe this also; and if ye believe this, ye will know concerning your fathers, and also the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God among them. And ye will also know that ye are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; therefore ye are numbered among the people of the first covenant." (Mormon 7:5-10.)

This passage is important because that in addition to assigning substantially the same reasons for the writing and coming forth of the Book of Mormon, as those before enumerated, it brings out the fact that the Book of Mormon was written also to be a witness for the Bible, to prove it true, for the language in the above passage makes plain reference to the Bible, the "record" which

comes from the Jews to the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles to the remnant of the Lamanites to whom Mormon makes reference.

This is also the testimony of the first Nephi. In vision he saw the advent of the Gentile races upon the western hemisphere. He saw their victories over the remnant of the seed of his brethren, the Lamanites. He then proceeds:

And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them. And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them. And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle. And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; and I beheld a book, and it was carried forth among them. And the angel said unto me: Knowest thou the meaning of the book? And I said unto him: I know not. And he said: Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew. And I, Nephi, beheld it; and he said unto me: The book that thou beholdest, is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass,^[7] save there are not so many; nevertheless, they contain the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; wherefore, they are of great worth unto the Gentiles.

And the angel of the Lord said unto me: Thou hast beheld that the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God. Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God. And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away. And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men. Wherefore, thou seest that after the book had gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God. And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles; and after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters which thou hast seen with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity, thou seest—because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them. * * * And it came to pass that the angel of the Lord spoke unto me, saying: Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel—and this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father^[8]—after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb—I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious saith the Lamb.

For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, ^[9] that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.

And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation. * * * And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren. And after it had come forth unto them I beheld other books, which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true. And the angel spake unto me, saying: These last records which thou

hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved. And they must come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb; and the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; wherefore they both shall be established in one; for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth.^[10]

The reference here made to "the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew," is beyond all question the Bible; while the "other books," which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto the remnant of Lehi's descendants, and which records are to establish the truth of the first records, or the Bible, is in plain allusion to the Book of Mormon and other scriptures to be brought forth by the power of God in the last days.

From all this, then, it is very evident that the purposes for which the Book of Mormon were written, counting in this summary both those reasons already enumerated and those stated in the passages last quoted, are:

First, to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord has done for their fathers.

Second, to teach them the covenants of the Lord made with their fathers, that the remnants may know that they are not cast off forever.

Third, to convince both Jews and Gentiles that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, and that he manifests himself to all nations.

Fourth, to bring the knowledge of a Savior to the remnants of the house of Israel on the western hemisphere, through the testimony of the Nephites and Lamanites as well as through the testimony of the Jews, that they might more fully believe the gospel.

Fifth, to bring to the Jews the testimony of the Nephites that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that they might have the testimony of the Nephites as well as that of their fathers that Jesus is their Messiah.

Sixth, to be a witness for the truth of the Bible, to establish its authenticity, and its credibility by bringing other witnesses than those of the Eastern world to testify to the same great truths that are contained in the sacred pages of the Bible.

Seventh, to restore to the knowledge of mankind many plain and precious truths concerning the gospel which men have taken out of the Jewish Scriptures, or obscured by their interpretations; by the absence of which passages, or misleading interpretations, many have stumbled and fallen into unbelief. In a word, it is the mission of the Book of Mormon to be a witness for Jesus, the Christ; for the truth of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation; for that purpose it was written, preserved from destruction, and has now come forth to the children of men through the goodness and mercy and power of God.

Footnotes

[1.](#) Doc. & Cov. 3: 16-20.

[2.](#) Mormon here refers to the Lamanites, that is, that the seed of the Lamanites, the present "Indians" of the western hemisphere, might more fully believe the gospel, etc.

[3.](#) Book of Mormon 5:12-15.

[4.](#) The Bible.

[5.](#) The Book of Mormon.

[6.](#) The Bible.

[7.](#) The "record" upon the plates of brass is the record containing the Jewish Scripture which the colony of Lehi brought with them from Jerusalem, to which reference is here made.

[8.](#) The descendants of Lehi.

[9.](#) The Nephites.

[10.](#) I Nephi 13.

PART II.

The Discovery of the Book of Mormon and its Translation. The Migrations, Lands, Inter-Continental Movements, Civilizations, Governments, and Religions of its Peoples.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW JOSEPH SMITH OBTAINED THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon was published in the town of Palmyra, Wayne County, State of New York. It issued from the press of Mr. Egbert B. Grandin; and was published for Joseph Smith, the Prophet. The exact date on which the book issued from the press cannot be ascertained. Most likely, however, it was some time in the month of March or of April, 1830; for in the Prophet's history we have him saying that, "During this month of April, I went on a visit to the residence of Mr. Joseph Knight, of Colesville, Broome county, New York." This Mr. Knight had been acquainted with the Smith family for some time. He had visited them at their home near Manchester, New York, on several occasions;^[1] and during the period occupied in translating the Book of Mormon, had rendered some material assistance to the Prophet by supplying him and Oliver Cowdery with provisions.^[2] Soon after this visit the Prophet informs us that he returned to Fayette, Seneca county,—evidently in the same month of April—and then adds:

"The Book of Mormon * * * had now been published for some time, and as the ancient prophets predicted of it, 'it was accounted a strange thing.'"^[3] In the *Evening and Morning Star* for April, 1833, published at Independence, Missouri—the first periodical published by the Church—occurs the following: "Soon after the Book of Mormon came forth, containing the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Church was organized, on the 6th of April, 1830."^[4] This fixes approximately the date for the publication of the book. It issued from the press either very early in April or in the month of March, 1830; most likely some time in March. The first edition was five thousand copies.

Naturally enough the book was "accounted a strange thing." Joseph Smith, for whom it was published, was an unlettered young man, who from the time he was ten years of age until the Book of Mormon was published—when he was twenty-four—had lived in the vicinity of Palmyra and Manchester townships. His father having met with a series of misfortunes in business ventures and land purchases, the family was in straitened circumstances through all these years, and Joseph had been under the necessity of working among the farmers in and around Manchester to aid his parents in the support of their large family. About the last thing to be expected of a young man reared under such circumstances would be that he become the publisher of a book. The fact that he had published one was of itself sufficient cause for astonishment; but it was not the fact that an unlettered youth, who had spent his life in toil among them, had published a book that was regarded as so strange a thing by the people. It was the account he gave of the book's origin, and the nature of the book itself that constituted it such a "marvel and a wonder." Joseph Smith disclaimed being its author^[5] in any other sense than that he was the translator of it by miraculous means. The original Book of Mormon, the translation of which he had published, was written, or rather engraven, upon gold plates, according to his representations; which plates had come into his possession in the following manner:

Early in the spring of 1820 Joseph Smith received a revelation from God in which the apostate condition of Christendom was made known to him, coupled with a promise that at some future time the gospel of Jesus Christ would be restored to the earth; and that he, if faithful, would be an instrument in the hands of God in accomplishing some of his great purposes in the last days.^[6]

After this first revelation, Joseph Smith was left for three years without any further direct manifestation from God. At the expiration of that time, however, being oppressed with a sense of loneliness and longing for further communication with the heavens, and burdened with an anxious desire to know of his standing before the Lord, on the evening of the 21st of September, 1823, after having retired for the night, he betook himself to prayer that he might receive once more a manifestation from God. The rest of the narrative is best told in his own words:

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noon day, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were

naked and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His neck and head were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent,^[7] and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants [of America]; also that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted seers in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi,^[8] and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bible [the English authorized version of the Jewish Scriptures]. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books he quoted it thus: "For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them saith the Lord of hosts; that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: "Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." He also quoted the next verse differently: "And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming."

In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled.

He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament.^[9] He said that that prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when "they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people," but soon would come.

He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated, the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here. Again, he told me, that when I got the plates of which he had spoken—for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled—I should not show them to any person; neither the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim; only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them; if I did I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

After this communication, I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so, until the room was again left dark, except just around him, when instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended until he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance.

I lay musing on the singularity of the scene, and marveling greatly at what had been told me by this extraordinary messenger; when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside. He commenced, and again related the very same things which he had done at his first visit, without the least variation; which having done, he informed me of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before; and added a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me, (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family) to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in

getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom; otherwise I could not get them. After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

I shortly after arose from my bed, and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day; but in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house; but in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything. The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name: I looked up and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received.

I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger.^[10] I left the field and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited; and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there. Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all round was covered with earth. Having removed the earth I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them. I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates.^[11]

Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days. * * * At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim and the breast-plate. On the 22nd day of September, 1827, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge; that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they would be protected.^[12]

I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hands, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me; every stratagem that could be invented, was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible. But by the wisdom of God they remained safe in my hands, until I accomplished by them what was required at my hands; when, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, [and] I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the 2nd of May, 1838.^[13]

Such in Joseph Smith's account of the origin of the Book of Mormon. This is the account of its origin accepted by those who believe it to be a divine record, a volume of scripture, containing the word of God, and a history—though a brief one—of the hand-dealings of God with the people of the western hemisphere. This is the account of its origin to be maintained by those who speak or write in the defense of the Book of Mormon. This the account to be maintained as true in these pages.

It will readily be observed that the history given by Joseph Smith concerning his finding the Nephite record is very concise; that details are omitted. This is especially noticeable in regard to the efforts of his enemies to get the plates from him; he merely makes general reference to that

subject; as also in the matter as to what passed between himself and the angel Moroni at the annual meetings between 1823 and 1827. Of these visits, so interesting and instructive to Joseph Smith, he only says:

"I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instructions and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days."

Doubtless, however, the instructions then received but only so casually mentioned by the prophet, bore fruit in the progress of the work, in the things which the prophet said and did. The fact that much more happened than is stated in the narrative here quoted is evident; and not only is it evident from what the prophet himself says, but from what has been written by others who were associated with him in the work, and who must have received their information from the Prophet Joseph himself. Among these is Oliver Cowdery, who was the second Elder of the Church, and the first to give to the world any account in detail of these early events connected with the coming forth of the great work of God. This he did in 1834-5, in a series of nine letters to the *Saints Messenger and Advocate*, published at Kirtland, Ohio, under the caption, "Early Scenes and Incidents in the Church." And as these letters were published in the lifetime of the prophet, with his sanction and in a periodical published by the Church, it cannot be doubted that the statements contained in them are reliable. In these letters Oliver Cowdery gives an account of the young Prophet's first visit to Cumorah that is much more circumstantial than the description of that event by the Prophet, and which Oliver Cowdery could only have learned from Joseph himself. It will be remembered that in the account already quoted from the personal history of the Prophet Joseph that he said the angel Moroni had warned him that Satan would tempt him, on account of his father's indigent circumstances, to obtain the plates for the purpose of getting rich; but this he must not do, nor have any other object in view than that of glorifying God; and he must be influenced by no other consideration than that of building up God's kingdom. Otherwise, he could not get possession of the plates. And now Cowdery's account of the young Prophet's first visit to Cumorah. After quoting the instructions of the angel, directing Joseph to go to the hill Cumorah, Cowdery says:

Accordingly he repaired to the place which had thus been described. But it is necessary to give you more fully the express instructions of the angel with regard to the object of this work in which our brother [meaning, of course, Joseph Smith] had now engaged. He was to remember that it was the work of the Lord, to fulfill certain promises previously made to a branch of the house of Israel of the tribe of Joseph, and when it was brought forth it must be done expressly with an eye, as I have said before, single to the glory of God, and the welfare and restoration of the house of Israel. You will understand, then, that no motive of a pecuniary or earthly nature, was to be suffered to take the lead in the heart of the man thus favored. The allurements of vice, the contaminating influences of wealth, without the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, must have no place in his heart nor be suffered to take from it that warm desire for the glory and kingdom of the Lord, or, instead of obtaining, disappointment and reproof would most assuredly follow. Such was the instruction and the caution. Alternately, as we would naturally expect, the thought of the previous vision was ruminating in his mind, with a reflection of the brightness and glory of the heavenly messenger; but again a thought would start across the mind on the prospects of obtaining so desirable a treasure—one in all human probability sufficient to raise him above the level of the common earthly fortunes of his fellow men, and relieve his family from want, in which by misfortune and sickness they were placed. * * * Here was a struggle indeed; for when he calmly reflected upon his errand, he knew that if God did not give, he could not obtain; and again, with the thought or hope of obtaining, his mind would be carried back to its former reflections of poverty, abuse, wealth, grandeur and ease, until before arriving at the place described, this wholly occupied his desire; and when he thought upon the fact of what was previously shown him, it was only with an assurance that he should obtain, and accomplish his desire in relieving himself and friends from want. * * * You will have wondered, perhaps, that the mind of our brother should be so occupied with the thoughts of the goods of this world, at the time of arriving at Cumorah, on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1823, after having been wrapt in the visions of heaven, during the night, and also seeing and hearing in open day; but the mind of man is easily turned if it is not held by the power of God through the prayer of faith, and you will remember that I have said that two invisible powers were operating upon his mind during his walk from his residence to Cumorah, and that the one urging the certainty of wealth and ease in this life, had so powerfully wrought upon him that the great object so carefully and impressively named by the angel, had entirely gone from his recollection that only a fixed determination to obtain now urged him forward. In this, which occasioned a failure to obtain, at that time, the record, do not understand me to attach blame to our brother; he was young, and his mind easily turned from correct principles, unless he could be favored with a certain round of experience. And yet, while young, untraditioned and untaught in the systems of the world, he was in a situation to be led into the great work of God, and be qualified to perform it in due time.

After arriving at the repository, a little exertion in removing the soil from the edges of

the top of the box, and a light pry, brought to his natural vision its contents. No sooner did he behold this sacred treasure than his hopes were renewed, and he supposed his success certain and, without first attempting to take it from its place of long deposit, he thought, perhaps, there might be something more, equally as valuable, and to take only the plates might give others an opportunity of obtaining the remainder, which could he secure, would still add to his store of wealth. These, in short, were his reflections, without once thinking of the solemn instruction of the heavenly messenger, and that all must be done with an express view of glorifying God.

On attempting to take possession of the record a shock was produced upon his system, by an invisible power, which deprived him, in a measure, of his natural strength. He desisted, for an instant, and then made another attempt, but was more sensibly shocked than before. What was the occasion of this he knew not—there was the pure unsullied record, as has been described—he had heard of the powers of enchantment, and a thousand like stories, which held the hidden treasures of the earth, and supposed that physical exertion and personal strength was only necessary to enable him to yet obtain the object of his wish. He therefore made the third attempt with an increased exertion, when his strength failed him more than at either of the former times, and without premeditating he exclaimed, "Why can I not obtain this book?" "Because you have not kept the commandments of the Lord," answered a voice, within a seeming short distance. He looked and to his astonishment there stood the angel who had previously given him the directions concerning this matter. In an instant, all the former instructions, the great intelligence concerning Israel and the last days were brought to his mind; he thought of the time when his heart was fervently engaged in prayer to the Lord, when his spirit was contrite, and when this holy messenger from the skies unfolded the wonderful things connected with this record. He had come to be sure, and found the word of the angel fulfilled concerning the reality of the records, but he had failed to remember the great end for which they had been kept, and in consequence could not have power to take them into his possession and bear them away.

At that instant he looked to the Lord in prayer, and as he prayed, darkness began to disperse from his mind and his soul was lit up as it was the evening before, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit; and again did the Lord manifest his condescension and mercy; the heavens were opened and the glory of the Lord shone around about and rested upon him. While thus he stood gazing and admiring, the angel said, "Look!" and as he thus spake he beheld the prince of darkness, surrounded by his innumerable train of associates. All this passed before him, and the heavenly messenger said, "All this is shown, the good and the evil, the holy and impure, the glory of God and the power of darkness, that you may know hereafter the two powers and never be influenced or overcome by that wicked one. Behold, whatever entices and leads to good and to do good, is of God, and whatever does not is of that wicked one: it is he that fills the hearts of men with evil, to walk in darkness and blaspheme God; and you may learn from henceforth, that his ways are to destruction, but the way of holiness is peace and rest. You now see why you could not obtain this record; that the commandment was strict, and that if ever these sacred things are obtained they must be by prayer and faithfulness in obeying the Lord. They are not deposited here for the sake of accumulating gain and wealth for the glory of this world: they were sealed by the prayer of faith, and because of the knowledge which they contain they are of no worth among the children of men, only for their knowledge. On them is contained the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it was given to his people on this land, and when it shall be brought forth by the power of God it shall be carried to the Gentiles, of whom many will receive it, and after will the seed of Israel be brought into the fold of their Redeemer by obeying it also. Those who kept the commandments of the Lord on this land, through the prayer of faith obtained the promise, that if their descendants should transgress and fall away, a record should be kept and in the last days come to their children. These things are sacred, and must be kept so, for the promise of the Lord concerning them must be fulfilled. No man can obtain them if his heart is impure, because they contain that which is sacred; and besides, should they be entrusted in unholy hands the knowledge could not come to the world, because they cannot be interpreted by the learning of this generation: consequently they would be considered of no worth, only as precious metal. Therefore, remember, that they are to be translated by the gift and power of God. By them will the Lord work a great and a marvelous work: the wisdom of the wise shall become as naught, and the understanding of the prudent shall be hid, and because the power of God shall be displayed those who profess to know the truth but walk in deceit, shall tremble with anger; but with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted. You have now beheld the power of God manifested and the power of satan: you see that there is nothing that is desirable in works of darkness; that they cannot bring happiness: that those who are overcome therewith are miserable, while on the other hand the righteous are blessed with a peace in the kingdom of God where joy unspeakable surrounds them. There they rest beyond the power of the enemy of truth, where no evil can disturb them. The glory of God crowns them, and they continually feast upon his goodness and enjoy his smiles. Behold, notwithstanding you have seen this great display of power, by which you may ever be able to detect the evil one, yet I

give unto you another sign, and when it comes to pass then know that the Lord is God and that he will fulfill his purposes, and that the knowledge which this record contains will go to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people under the whole heaven. This is the sign: When these things begin to be known, that is, when it is known that the Lord has shown you these things, the workers of iniquity will seek your overthrow; they will circulate falsehoods to destroy your reputation, and also will seek to take your life; but remember this, if you are faithful, and shall hereafter continue to keep the commandments of the Lord, you shall be preserved to bring these things forth; for in due time he will again give you a commandment to come and take them. When they are interpreted the Lord will give the Holy Priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim this gospel and baptize by water, and after they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. Then will persecution rage more and more; for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not built upon the rock will seek to overthrow this Church; but it will increase the more opposed, and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till the Saints shall be sanctified and receive an inheritance where the glory of God shall rest upon them; and when this takes place, and all things are prepared, the Ten Tribes of Israel will be revealed in the north country, whither they have been for a long season; and when this is fulfilled will be brought to pass that saying of the prophet—"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." But, notwithstanding the workers of iniquity shall seek your destruction, the arm of the Lord will be extended and you will be borne off conqueror, if you keep all his commandments. Your name shall be known among the nations, for the work which the Lord will perform by your hands shall cause the righteous to rejoice and the wicked to rage; with one it shall be had in honor, and the other in reproach; yet, with these it shall be a terror because of the great and marvelous work which shall follow the coming forth of this fulness of the gospel. Now, go thy way, remember what the Lord has done for thee, and be diligent in keeping his commandments, and he will deliver thee from temptations, and all the arts and devices of the wicked one. Forget not to pray, that thy mind may become strong, that when he shall manifest unto thee, thou mayest have power to escape the evil, and obtain these precious things.^[14]

Such the events which took place on the occasion of the Prophet's first visit to Cumorah. It is unfortunate that we do not have a more circumstantial account of the subsequent annual interviews from 1823 to 1827; and likewise a more detailed account of the Prophet's early movements connected with his obtaining the plates, and caring for them.

The place where the Nephite record was deposited must ever be of interest to those who believe that record to be true, and therefore a description of the hill Cumorah will not be out of place in concluding this chapter. Joseph Smith's brief description of it has already been given.^[15]

The writer visited the hill Cumorah on the 22nd of February, 1897, and the same day wrote out the following description of it: The hill Cumorah is on the road between Manchester and the town of Palmyra, in Wayne county, New York, about four miles directly south of the latter place. Approaching it from the north, you are confronted by the bold face of the hill, which rises quite abruptly from the common level of the surrounding country; and as the east and west slopes of the hill, as viewed from the north, are about equal and regular, it looks from a distance as if it might be a huge conical-shaped mound. Ascending its steep north side to the summit dispels the illusion, for one finds that he has but climbed the abrupt north end of a ridge of hill having its greatest extent from north to south, and which from its very narrow summit broadens and slopes gently to the southward until it sinks to the level of the common country. The east side of the hill is now ploughed, but the west side is untouched by the husbandman; and about two or three hundred yards from the north end there is on the west side a small grove of young trees, with here and there a decaying stump of a large tree to bear witness that the hill was once covered with a heavy growth of timber. In fact it was so covered by timber when the Prophet Joseph Smith first visited the place in 1823, as indeed much of the surrounding country was at that time.

Unquestionably Cumorah is the most distinct land mark in all that section of country, the highest hill, and the most commanding in what I should describe as an extensive plain sloping northward filled with numerous irregular hills, but which in the main have their greatest extent, like Cumorah, from north to south; and which, also like Cumorah, are generally highest at the north end. I observed this to be the case all the way from Syracuse to Palmyra. It is worthy of note, too, that the lakes of central and western New York, also have their greatest extent from north to south. Indeed, for the most part, they are but long strips of water left in their narrow beds when the great body of water, which in ages long gone by once covered this whole region, receded northward and gave the same general form both to the lakes and to the hills on this northern slope of the water shed which runs from east to west through New York, north Pennsylvania, Ohio and Indiana; and which separates the basin of the great lakes and the valley of the St. Lawrence from the valley of the Ohio and Mississippi.

West of Cumorah the country is more open than on the south or east. The hills common to the country are fewer and the plain more expansive. Though the country south and east is broken, and the numerous hills higher than on the west, yet such is the commanding height of Cumorah that the view is unobstructed for many miles. Northward some miles the hills are most thickly clustered; between them and Cumorah is located the town of Palmyra, and beyond that, at the

foot of the thickly clustered hills referred to, runs what is now called Canagrie creek, really one of the tributaries of the Clyde river, into which it empties at no great distance.

Such is the hill "Cumorah" and its surroundings; the hill "Ramah" of the Jaredites; "Mormon Hill," or "Mormon Bible Hill," as it is called by the people about Palmyra. "On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates of the Book of Mormon, deposited in a stone box."^[16]

Footnotes

1. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, chapters 21, 23.
2. *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 47.
3. *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 84.
4. *Evening and Morning Star* for April, 1833, p. 167.
5. The fact that on the title page of the first edition, Joseph Smith is called the "Author and Proprietor," is considered in Part IV of this work.
6. See *New Witnesses for God*, vol. I, chapters 10 and 11, for a full account of this revelation. See also Wentworth letter, *History of the Church*, vol. IV, ch. 31.
7. America.
8. This undoubtedly would be the first part of the third chapter of Malachi, as that part of the chapter has undoubtedly a direct bearing on the coming forth of God's work in the last days. It reads as follows: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth. For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old and as in former years."
9. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.—Acts 3: 22, 23.
10. Relative to the circumstances of the young Prophet's vision on the 22nd of September, when he was on his way from the field to his father's house, before his first visit to Cumorah, his mother in her *History of the Prophet Joseph* gives the following interesting details which the prophet does not record. It would seem, according to Lucy Smith's statement, that during the interviews with the angel Moroni the night before—September 21, 1823—the young Prophet had been instructed to inform his father of what he had seen and heard; but this Joseph failed to do. "The next day," says Lucy Smith's account, "my husband, Alvin, and Joseph, were reaping together in the field, and as they were reaping Joseph stopped quite suddenly, and seemed to be in a deep study. Alvin [this was an elder brother—died a little more than a year later], observing it, hurried him, saying, 'We must not slacken our hands, or we will not be able to complete our task.' Upon this Joseph went to work again, and after laboring a short time, he stopped just as he had done before. This being quite unusual and strange, it attracted the attention of his father, upon which he discovered that Joseph was very pale. My husband, supposing that he was sick, told him to go to the house, and have his mother doctor him. He accordingly ceased his work, and started; but on coming to a beautiful green, under an apple tree, he stopped and laid down, for he was so weak he could proceed no further. He was there but a short time, when the messenger whom he saw the previous night, visited him again, and the first thing he said was, 'Why did you not tell your father that which I commanded you to tell him?' Joseph replied, 'I was afraid my father would not believe me.' The angel rejoined, 'He will believe every word you say to him.'

Joseph then promised the angel that he would do as he had been commanded. Upon this the messenger departed, and Joseph returned to the field where he had left my husband and Alvin; but when he got there his father had just gone to the house, as he was somewhat unwell. Joseph then desired Alvin to go straightway and see his father, and inform him that he had something of great importance to communicate to him, and that he wanted him to come out into the field where they were at work. Alvin did as he was requested, and when my husband got there, Joseph related to him all that had passed between him and the angel the previous night and that morning. Having heard this account, his father charged him not to fail in attending strictly to the instructions which he had received from this heavenly messenger." (*History of the Prophet Joseph*, by his mother, chap. 19.)

11. Lucy Smith has a very interesting account in her *History of the Prophet* concerning his report of this interview at Cumorah with Moroni, she says:

"The ensuing evening, when the family were all together, Joseph made known to them all that he had communicated to his father in the field, and also of his finding the record, as well as what passed between him and the angel while he was at the place where the plates were deposited. Sitting up late that evening in order to converse upon these things, together with overexertion of mind, had much fatigued Joseph; and when Alvin observed it, he said, 'Now, brother, let us go to bed, and rise early in the morning in order to finish our day's work at an hour before sunset, then if mother will get our supper early, we will have a fine long evening, and we will all sit down for the purpose of listening to you while you tell us the great things which God has revealed to you.' Accordingly, by sunset the next day (Sept. 23rd), we were all seated, and Joseph commenced telling us the great and glorious things which God had manifested unto him; but before proceeding he charged us not to mention out of the family that which he was about to say unto us, as the world was so wicked that when they came to a knowledge of these things they would try to take our lives; and that when he should obtain the plates, our names would be cast out as evil by all people. Hence the necessity of suppressing these things as much as possible, until the time should come for them to go forth to the world. After giving us this charge, he proceeded to relate further particulars concerning the work which he was appointed to do, and we received them joyfully, never mentioning them except among ourselves, agreeable to the instructions which we had received from him." (*History of the Prophet Joseph*, by his mother, chap. 19.)

[12.](#) In relation to the matter of the Prophet Joseph obtaining the Nephite record on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1827, his mother gives a number of interesting details in her *History of the Prophet*. It appears that both Joseph Knight of Broome county, New York, and also a Mr. Josiah Stool were present at the Smith homestead on the night of September the 21st, 1827. And now Lucy Smith:

"On the night of the 21st, I sat up very late as my work rather pressed upon my hands. I did not retire until 12 o'clock at night. About 12 o'clock, Joseph came to me, and asked me if I had a chest with a lock and key. I knew in an instant what he wanted it for, and not having one, I was greatly alarmed, as I thought it might be a matter of considerable moment. But Joseph discovering my anxiety, said, 'Never mind, mother, I can do very well for the present without it—be calm—all is right.' Shortly after this Joseph's wife passed through the room with her bonnet and riding dress and in a few minutes they left together taking Mr. Knight's horse and wagon. I spent the night in prayer and supplication to God, for the anxiety of my mind would not permit me to sleep. At the usual hour, I commenced preparing breakfast, my heart fluttered at every footstep, as I now expected Joseph and Emma momentarily, and feared lest Joseph might meet with another disappointment.

"When the male portion of the family were seated at breakfast table, Mr. Smith inquired for Joseph, for he was not aware that he had left home. I requested my husband not to call him, for I would like to have him take breakfast with his wife that morning. 'No, no,' said my husband, 'I must have Joseph eat with me.' 'Well now, Mr. Smith,' I continued, 'do let him eat with his wife this morning; he almost always takes breakfast with you.' His father finally consented and ate without him, and no further inquiries were made concerning his absence, but in a few minutes Mr. Knight came in quite disturbed. 'Why, Mr. Smith,' he exclaimed, 'my horse is gone, and I can't find him on the premises, and I wish to start for home in half an hour.' 'Never mind the horse,' said I, 'Mr. Knight does not know all the nooks and corners in the pastures; I will call William, he will bring the horse immediately.'

"This satisfied him for the time being; but he soon made another discovery. His wagon also was gone. He then concluded that a rogue had stolen them both. 'Mr. Knight,' said I, 'do be quiet; I would be ashamed to have you go about waiting upon yourself—just go out and talk to Mr. Smith until William comes, and if you really must go home your horse shall be brought and you shall be waited upon like a gentleman.' He accordingly went out and while he was absent Joseph returned. I trembled so with fear, lest all might be lost in consequence of some failure in keeping the commandments of God, that I was under the necessity of leaving the room in order to conceal my feelings. Joseph saw this, and said, 'Do not be uneasy, mother, all is right, see here, I have got a key.' I knew not what he meant but took the article of which he spoke into my hands, and examined it. He took it again and left me, but said nothing respecting the record. * * * That of which I spoke, which Joseph termed a key, was indeed nothing more nor less than the Urim and Thummim." (*History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, chap. 23.)

[13.](#) *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 11-19; also *Pearl of Great Price* (1902 edition) pp. 88-96.

[14.](#) It will be observed by the reader that in the reported interview between Joseph Smith and Moroni, as given by Oliver Cowdery above, there are a number of very remarkable predictions both concerning Joseph Smith and the work he is bringing forth, all of which are considered in vol. I of this work, chapter 20.

[15.](#) P. 56.

[16.](#) Joseph Smith, see *ante*.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE RECORD.—MARTIN HARRIS AS AMANUENSIS.

Following the account of how Joseph Smith obtained the Book of Mormon it should be known how he translated it, and what difficulties attended that work. I would remind the reader, in passing, that I am to deal with a remarkable narrative, one in which strange things occur, and one in which many who deny or doubt the power of God will be inclined to have little faith. To such I would say, judge nothing hastily, dismiss nothing petulantly, patient investigation, and sometimes suspension of judgment in relation to matters difficult of belief are necessary to the ascertainment of truth, and in such manner wise men, anxious to know the truth, proceed.

The Prophet, in his narrative, quoted in the preceding chapter, tells us that he soon found out the reason why he had received such a strict injunction to carefully guard the Nephite record and the Urim and Thummim; and why it was that Moroni has said that after he (Joseph) had done what was required at his hands, he (Moroni) would call for them. "For no sooner was it known," says Joseph, "that I had them, [the Nephite plates] than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me; every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose; the persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible."^[1]

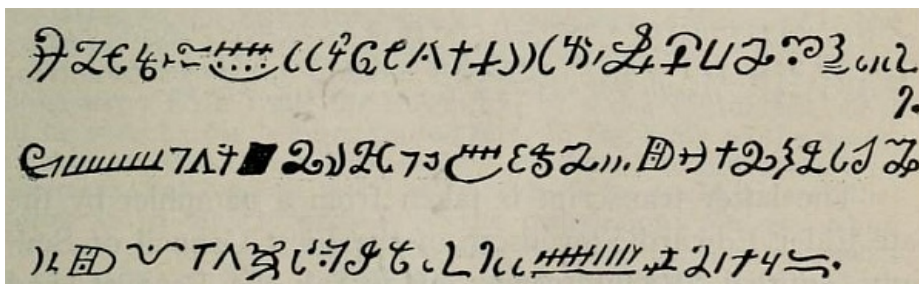
Rumor, with her thousand tongues, he informs us, was all the time employed circulating tales about his father's family, and about himself; and doubtless much of that misrepresentation which followed the prophet and his father's family throughout his life had its origin about this time.

So intolerable at last became the persecution about Manchester that Joseph decided to move with his wife to the home of her parents in Harmony, Susquehannah county, Pennsylvania. Susquehannah county is one of the northern counties of Pennsylvania, and joins Broome county, in the state of New York; and Harmony is a distance of from one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles from Manchester, New York. The young Prophet was in very straitened circumstances when he resolved upon removing to Pennsylvania; but about that time a Mr. Martin Harris, a respectable and well-to-do farmer of Palmyra, New York, called upon the Smith family and gave Joseph fifty dollars to enable him to make the proposed journey. A team and wagon was fitted out, and in company with his wife the Prophet started for Pennsylvania. Enroute he was twice stopped by officers of the law, who, under the power of a search warrant, ransacked his wagon in search of the plates, but in each case they were disappointed, as they did not find them, though the prophet had them concealed among his effects.

Arriving in Pennsylvania in the month of December, the Prophet began an examination of the characters engraven upon the plates and copied a considerable number of them. Some of them he translated by means of the Urim and Thummim. In this desultory work he spent the time until the month of February, 1828, when Martin Harris, the gentleman who had befriended him on the eve of his departure from Manchester, arrived at his home in Harmony. This man had become interested in the Prophet and his work and believed him to be in possession of the plates.

Some of the characters which Joseph had copied from the plates, Martin Harris determined to submit to Professor Charles Anthon, "a gentleman of the highest reputation, both in America and Europe, and well known for his valuable and correct edition of the classics."^[2] For this purpose Harris made the journey from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to the city of New York. Some of the Nephite characters given into the custody of Mr. Harris were translated while others were not. Following is a facsimile of some of the characters handed to Professor Anthon in fulfilment of the words of Isaiah:

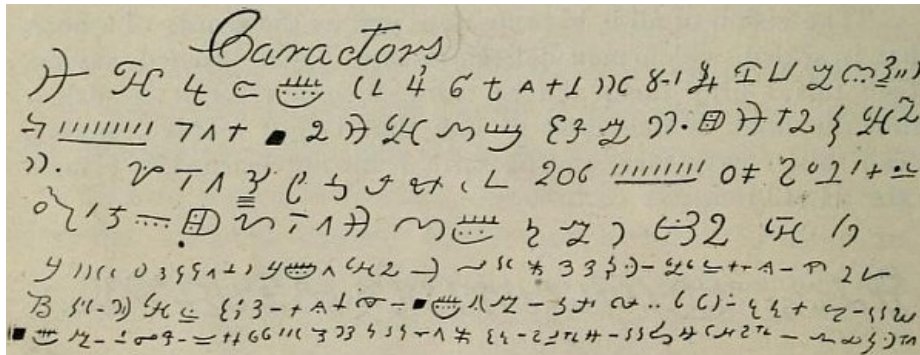
"The vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to one that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith I am not learned." (Isaiah 29:11, 12.)



[3]

Whether or not these are the characters to which a translation was appended by the Prophet, cannot now be determined.

With the printer's copy of the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, now in the hands of the descendants of Joseph Smith, is also a transcript of characters consisting of seven lines, the first three of which are very similar to those copied from *The Prophet*. They were also handed, it is claimed, to Doctor Mitchell and Professor Anthon by Martin Harris. Whether this seven-line transcript was the translated or untranslated part of the characters handed to these learned men for their inspection may not now be determined; but I present them herewith in order that as many of the Nephite characters as have been transcribed from the plates may be before the reader:



The latter transcript is taken from a pamphlet by the late Elder Edward Stevenson, of the First Council of Seventy, entitled *Reminiscences of Joseph the Prophet, and the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon*. Of this transcript Elder Stevenson says:

"I will vouch for the correctness of the characters, as I have compared them with the original copy, which is still in existence, intact, just as it was when Martin Harris, as a messenger, took it with the translation Joseph Smith had made, to Professor Anthon of New York. The copy here presented was traced from the original copy, and is an exact reproduction of it."^[4]

Of both these transcripts it should be said that doubtless inaccuracies exist in them, for the reason that the Prophet who made the *fac simile* was unskillful in such work, but for all that the *fac simile* of the characters will be of interest and may be of very great importance yet as evidence for the truth of the claims of the Book of Mormon.

On the return of Martin Harris to Harmony, he made the following statement to Joseph Smith as to what took place between himself and Professor Anthon:

"I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian.^[5] I then showed him those which were not translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic, and he said that they were the true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

"He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying, that there was no such thing now as ministering angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him, he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation."^[6]

Some years after this, *viz.*, in 1834, Professor Anthon, in a letter to Mr. E. D. Howe, of Painesville, Ohio, made a statement as to what took place on the occasion of Martin Harris' visit to him, and I give that statement below. By way of introduction it should be said, however, that Mr. E. D. Howe at the time (1834) was connected with a Dr. Hurlburt in the production of an anti-"Mormon" book, and the report of Harris' interview with the learned professor having become known, Mr. Howe wrote to Professor Anthon making inquiries about it, hoping, perhaps, that the fact of the interview might be denied. This is the letter he received in reply to his inquiries:

New York, February 17, 1834.

Dear Sir: I received your letter of the 9th, and lose no time in making a reply. The whole story about my pronouncing the Mormon inscription to be reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics is perfectly false. Some years ago, a plain, apparently simple-hearted farmer called on me with a note from Dr. Mitchell, of our city, now dead, requesting me

to decipher, if possible, the paper which the farmer would hand me. Upon examining the paper in question, I soon came to the conclusion that it was all a trick—perhaps a hoax. When I asked the person who brought it how he obtained the writing, he gave me the following account: A gold book consisting of a number of plates, fastened together by wires of the same material, had been dug up in the northern part of the state of New York, and along with it an enormous pair of spectacles. These spectacles were so large that if a person attempted to look through them, his two eyes would look through one glass only the spectacles in question being altogether too large for the human face. "Whoever," he said, "examined the plates through the glasses was enabled not only to read them, but fully to understand their meaning." All this knowledge, however, was confined to a young man, who had the trunk containing the book and spectacles in his sole possession. This young man was placed behind a curtain in a garret in a farmhouse, and being thus concealed from view, he put on the spectacles occasionally, or rather looked through one of the glasses, deciphered the characters in the book, and having committed some of them to paper, handed copies from behind the curtain to those who stood outside. Not a word was said about their being deciphered by the gift of God. Everything in this way was effected by the large pair of spectacles. The farmer added that he had been requested to contribute a sum of money toward the publication of the golden book, the contents of which would, as he was told, produce an entire change in the world, and save it from ruin. So urgent had been these solicitations, that he intended selling his farm and giving the amount to those who wished to publish the plates. As a last precautionary step, he had resolved to come to New York, and obtain the opinion of the *learned* about the meaning of the paper which he brought with him, and which had been given him as a part of the contents of the book, although no translation had at that time been made by the young man with spectacles. On hearing this odd story, I changed my opinion about the paper, and instead of viewing it any longer as a hoax, I began to regard it as part of a scheme to cheat the farmer of his money, and I communicated my suspicions to him to beware of rogues. He requested an opinion from me in writing, which, of course, I declined to give, and he then took his leave, taking his paper with him. This paper in question was, in fact, a singular scroll. It consisted of all kinds of singular characters disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time a book containing various alphabets, Greek and Hebrew letters, crosses and flourishes; Roman letters inverted or placed sideways were arranged and placed in perpendicular columns, and the whole ended in a rude delineation of a circle, divided into various compartments, arched with various strange marks, and evidently copied after the Mexican calendar by Humboldt, but copied in such a way as not to betray the source whence it was derived. I am thus particular as to the contents of the paper, inasmuch as I have frequently conversed with friends on the subject since the Mormon excitement began, and well remember that the paper contained anything else but Egyptian hieroglyphics. Some time after, the farmer paid me a second visit. He brought with him the gold book in print, and offered it to me for sale. I declined purchasing. He then asked permission to leave the book with me for examination. I declined receiving it, although his manner was strangely urgent. I adverted once more to the roguery which, in my opinion, had been practiced upon him, and asked him what had become of the gold plates. He informed me they were in a trunk with the spectacles. I advised him to go to a magistrate and have the trunk examined. He said the curse of God would come upon him if he did. On my pressing him, however, to go to a magistrate, he told me he would open the trunk if I would take the curse of God upon myself. I replied that I would do so with the greatest willingness, and would incur every risk of that nature, provided I could only extricate him from the grasp of the rogues. He then left me. I have given you a full statement of all that I know respecting the origin of Mormonism and must beg of you as a personal favor, to publish this letter immediately, should you find my name mentioned again by these wretched fanatics.

Yours respectfully,

CHAS. ANTHON.

In addition to this acknowledgement of the visit of Martin Harris to him with the transcript of the Nephite characters, Professor Anthon subsequently made another acknowledgement of Martin Harris' visit in a letter written to Rev. T. W. Coit, in answer to a note of inquiry from that gentleman concerning the professor's connection with the Book of Mormon. The letter was published in *The Church Record*, vol. I, no. 22; and is frequently quoted, in parts, at least, in various anti—"Mormon" works. *The Church Record* was published in New York, I think; but not having access to that volume I am under the necessity of copying the parts of Anthon's second letter from anti—"Mormon" books. None of these anti—"Mormon" works publish the letter in full, and doubtless for the reason that in this second letter Mr. Anthon contradicts several statements that he makes in his letter to E. D. Howe. Following is his letter to Rev. Coit:

New York, April 3, 1841.

Rev. and Dear Sir: I have often heard that the "Mormons" claimed me for an auxiliary, but as no one until the present time has even requested from me a statement in writing, I have not deemed it worth while to say anything publicly on the subject. What I do

know of the sect relates to some of the early movements; and as the facts may amuse you, while they will furnish a satisfactory answer to the charge of my being a "Mormon" proselyte, I proceed to lay them before you in detail.

Many years ago,—the precise date I do not now recollect,—a plain-looking countryman called upon me with a letter from Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell, requesting me to examine, and give my opinion upon a certain paper, marked with various characters, which the doctor confessed he could not decipher, and which the bearer of the note was very anxious to have explained. A very brief examination of the paper, convinced me that it was a mere hoax, and a very clumsy one too. The characters were arranged in columns, like the Chinese mode of writing, and presented the most singular medley that I ever beheld. Greek, Hebrew and all sorts of letters, more or less distorted, either through unskilfulness or from actual design, were intermingled with sundry delineations of half moons, stars, and other natural objects, and the whole ended in a rude representation of the Mexican zodiac. The conclusion was irresistible, that some cunning fellow had prepared the paper in question for the purpose of imposing upon the countryman who brought it, and I told the man so without any hesitation. He then proceeded to give me the history of the whole affair, which convinced me that he had fallen into the hands of some sharper, while it left me in great astonishment at his simplicity. On my telling the bearer of the paper that an attempt had been made to impose on him and defraud him of his property, he requested me to give him my opinion in writing about the paper which he had shown to me. I did so without hesitation, partly for the man's sake, and partly to let the individual "behind the curtain" see that his trick was discovered. The import of what I wrote was, as far as I can now recollect, simply this, that the marks in the paper appeared to be merely an imitation of various alphabetical characters, and had, in my opinion, no meaning at all connected with them. The countryman then took his leave, with many thanks, and with the express declaration that he would in no shape part with his farm, or embark in the speculation of printing the golden book.^[7]

The matter rested here for a considerable time, until one day, when I had ceased entirely to think of the countryman and his paper, he paid me a second visit. He now brought with him a duodecimo volume, which he said was a translation into English of the "Golden Bible." He also stated, that notwithstanding his original determination, he had been induced evidently to sell his farm, and apply the money to the publication of the book, and received the golden plates as a security for payment. He begged my acceptance of the volume, assuring me that it would be found extremely interesting, and that it was already "making great noise" in the upper part of the state. Suspecting now, that some serious trick was on foot, and that my plain-looking visitor might be in fact a very cunning fellow, I declined his present, and merely contended myself with a slight examination of the volume while he stood by. The more I declined receiving it, however, the more urgent the man became in offering the book, until at last I told him plainly that if he left the volume, as he said he intended to do, I should most assuredly throw it after him as he departed. I then asked him how he could be so foolish as to sell his farm and engage in this affair; and requested him to tell me if the plates were really of gold. In answer to this latter inquiry, he said, that he had not seen the plates himself, which were carefully locked up in a trunk, but that he had the trunk in his possession. I advised him by all means to open the trunk and examine its contents, and if the plates proved to be of gold, which I did not believe at all, to sell them immediately. His reply was, that if he opened the trunk, the "curse of Heaven would descend upon him and his children. However," added he, "I will agree to open it, provided you take the 'curse of Heaven' upon yourself, for having advised me to the step." I told him I was perfectly willing to do so, and begged him to hasten home and examine the trunk, for he would find that he had been cheated. He promised to do as I recommended, and left me, taking his book with him. I have never seen him since.

Such is a plain statement of all I know respecting the "Mormons." My impression now is, that the plain-looking countryman was none other than the Prophet Smith himself, who assumed an appearance of great simplicity in order to entrap me, if possible, into some recommendation of his book. That the Prophet aided me, by his inspiration, in interpreting the volume, is only one of the many amusing falsehoods which the "Mormonites" utter, relative to my participation in their doctrines. Of these doctrines I know nothing whatever, nor have I ever heard a single discourse from any of their preachers, although I have often felt a strong curiosity to become an auditor, since my friends tell me that they frequently name me in their sermons, and even go so far as to say that I am alluded to in the prophecies of scripture!

If what I have here written shall prove of any service in opening the eyes of some of their deluded followers to the real designs of those who profess to be the apostles of "Mormonism," it will afford me satisfaction equalled, I have no doubt, only by that which yourself will feel on this subject.

I remain, very respectfully and truly,

Your friend,

CHAS. ANTHON.

It will be observed that there is a discrepancy between the letter written by Professor Anthon to the Rev. Mr. Coit and the one he sent to E. D. Howe. In the latter he states that he refused to give his opinion in writing on the characters submitted to him; but in his letter to Rev. Coit he says that he gave a written opinion to Harris without hesitation, and to the effect that the marks on the paper appeared to be merely an imitation of various alphabetical characters that had no meaning at all connected with them. According to Martin Harris' statement he gave him a certificate to the effect that the characters submitted were genuine, and that the translation accompanying them was correct; but upon hearing that the existence of the Nephite plates was made known to Joseph Smith by a heavenly messenger, he requested the return of the paper he had given Martin Harris, and he destroyed it, saying that the visitation of angels had ceased, etc., I shall leave it for the anti—"Mormon" friends of Mr. Anthon to reconcile the contradiction that occurs in his statements, merely remarking that since the doctor in one letter declares that he refused to give Martin Harris a written opinion on the characters; and in the other that he gave him a written opinion, increases very much one's faith in Martin Harris' statement as against that of Professor Anthon's upon this point; namely, that the Professor gave Harris a written statement, but afterwards recalled and destroyed it. The reader should observe also that in his letter to Rev. Coit, written in 1841, the Professor says that no one until that time had ever requested from him a statement in writing on the subject of his connection with the Book of Mormon. Yet as a matter of fact E. D. Howe had addressed him a letter on the subject, asking him for a statement, in 1834, to which request the professor responded, telling substantially the same story as in this letter to Rev. Coit, excepting as to the written opinion furnished to Harris. The contradictions in Anthon's letters leave him in a most unenviable situation; and doubtless accounts for anti-"Mormons" publishing extracts only from his letters.

The statements of Professor Anthon and Martin Harris are very contradictory, but the sequence will show that there is much that supports the statement of Martin Harris in the main as true; while the anxiety of the professor to disconnect himself as far as possible from any association with "these wretched fanatics," will account for his version of the incident. The object of Mr. Harris in presenting these transcribed characters to the learned professor was, undoubtedly, to learn if they were true characters, or only the idle invention of Joseph Smith. That the answer of Professor Anthon and Dr. Mitchell was in favor of their being true characters is evidenced by the fact that Martin Harris returned immediately to Joseph Smith, in Harmony, made his report, and thence went to Palmyra, in New York, to arrange his business affairs that he might hasten back to Pennsylvania to become the amanuensis of the young Prophet in the work of translation. This Martin Harris would not likely have done if Professor Anthon's answer had been what that gentleman represents it to have been in his letters to Mr. Howe and Rev. Coit; nor would Martin Harris have ventured, subsequently, to have furnished the money to pay for the publication of the first edition of the book, had he been assured by the professor that the whole thing was a "hoax" or a "scheme" to cheat him out of his money.

As stated above, Martin Harris returned to Palmyra after this interview with Professor Anthon, arranged his affairs, and joined the Prophet in Harmony, about the 12th of April, 1828, when he commenced writing as Joseph translated. This work he continued until the 14th of June following—two months, by which time they had translated enough to make one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript, of large sheets—usually called fool's cap paper.

Soon after Mr. Harris commenced to write for the Prophet he began to importune him for the privilege of showing so much of the translation as they had made to a number of his friends. This request the Prophet refused to grant. Nothing daunted by this refusal, Harris asked the Prophet to inquire of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim if he might not have that privilege. This Joseph did, and Harris' request was denied. He importuned him to ask again, with the like result, and yet again did he implore that the Prophet would ask the Lord for his permission.

"After much solicitation," says the Prophet, in his account of this affair, "I again inquired of the Lord, and permission was granted him to have the writings on certain conditions; which were, that he should show them only to his brother, Preserved Harris, his own wife, his father and his mother, and a Mrs. Cobb, a sister of his wife. In accordance with this last answer, I required of him that he should bind himself in a covenant to me in the most solemn manner that he would not do otherwise than had been directed. He did so. He bound himself as I required of him, took the writings, and went his way;"^[9] and the Prophet took advantage of the absence of Harris, who had acted as his scribe, to visit his parents at Manchester.

The solemn engagement which Martin Harris made with the Prophet he broke. He showed the writings to other persons than those named in his agreement with the Prophet, and these stole the precious manuscript from him, and he was never able to recover it. This circumstance also went hard with Joseph as to his standing with the Lord. He had allowed himself to be over-persuaded by the importunities of Martin Harris, and that after he had twice learned that it was not the will of the Lord that Harris should have the manuscript. He learned that Harris had lost the one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript while he was yet in Manchester visiting with his parents; and immediately returned to Harmony, where he humbled himself in prayer before God that he might obtain forgiveness for his error; but apparently to no immediate purpose, for Moroni appeared to him and demanded the plates and also the Urim and Thummim. These were surrendered, with what anguish of soul one may readily understand. Exactly what length of time

they were withheld from him cannot be determined, but evidently not long; for in July of the same year the angel guardian of the record, Moroni, appeared to him again and presented the plates and Urim and Thummim to him. The Prophet, through the medium of the holy instrument, obtained the following revelation which bears the date of July, 1828:^[10]

"The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught. For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand, nor to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round.

"Remember, remember, that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men; for although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him.

"Behold, you have been entrusted with these things, but how strict were your commandments; and remember also the promises which were made to you, if you did not transgress them. And behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men. For, behold, you should not have feared man more than God. Although men set at naught the counsels of God, and despise his words—yet you should have been faithful; and he would have extended his arm and supported you against all the fiery darts of the adversary; and he would have been with you in every time of trouble.

"Behold, thou art Joseph, and thou wast chosen to do the work of the Lord, but because of transgression, if thou art not aware thou wilt fall. But remember, God is merciful; therefore, repent of that which thou hast done, which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work; except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift.

"And when thou deliveredst up that which God had given thee sight and power to translate, thou deliveredst up that which was sacred into the hands of a wicked man, who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own wisdom. And this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season—for thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning. Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—and to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, ^[11] through the testimony of their fathers—and this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren, the Nephites, because of their iniquities and their abominations. And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel, and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen."

The Prophet informs us that after receiving this revelation, the Urim and Thummim and also the plates were taken from him, but in a few days they were returned to him, whereupon he again inquired of the Lord and received the following very important revelation:^[12]

Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings, which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them. And you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened. Nevertheless, it is now restored unto you again; therefore see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun. Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end. Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. Behold, they have sought to destroy you; yea, even the man in whom you have trusted has sought to destroy you. And for this cause I said that he is a wicked man, for, he has sought to take away the things wherewith you have been entrusted; and he has also sought to destroy your gift. And because you have delivered the writings into his hands, behold, wicked men have taken them from you. Therefore, you have delivered them up, yea, that which was sacred, unto wickedness. And, behold, Satan hath put into their hearts to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands. And behold, I say unto you, that because they have altered the words, they read contrary from that which you translated and caused to be written; and, on this wise, the devil has sought to lay a cunning plan, that he may destroy this work; for he hath put it into their hearts to do this, that by lying

they may say they have caught you in the words which you have pretended to translate.

Verily, I say unto you, that I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing. For behold, he has put it into their hearts to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God, in asking to translate it over again. And then, behold, they say and think in their hearts—We will see if God has given him power to translate; if so, he will also give him power again; and if God giveth him power again, or if he translates again, or, in other words, if he bringeth forth the same words, behold, we have the same with us, and we have altered them; therefore they will not agree, and we will say that he has lied in his words, and that he has no gift, and that he has no power; therefore we will destroy him, and also the work; and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts, he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good; and their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore they will not ask of me. Satan stirreth them up, that he may lead their souls to destruction. And thus he has laid a cunning plan, thinking to destroy the work of God; but I will require this at their hands, and it shall turn to their shame and condemnation in the day of judgment. Yea, he stirreth up their hearts to anger against this work. Yea, he saith unto them: Deceive, and lie in wait to catch, that ye may destroy; behold, this is no harm; and thus he flattereth them, and telleth them that it is no sin to lie that they may catch a man in a lie, that they may destroy him. And thus he flattereth them, and leadeth them along until he draggeth their souls down to hell; and thus he causeth them to catch themselves in their own snare. And thus he goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, woe be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God.

Now, behold, they have altered these words, because Satan saith unto them: He hath deceived you—and thus he flattereth them away to do iniquity, to get thee to tempt the Lord thy God.

Behold, I say unto you, that you shall not translate again those words which have gone forth out of your hands; for, behold, they shall not accomplish their evil designs in lying against those words. For, behold, if you should bring forth the same words they will say that you have lied that you have pretended to translate, but that you have contradicted yourself. And, behold, they will publish this, and Satan will harden the hearts of the people to stir them up to anger against you, that they will not believe my words. Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this generation. But behold, here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work of translation.

Marvel not that I said unto you: here is wisdom, show it not unto the world—for I said, show it not unto the world, that you may be preserved. Behold, I do not say that you shall not show it unto the righteous; but as you cannot always judge the righteous, or as you cannot always tell the wicked from the righteous, therefore I say unto you, hold your peace until I shall see fit to make all things known unto the world concerning the matter.

And now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi; yea, and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi.

And now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of King Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained; and behold, you shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.

Behold, they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi. Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work. And, behold, all the remainder of this work does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people. And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers; yea, and this was their faith—that my gospel, which I gave unto them that they might preach in their days, might come unto their brethren the Lamanites, and also all

that had become Lamanites because of their dissensions.

Now, this is not all—their faith in their prayers was that this gospel should be made known also, if it were possible that other nations should possess this land; and thus they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel in this land might have eternal life; yea, that it might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be.

And now, behold, according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.

And for this cause have I said: if this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them. Now I do not say this to destroy my church, but I say this to build up my church; therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. But it is they who do not fear me, neither keep my commandments but build up churches unto themselves to get gain, yea, and all those that do wickedly and build up the kingdom of the devil—yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that it is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center.

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I came unto my own and my own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. I am he who said—Other sheep have I which are not of this fold, unto my disciples, and many there were that understood me not.

And I will show unto this people that I had other sheep, and that they were a branch of the house of Jacob; and I will bring to light their marvelous works, which they did in my name; yea, and I will also bring to light my gospel which was ministered unto them, and, behold, they shall not deny that which you have received, but they shall build it up, and shall bring to light the true points of my doctrine, yea, and the only doctrine which is in me; and this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention; yea, Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them. Therefore, I will unfold unto them this great mystery; for, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts; yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely.

Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church.

And now, behold, whosoever is of my church, and endureth of my church to the end, him will I establish upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

And now, remember the words of him who is the life and the light of the world, your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Amen."^[13]

Encouraged to be moderate in his exertions at translating by the admonition in the foregoing revelation not to run faster, or labor more than he had strength and means provided to enable him to proceed, the Prophet did not immediately attempt to resume the work of translation, but worked upon a small farm which he had purchased of his wife's father.

As this episode of losing the one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript, together with the loss for a season of the gift to translate, and being required to surrender all the sacred things which had been entrusted to his keeping, was unquestionably a cause of deep sorrow to the young Prophet, so the restoration of the plates and Urim and Thummim to him must have been a joy unspeakable. How Martin Harris felt—what anguish of heart—what sense of chagrin, or how deeply he repented his folly is not recorded; but as he was not a man of keen sensibilities, it may be that his sufferings were not intense. At any rate we next hear of him in March, 1829, and he is still clamoring for a witness from the Lord that Joseph Smith had the plates, of which the Prophet had testified. The Prophet inquired of the Lord and obtained a revelation of which the following is the part that has reference to Martin Harris' request:

Behold, I say unto you, that as my servant Martin Harris has desired a witness at my hand, that you, my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., have got the plates of which you have testified and borne record that you have received of me; and now, behold, this shall you say unto him—he who spake unto you, said unto you: I, the Lord, am God, and have given these things unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and have commanded you that you should stand as a witness of these things; and I have caused you that you should enter into a covenant with me, that you should not show them except to those persons to whom I commanded you; and you have no power over them except I grant it unto you. * * * Behold, verily I say unto you, I have reserved those things which I have entrusted unto you, my servant Joseph, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations; but this generation shall have my word through you;

and in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you. Yea, they shall know of a surety that these things are true, for from heaven will I declare it unto them. I will give them power that they may behold and view these things as they are; and to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation, in this the beginning of the rising up and the coming forth of my church out of the wilderness. * * * And the testimony of three witnesses will I send forth of my word. And behold, whosoever believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit; and they shall be born of me, even of water and of the spirit. * * * And their testimony shall also go forth unto the condemnation of this generation if they harden their hearts against them; for a desolating scourge shall go forth among the inhabitants of the earth, and shall continue to be poured out from time to time, if they repent not, until the earth is empty, and the inhabitants thereof are consumed away and utterly destroyed by the brightness of my coming. Behold, I tell you these things, even as I also told the people of the destruction of Jerusalem; and my word shall be verified at this time as it hath hitherto been verified. * * *

* * * And now, again I speak unto you, my servant Joseph, concerning the man that desires the witness—behold, I say unto him, he exalts himself, and does not humble himself sufficiently before me; but if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a view of the things which he desires to see. And then he shall say unto the people of this generation: Behold, I have seen the things which the Lord has shown unto Joseph Smith, Jun., and I know of a surety that they are true, for I have seen them, for they have been shown unto me by the power of God and not of man. And I the Lord command him, my servant Martin Harris, that he shall say no more unto them concerning these things, except he shall say: I have seen them, and they have been shown unto me by the power of God; and these are the words which he shall say. But if he deny this he will break the covenant which he has before covenanted with me, and behold, he is condemned. And now, except he humble himself and acknowledge unto me the things that he has done which are wrong,^[14] and covenant with me that he will keep my commandments, and exercise faith in me, behold, I say unto him, he shall have no such views, for I will grant unto him no views of the things of which I have spoken. And if this be the case, I command you, my servant Joseph, that you shall say unto him, that he shall do no more, nor trouble me any more concerning this matter. And if this be the case, behold, I say unto thee Joseph, when thou hast translated a few more pages^[15] thou shalt stop for a season, even until I command thee again; then thou mayest translate again. And except thou do this, behold, thou shalt have no more gift, and I will take away the things which I have entrusted with thee. And now, because I foresee the lying in wait to destroy thee, yea, I foresee that if my servant Martin Harris humbleth not himself and receive a witness from my hand, that he will fall into transgression; and there are many that lie in wait to destroy thee from off the face of the earth; and for this cause, that thy days may be prolonged, I have given unto thee these commandments. Yea, for this cause I have said: Stop, and stand still until I command thee, and I will provide means whereby thou mayest accomplish the thing which I have commanded thee. And if thou art faithful in keeping my commandments, thou shalt be lifted up at the last day. Amen.^[16]

It will be observed here that the language of this revelation takes on a sternness of tone and an independence in respect to Martin Harris and his future connection with the work that is suitable to the conduct of that vacillating man; and in effect gives him sharply to understand that there must be repentance deep and sincere, and humiliation before God, or he may go his way and have no further lot nor part in the great work of the Lord then coming forth.

Footnotes

[1.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, p. 18.

[2.](#) This upon the authority of Samuel M. Smucker, author of a "History of the Mormons," p. 37.—Hurst & Co., N. Y.

[3.](#) This fac simile of Nephite characters is copied from "The Prophet" of December 21, 1844 (vol. I, no. 31).

[4.](#) *Stevenson's Reminiscences*, p. 33.

[5.](#) The writer is of the opinion that there is in this statement too wide a scope given to what Professor Anthon said of the translation of the Egyptian-Nephite characters. Of course, in the transcripts the professor would doubtless recognize some Egyptian characters of the hieratic Egyptian, and in the translation would also find a right interpretation of those characters, as it will be seen by his letters, quoted later in the body of the work. He may have acknowledged that the characters submitted to him were true characters, but beyond this I do not think he could give confirmation as to the *correctness of the translation*; for, according to the writers of the

Book of Mormon, they had changed somewhat the characters in both languages in which they made records, both in the Egyptian, and also in the Hebrew (See Mormon 9:32, 43); and Moroni adds: "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" (Mormon 9:34), referring to the Urim and Thummim or "Interpreters," as the Nephites call that instrument. It follows from this that neither Professor Anthon nor any one else could have confirmed the translation beyond perhaps saying that some one or more of the Egyptian characters, which he recognized in the transcript, had been assigned their true significance.

[6.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, p. 20

[7.](#) To this point the Letter of Professor Anthon is copied from *Early Days of Mormonism*, by J. H. Kennedy, Scribners & Sons, 1888, p. 268. The remainder of the letter is copied from Gregg's *Prophet of Palmyra*, pp. 60-62.

[8.](#) "Prophet of Palmyra", (Gregg) pp. 60-62.

[9.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, p. 21.

[10.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, pp. 21, 22; also Doc. and Cov., sec. 3.

[11.](#) The reader will of course understand that reference is here made to the descendants of these ancient American peoples.

[12.](#) The revelation, here quoted in the *History of Joseph Smith—Millennial Star*, vol. 14 (Supplement) p. 8; and also in some of the earlier editions of the Doctrine and Covenants (sec. 10), bears the date of "May, 1829." This date, however, must be wrong, because contradictory of the language of the prophet who in speaking of this revelation says that after the plates and Urim and Thummim were taken from him, after he had received the revelation dated July, 1828, (just quoted)—"In a few days they were returned to me, when I inquired of the Lord, and the Lord said thus to me." Then follows the revelation, the date of which is under consideration. If the date of the revelation given July, 1828, in which the Prophet is reproved for importuning the Lord to allow Martin Harris to have one hundred and sixteen pages of translation from the Book of Mormon, is correct—then it could scarcely be said, "in a few days" the Urim and Thummim was returned to the Prophet; that he inquired and then received the revelation in question if that revelation was received in May, 1829. That would make nine or ten months' time between these two revelations instead of "a few days." Moreover, the matter of the revelation is more in keeping with the events of a few days after July, 1828, than with May, 1829. Oliver Cowdery came to Joseph Smith on the 5th of April, 1829; and on the 7th began to assist him in the translation. This was before May, 1829, the alleged date of the revelation in question, and it is scarcely likely that the work of translation was resumed after the loss of the manuscript by Harris, before the revelation given informing the prophet of the intention of those who had stolen it. My conclusion is that the revelation erroneously dated May, 1829, was given "a few days after" the one bearing date of "July, 1828."

[13.](#) Doc. and Cov., sec. 10.

[14.](#) Doubtless an allusion to his breaking the covenant with Joseph respecting the manuscript which was lost.

[15.](#) Most likely Emma Smith, the Prophet's wife, wrote for him during these days when he was evidently translating occasionally.

[16.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, p. 28; also Doc. and Cov., sec. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

TRANSLATION OF THE RECORD—(CONTINUED) OLIVER COWDERY, AMANUENSIS.

On the 5th day of April,^[1] as if in fulfilment of the promise made to Joseph Smith in the revelation concerning Martin Harris, just quoted, namely, that the Lord would provide means whereby the prophet might accomplish the thing which the Lord had commanded him to do—Oliver Cowdery came to the young Prophet's house, at Harmony, Pennsylvania. This was the first meeting of these two men. Oliver Cowdery, a native of Vermont, and now twenty-four years of age, had moved into the state of New York about four years previous to this, and for a time had been employed as a clerk in a store. In the winter of 1828-9 he left the store and taught the district school in the town of Manchester, which was only some nine miles from his father's home. At Manchester he became acquainted with the Smith family, Joseph Smith, Sen., being a patron of

the school he taught. According to the American custom of those days, the school teacher "boarded round" in turn with the families of the neighborhood. This brought Oliver Cowdery into immediate contact with the Smith family, and while he was boarding at their home the parents of the Prophet related to him the circumstances of their son obtaining the Nephite record.

Young Cowdery became intensely interested in the story related to him. Meantime he met David Whitmer in Palmyra, a young man about his own age, who lived with his father's family some twenty-five miles from Palmyra, near the town of Waterloo, in the township called Fayette, Seneca county, at the north end of Seneca Lake. In his conversation with young Whitmer, Oliver told him of his acquaintance with the Smith family and expressed himself to the effect that there must be something in the story of finding the plates, and he announced his intention to investigate the matter.^[2] Later, when Oliver started for Harmony, where the Prophet was living, he passed the Whitmer home at Fayette, and promised David that he would report his findings to him concerning Joseph having the plates.

Oliver became convinced that Joseph's story was true, and being informed by the Prophet that it was the will of God that he should remain and act as his scribe in the work of translation, he did so, and on the 7th of April, 1829, commenced to write as the prophet indited the translation obtained by means of the Urim and Thummim.

Oliver, in a few days, became anxious to learn more largely the will of the Lord concerning himself and his connection with the work then coming forth, and the Prophet, through the Urim and Thummim obtained a revelation for him in which occur the passages:

A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men. Behold, I am God; give heed unto my word, which is quick and powerful. * * * Behold, the field is white already to harvest; therefore, whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God. * * * Now as you have asked, behold, I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion; seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich. * * * Verily, verily, I say unto thee, blessed art thou for what thou hast done; for thou hast inquired of me, and behold, as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. If it had not been so, thou wouldst not have come to the place where thou art at this time. Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did enlighten thy mind; and now I tell thee these things that thou mayest know that thou hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth; yea, I tell thee, that thou mayest know that there is none else save God that knowest thy thoughts and the intents of thy heart. I tell thee these things as a witness unto thee—that the words of the work which thou hast been writing are true. Therefore be diligent; stand by my servant Joseph, faithfully, in whatsoever difficult circumstances he may be for the word's sake. Admonish him in his faults, and also receive admonition of him. Be patient; be sober; be temperate; have patience, faith, hope and charity. Behold, thou art Oliver, and I have spoken unto thee because of thy desires; therefore treasure up these words in thy heart. Be faithful and diligent in keeping the commandments of God, and I will encircle thee in the arms of my love.

* * * Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart, that you might know concerning the truth of these things. Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? * * * And now, behold, you have received a witness; for if I have told you things which no man knoweth have ye not received a witness?^[3]

These revelations, it should be observed, contain sharp reproofs for the transgressor. They do not flatter Joseph Smith any more than they do Martin Harris, though Joseph is the one through whom they were given. Each is reproved and evidently without respect of person. They represent the Lord as holding out no promise either to the Prophet or his associates of immunity from difficulty, from trial. They are redolent rather of warning. The Prophet is plainly told of the many that were lying in wait to destroy him. Deep humility and repentance is required when a wrong is committed; and if that is not forthcoming then behold the self-willed, the proud, are told to go their way, and trouble the Lord no further concerning their future connection with this work.

Look, in passing, at this revelation to Oliver Cowdery. There is no flattering promise of a worldly character in it. A great and a marvelous work is about to come forth; thrust in your sickle and reap; keep my commandments, is almost sternly said; seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion; seek not for riches, but for wisdom; be diligent; stand by my servant Joseph in whatsoever difficult circumstances he may be for the word's sake. Then there are to be difficult circumstances? "Admonish him in his faults." What, the Prophet! Yes, the Prophet—he is not to be above admonition. What humility in the Prophet is here! This smacks of the Spirit of Christ. Receive admonition of him. Be patient. Be sober. Be temperate. Have patience, faith, hope and charity. This is admirable. False prophets have no such basic principles as these. They build not with such stones. And Oliver's reward? Not riches of this world. Not greatness in the eyes of men. Not the honors and applause of the world. "If thou wilt do good, yea and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God." That is to be his reward. There is nothing worldly in all this. This spirit is worthy the great work these young men are, under God, bringing

forth. This is the kind of atmosphere one would expect to find surrounding men engaged in such a work. But it is time to return to the narrative.

When Oliver found that the secret meditations of his heart were thus revealed through Joseph Smith; when his secret prayers were revealed and the answer of God's Spirit to those prayers made known, he could no longer doubt that his new-found friend was a prophet of God. It must have been with renewed zeal that he took up again his work as a scribe. It was of these days that he afterwards wrote:

These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom. Day after day I continued uninterrupted to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, "Interpreters," the history or record called the Book of Mormon.^[4]

Soon after this, namely, on the 15th day of May, 1829, Oliver Cowdery himself became a witness to the ministration of an angel, for it was upon that date that John the Baptist appeared to him and Joseph Smith while they were engaged in prayer in the woods, near Harmony. John ordained them to the Aaronic priesthood and instructed them upon the subject of baptism, a full account of which is given in *New Witnesses for God*, vol. I.^[5] Subsequently he, with Joseph, received another visitation of angels some time in the month of June following, when Peter, James and John conferred upon them the Melchizedek priesthood on the banks of the Susquehanna river, a full account of which is also given in vol. I, of *New Witnesses for God*.^[6]

Meantime Oliver was writing his friend, David Whitmer, his findings as to the truth of the Prophet Joseph having the plates. He wrote soon after his arrival in Harmony that he was convinced that Joseph Smith had the records.^[7] Shortly after this, doubtless immediately after Joseph received the revelation in which the secret meditations and prayers of Oliver respecting the work before he saw the Prophet were made known, Oliver wrote a second letter to David, in which he enclosed a few lines of what had been translated, and assured him that he knew of a surety that Joseph Smith had a record of a people that inhabited the American continents in the ancient times: and that the plates they were translating gave a history of these people; he moreover assured David that he had "revealed knowledge" concerning the truth of what he affirmed. These letters young Whitmer showed to his parents, and to his brothers and sisters.

Mr. Joseph Knight, Sen., of Colesville, Broome county, New York, several times brought the young men provisions—food—which enabled them to continue the work of translation without interruption. But for this timely assistance the work of translation must have been relinquished from time to time in order to secure supplies. Mr. Knight knew the Smith family and had called upon them a number of times at their home in Manchester. He evidently had considerable faith in the claims of Joseph concerning the Book of Mormon; for on the occasion of his visit to him in May, 1829, he desired to know what his duty was with reference to the work that the Lord was about to bring forth. The prophet inquired of the Lord and, as in the case of Oliver Cowdery, after declaring that a great and marvelous work was about to come forth, the revelation said:

Keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Behold, I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work; and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope and charity, being temperate in all things whatsoever shall be entrusted in his care.^[8]

For a time the Prophet had been permitted to pursue the work of translation at Harmony without interference. But now there began to be mutterings of an approaching storm of persecution. Threats were frequent, and the young men were only preserved from actual violence by the blessing of the Lord and the influence of Mr. Isaac Hale, father of the Prophet's wife; who, though he had no faith in the Prophet's work, and in the past had manifested some hostility towards him, still believed in law and order; was opposed to mob violence; and was willing that Joseph and his associates should be permitted to complete their work without interference.^[9]

On account of the manifestation of this unfriendly spirit in the community, however, Joseph and Oliver kept secret for a time the circumstance of their ordination to the priesthood and their baptism. They could not, however, long continue silent on such a subject, and in a few days, under a sense of duty, they commenced to reason out of the scriptures with their friends and acquaintances concerning the work of God. But Joseph was evidently uneasy concerning their safety at Harmony, and under his direction Oliver wrote to David Whitmer at Fayette, asking him to come down to Harmony and take them to the elder Whitmer's home, giving as a reason for their rather strange request that they had received a commandment from God to that effect.^[10] This request found David Whitmer in the midst of his spring work. He had some twenty acres of land to plow and concluded to do that and then go. "I got up one morning to go to work as usual," he says, "and on going to the field, found that between five and seven acres of my land had been plowed under during the night. I don't know who did it; but it was done just as I would have done it myself, and the plow was left standing in the furrow. This enabled me to start sooner."^[11] Nor was this the only assistance of like character given to him. While harrowing in a field of wheat before starting on his journey he found to his surprise that he had accomplished more in a few hours than was usual to do in two or three days. The day following this circumstance he went out

to spread plaster over a field, according to the custom of the farmers in that locality, when, to his surprise, he found the work had been done, and well done. David Whitmer's sister, who lived near the field, told him that three strangers had appeared in the field the day before and spread the plaster with remarkable skill. She at the time presumed that they were men whom David had hired to do the work.^[12]

This assistance, provided through some divine agency—it can be accounted for in no other way, enabled David Whitmer to respond sooner than he otherwise could have done to the call to go and bring the Prophet and his associate from Harmony, where mob violence was impending, to the home of his father, Peter Whitmer, where the work of translation could be finished in peace and security.

When David Whitmer was approaching the little village of Harmony with his two-horse team and wagon, he was met some distance from it by the Prophet and Oliver. "Oliver told me," says David Whitmer, in relating the circumstance, "that Joseph had informed him when I started from home, where I had stopped the first night, how I read the sign at the tavern; where I stopped the next night, etc.; and that I would be there that day before dinner, and this was why they had come out to meet me; all of which was exactly as Joseph had told Oliver, at which I was greatly astonished."^[13]

The day following David Whitmer's arrival at Harmony the plates were packed up and delivered into the care of the Angel Moroni, that they might be safely conveyed to Fayette. "When I was returning to Fayette," says David Whitmer, "with Joseph and Oliver, all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an old fashioned, wooden spring-seat, and Joseph behind us, when traveling along in a clear, open place, a very pleasant, nice looking old man suddenly appeared by the side of our wagon and saluted us with, 'Good morning; it is very warm;' at the same time wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation, and by a sign from Joseph, I invited him to ride if he was going our way. But he said very pleasantly, 'No, I am going to Cumorah.' This name was somewhat new to me, and I did not know what 'Cumorah' meant. We all gazed at him and at each other, and as I looked round inquiringly of Joseph, the old man instantly disappeared, so that I did not see him again."

Replying to the question, "Did you notice his appearance?" David Whitmer replied: "I should think I did. He was, I should think, about five feet eight or nine inches tall and heavy set, about such a man as James Cleve there (a gentleman present at the Whitmer, Pratt and Smith interview), but heavier. His face was as large; he was dressed in a suit of brown woolen clothes, his hair and beard were white, like Brother Pratt's, but his beard was not so heavy. I also remember that he had on his back a sort of knapsack with something in it shaped like a book. It was the messenger who had the plates, who had taken them from Joseph just prior to our starting from Harmony."^[14]

Soon after the arrival at the Whitmer residence, in the garden near by, Moroni once more delivered the sacred record to Joseph, and the work of translation was renewed with even greater vigor than at Harmony; for when Oliver would tire of writing, one of the Whitmers or Emma Smith would relieve him.

David Whitmer says that soon after the installment of Joseph, his wife, and Oliver Cowdery in the Whitmer household, he saw something which led him to believe that the plates were concealed in his father's barn, and frankly asked the prophet if it were so. Joseph replied that it was. "Some time after this," David adds, "my mother was going to milk the cows, when she was met out near the yard by the same old man [meaning the one who had saluted his party on the way from Harmony; at least, David judged him to be the same, doubtless from his mother's description of him,] who said to her: 'You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors, but you are tired because of the increase of your toil; it is proper, therefore, that you should receive a witness, that your faith may be strengthened.' Thereupon he showed her the plates. My father and mother had a large family of their own, the addition to it, therefore, of Joseph, his wife Emma, and Oliver, very greatly increased the toil and anxiety of my mother. And although she had never complained she had sometimes felt that her labor was too much, or, at least, she was perhaps beginning to feel so. This circumstance, however, completely removed all such feelings, and nerved her up for her increased responsibilities."^[15]

Footnotes

¹. This date in the prophet's history, published in the *Millennial Star* (Supplement), vol. 14, p. 12, is set down as the 15th of April, and the day Oliver began writing as Joseph translated is said to be the 17th of April. The 15th and 17th, however, are typographical errors. In the original manuscript of the History of the Church, in the Historian's Office, the dates are written the 5th and 7th; see also *Times and Seasons*, vol. I, p. 201, where Oliver Cowdery gives the dates 5th and 7th of April, 1829.

². Statement of David Whitmer, in *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881.

³. Doc. and Cov., sec. 6. The reader may think I am quoting over copiously from these revelations given while the translation of the Book of Mormon was in progress; and he may think that these incidents have little or nothing to do with the story of the translation, and the story of the translation itself but little to do with the object of this work. I would suggest, however, that this

history of the translation is necessary to future arguments to be made when I come to the considerations of the objections to the Book of Mormon, in part IV, where I shall examine other theories for the origin of the Book of Mormon. Besides, I want the reader to know the atmosphere in which this work of translation was done; and for that purpose call especial attention to the spirit of the several revelations that have been quoted.

[4.](#) *Times and Seasons*, vol. II, p. 201.

[5.](#) Chapter 14.

[6.](#) Chapter 14.

[7.](#) Whitmer's statement, *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881.

[8.](#) *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 47.

[9.](#) *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 44.

[10.](#) Whitmer's statement, *Kansas City Journal*, June 5, 1881. Also report of visit to David Whitmer, by Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, *Millennial Star*, vol. 40, pp. 769-774.

[11.](#) Statement of David Whitmer, *Pratt and Smith Report, Millennial Star*, vol. 40, pp. 769-774.

Let it be observed that this reported conversation was published during the life time of David Whitmer. It took place on the 7th of Sept., 1878; and Whitmer did not die until 25th Jan., 1888.

[12.](#) Cannon's *Life of Joseph Smith*, pp. 67, 68.

[13.](#) Statement of David Whitmer, *Pratt and Smith Report, Millennial Star*, vol. 40, pp. 769-774. Another instance that in like manner illustrates the seership of the prophet Joseph is related in the church history, and which occurred while making a journey from Independence, Missouri, to Ohio, in company with Bishop Newel K. Whitney. Near New Albany their horses took fright and while they were running at full speed Bishop Whitney attempted to jump out of the conveyance, but caught his foot in the wheel and had his leg and foot broken in several places. This occasioned delay of several weeks among a not very friendly people; for besides their manifest coldness an attempt was made to poison the Prophet. And now the Prophet's statement: "Brother Whitney had not had his foot moved from the bed for nearly four weeks, when I went into his room, after a walk in the grove, and told him if he would agree to start for home in the morning, we would take a wagon to the river, about four miles, and there would be a ferry boat in waiting which would take us quickly across, where we would find a hack which would take us directly to the landing, where we should find a boat, in waiting, and we would be going up the river before 10 o'clock, and have a prosperous journey home. He took courage and told me he would go. We started next morning, and found everything as I had told him, for we were passing rapidly up the river before 10 o'clock, and landing at Wellsville, took stage coach to Chardon, from thence in a wagon to Kirtland, where we arrived some time in June." (*History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 272.)

[14.](#) Whitmer's statement, *Pratt and Smith Report, Millennial Star*, vol. 40, pp. 769-774.

[15.](#) *Pratt and Smith Report, Millennial Star*, vol. 40, p. 772.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MANNER OF TRANSLATING THE BOOK OF MORMON.

Relative to the manner of translating the Book of Mormon the Prophet himself has said but little. "Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift and power of God,"^[1] is the most extended published statement made by him upon the subject. Of the Urim and Thummim he says: "With the record was found a curious instrument which the ancients called a Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate."^[2]

Oliver Cowdery, one of the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, and the Prophet's chief amanuensis, says of the work of translation in which he assisted: "I wrote with my own pen the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages), as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he translated by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, or, as it is called by that book, 'Holy Interpreters.'"^[3] This is all he has left on record on the manner of translating the book.^[4]

David Whitmer, another of the Three Witnesses, is more specific on this subject. After describing

the means the Prophet employed to exclude the light from the "Seer Stone," he says: "In the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man."^[5]

There will appear between this statement of David Whitmer's and what is said both by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery a seeming contradiction. Joseph and Oliver both say the translation was done by means of the Urim and Thummim, which is described by Joseph as being two transparent stones "set in a rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate;" while David Whitmer says that the translation was made by means of a "Seer Stone." The apparent contradiction is cleared up, however, by a statement made by Martin Harris, another of the Three Witnesses. He said that the Prophet possessed a "Seer Stone," by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then (i. e., at the time Harris was acting as his scribe) used the Seer Stone. * * * Martin said further that the Seer Stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only they were larger.^[6]

The "Seer Stone" referred to here was a chocolate-colored, somewhat egg-shaped stone which the Prophet found while digging a well in company with his brother Hyrum.^[7] It possessed the qualities of Urim and Thummim, since by means of it—as described above—as well as by means of the "Interpreters" found with the Nephite record, Joseph was able to translate the characters engraven on the plates.^[8]

Another account of the manner of translating the record purporting to have been given by David Whitmer, and published in the *Kansas City Journal* of June 5, 1881, says:

He [meaning Joseph Smith] had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg-shape, and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not see the plates in translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light, and before his eyes would appear what seemed to be parchment on which would appear the characters of the plates in a line at the top, and immediately below would appear the translation in English, which Smith would read to his scribe, who wrote it down exactly as it fell from his lips. The scribe would then read the sentence written, and if any mistakes had been made, the characters would remain visible to Smith until corrected, when they would fade from sight to be replaced by another line.

It is evident that there are inaccuracies in the above statement, due, doubtless, to the carelessness of the reporter of the *Journal*, who has confused what Mr. Whitmer said of the Seer Stone and Urim and Thummim. If he meant to describe the Urim and Thummim or "Interpreters" given to Joseph Smith with the plates—as seems to be the case—then the reporter is wrong in saying that they were chocolate color and not transparent; for the "Interpreters," given to the Prophet with the plates, as we have seen by his own description, were "two transparent stones." If the reporter meant to describe the "Seer Stone"—which is not likely—he would be right in saying it was of a chocolate color, and egg-shaped, but wrong in saying there were two of them.

Martin Harris' description of the manner of translating while he was the amanuensis of the Prophet is as follows:

By aid of the Seer Stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say "written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used.^[9]

On one occasion Harris sought to test the genuineness of the Prophet's procedure in the matter of translation, as follows:

Martin said that after continued translation they would become weary and would go down to the river and exercise in throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translating, and on resuming their labors of translation Martin put in place [of the Seer Stone] the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent unusually long and intently gazing in darkness, no trace of the usual sentence appearing. Much surprised Joseph exclaimed: "Martin! what is the matter? all is as dark as Egypt." Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the Prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, to stop the mouths of fools, who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them.^[10]

The sum of the whole matter, then, concerning the manner of translating the sacred record of the Nephites, according to the testimony of the only witnesses competent to testify in the matter is: With the Nephite record was deposited a curious instrument, consisting of two transparent stones, set in the rim of a bow, somewhat resembling spectacles, but larger, called by the ancient

Hebrews "Urim and Thummim," but by the Nephites "Interpreters." In addition to these "Interpreters" the Prophet Joseph had a "Seer Stone," which to him was a Urim and Thummim; that the Prophet sometimes used one and sometimes the other of these sacred instruments in the work of translation; that whether the "Interpreters" or the "Seer Stone" was used, the Nephite characters with the English interpretation appeared in the sacred instrument; that the Prophet would pronounce the English translation to his scribe, which, when correctly written, would disappear and the other characters with their interpretation take their place, and so on until the work was completed.

It should not be supposed, however, that this translation, though accomplished by means of the "Interpreters" and "Seer Stone," as stated above, was merely a mechanical procedure; that no faith, or mental or spiritual effort was required on the Prophet's part; that the instruments did all, while he who used them did nothing but look and repeat mechanically what he saw there reflected. Much has been written upon this manner of translating the Nephite record, by those who have opposed the Book of Mormon, and chiefly in a sneering way. On the manner of translation they have bottomed much, not of their argument but their ridicule—against the record; and as in another part of this volume I am to meet what they consider their argument, and what I know to be their ridicule, I consider here a few other facts connected with the manner of translating the Book of Mormon, which are extremely important, as they furnish a basis upon which can be successfully answered all the objections that are urged, based on the manner in which the translation was accomplished, and also as to errors in grammar, the use of modern words, western New York phrases, and other defects of language which it is admitted are to be found in the Book of Mormon, especially in the first edition.

I repeat, then, that the translation of the Book of Mormon by means of the "Interpreters" and "Seer Stone," was not merely a mechanical process, but required the utmost concentration of mental and spiritual force possessed by the Prophet, in order to exercise the gift of translation through the means of the sacred instruments provided for that work. Fortunately we have the most perfect evidence of the fact, though it could be inferred from the general truth that God sets no premium upon mental or spiritual laziness; for whatever means God may have provided to assist man to arrive at the truth, he has always made it necessary for man to couple with those means his utmost endeavor of mind and heart. So much in the way of reflection; now as to the facts referred to.

In his *Address to All Believers in Christ*, David Whitmer says:

At times when Brother Joseph would attempt to translate he would look into the hat in which the stone was placed, he found he was spiritually blind and could not translate. He told us that his mind dwelt too much on earthly things, and various causes would make him incapable of proceeding with the translation. When in this condition he would go out and pray, and when he became sufficiently humble before God, he could then proceed with the translation. Now we see how very strict the Lord is, and how he requires the heart of man to be just right in his sight before he can receive revelation from him.^[11]

In a statement to Wm. H. Kelley, G. A. Blakeslee, of Gallen, Michigan, under date of September 15, 1882, David Whitmer said of Joseph Smith and the necessity of his humility and faithfulness while translating the Book of Mormon:

He was a religious and straight-forward man. He had to be; for he was illiterate and he could do nothing himself. He had to trust in God. He could not translate unless he was humble and possessed the right feelings towards everyone. To illustrate so you can see: One morning when he was getting ready to continue the translation, something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife, had done. Oliver and I went up stairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation, but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went down stairs, out into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, and asked Emma's forgiveness and then came up stairs where we were, and then the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful.^[12]

The manner of translation is so far described by David Whitmer and Martin Harris, who received their information necessarily from Joseph Smith, and doubtless it is substantially correct, except in so far as their statements may have created the impression that the translation was a mere mechanical process; and this is certainly corrected in part at least by what David Whitmer has said relative to the frame of mind Joseph must be in before he could translate. But we have more important evidence to consider on this subject of translation than these statements of David Whitmer. In the course of the work of translation Oliver Cowdery desired the gift of translation to be conferred upon him, and God promised to grant it to him in the following terms:

Oliver Cowdery, verily, verily, I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which has been spoken by the manifestation of my Spirit. Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by

the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation; behold this is the spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground. * * * Ask that you may know the mysteries of God, and that you may translate and receive knowledge from all those ancient records which have been hid up, that are sacred; and according to your faith shall it be done unto you.^[13]

In attempting to exercise this gift of translation, however, Oliver Cowdery failed; and in a revelation upon the subject the Lord explained the cause of his failure to translate:

Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it [*i. e.* the gift of translation] unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me. But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.^[14]

While this is not a description of the manner in which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, it is, nevertheless, the Lord's description of how another man was to exercise the gift of translation; and doubtless it is substantially the manner in which Joseph Smith did exercise it, and the manner in which he translated the Book of Mormon. That is, the Prophet Joseph Smith looked into the "Interpreters" or "Seer Stone," saw there by the power of God and the gift of God to him, the ancient Nephite characters, and by bending every power of his mind to know the meaning thereof, the interpretation wrought out in his mind by this effort—"by studying it out in his mind," to use the Lord's phrase—was reflected in the sacred instrument, there to remain until correctly written by the scribe.

We see something akin to this also in the manner in which the Nephites used Liahona, their Urim and Thummim—the instrument through means of which they were directed of the Lord upon their journey to the promised land of America—it worked "according to the faith and diligence and heed" they gave unto it. (I Nephi 16:28.)

In further proof that translation was not a merely mechanical process with the Prophet Joseph, I call attention to the evident thought and study he later bestowed upon the work of translating the rolls of papyrus found with the Egyptian mummies, purchased by the Saints in Kirtland, of Michael H. Chandler, about the 6th of July, 1835. "Soon after this," says the Prophet, "with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt," etc. Speaking in his history of the latter part of July, he says: "The remainder of this month I was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language." In his journal entry for November 26, 1835, is the following: "Spent the day in translating the Egyptian characters from the papyrus, though suffering with a severe cold." Under date of December 15, this: "I exhibited and explained the Egyptian characters to them (Elders M'Lellin and Young), and explained many things concerning the dealings of God with the ancients, and the formation of the planetary system." Thus he continued from time to time to work upon this translation, which was not published until 1842, in the *Times and Seasons*, beginning in number nine of volume three. It should be remembered in connection with this "preparing an alphabet" and "arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language" that the Prophet still had in his possession the "Seer Stone" (or at least Oliver Cowdery had it, for on completing the translation of the Book of Mormon the Prophet gave the Seer Stone into Oliver Cowdery's keeping.—David Whitmer's *Address to All Believers*, p. 32),—which he had used sometimes in the translation of the Book of Mormon, yet it seems from the circumstances named that he had to bend all the energies of his intellectual powers to obtain a translation of the Egyptian characters.

There can be no doubt, either, that the interpretation thus obtained was expressed in such language as the Prophet could command, in such phraseology as he was master of, and common to the time and locality where he lived; modified, of course, by the application of that phraseology to facts and ideas new to him in many respects, and above the ordinary level of the Prophet's thoughts and language, because of the inspiration of God that was upon him. This view of the translation of the Nephite record accounts for the fact that the Book of Mormon, though a translation of an ancient record, is, nevertheless, given in English idiom of the period and locality in which the Prophet lived; and in the faulty English, moreover, both as to composition, phraseology, and grammar, of a person of Joseph Smith's limited education; and also accounts for the sameness of phraseology and literary style which runs through the whole volume.

Nor are we without authority of high value in these views for the verbal style of inspired writers. In *The Annotated Bible*, published by the "Religious Tract Society," London, 1859, the following occurs in relation to the explanation of the words "prophet" and "prophecy":

That the prophets were more than foretellers of things future is apparent from their history as well as from their writings. It must also be remembered that, although prophecy contains many very circumstantial allusions to particular facts and individuals, yet these are referred to chiefly on account of their revelation of those great, general principles with which it has to do. Prophecy is God's voice, speaking to

us respecting that great struggle which has been and is going on in this world between good and evil.

The divine communications were made to the prophets in divers manners; God seems sometimes to have spoken to them in audible voice; occasionally appearing in human form. At other times he employed the ministry of angels, or made known his purposes by dreams. But he most frequently revealed his truth to the prophets by producing that supernatural state of the sentiment, intellectual, and moral faculties which the scriptures call "vision." Hence prophetic announcements are often called "visions," *i. e.* things seen; and the prophets themselves are called "seers."

Although the visions which the prophet beheld and the predictions of the future which he announced were wholly announced by the divine Spirit, yet the form of the communication, the imagery in which it is clothed, the illustration by which it is cleared up and impressed, the symbols employed to bring it more graphically before the mind—in short, all that may be considered as its garb and dress, depends upon the education, habits, association, feelings and the whole mental intellectual and spiritual character of the prophet. Hence the style of some is purer, more sententious, more ornate, or more sublime than others.

The author of *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, Frederick Denison Maurice, sometime Professor of Casuistry and Modern Philosophy in the University of Cambridge, in discussing the philosophers of the last half of the seventeenth century, has an excellent passage on the views of Spinoza respecting the Hebrew prophets, and in what manner they and their work are to be regarded. The passage is so *apropos* the matter here discussed that I quote the essential parts of it:

"What do the sacred books impart when they affirm the Spirit of God to have been infused into the prophets—that the prophets spoke by the Spirit of God?" (Spinoza.)

The result at which our author arrives upon a long examination into the different uses of the word "Spirit" is, that these expressions respecting the infusion of the Spirit "signify nothing more than that the prophets had a singular and extraordinary virtue and cultivated piety, with very great constancy of mind, and thereby they had a perception of the mind or judgment of God; for we shall find that the Spirit of God denotes in Hebrew as well the mind as the judgment or sentence of God, and therefore that the law of God, because it unfolded the mind of God, is called the mind or Spirit of God; therefore the imagination of the prophets might, with equal justice, be said to be the mind of God, and the prophets be said to have had the mind of God, inasmuch as through their imagination the decrees of God were revealed. * * * The question how the prophets acquired a sense of certainty respecting their revelations gives rise to a long discussion. Their imagination being the main instrument of their discoveries, they cannot have the same security as we have for those truths which are discovered by scientific insight or "natural light." "It is," says Spinoza, very characteristically, "a moral, not a mathematical security. It is derived (1) from the great strength of their phantasy, which brings objects before them as clearly as we see them when we are awake. (2) From some divine sign. (3) From their minds being disposed to the right and just," Spinoza affirms the last to be the principal secret of their certainty. * * * Nevertheless, he affirms that the revelations to the prophet depended upon his temperament and upon his own opinions. These he brought with him—these varied not only his style of writing, but his understanding of any communication that was made to him. His joy, his sorrow, all the different moods of his mind and body, were continually affecting his judgments and his teachings. * * * Every thoughtful reader will perceive that in these statements Spinoza has an evident advantage over those who treat the personal feelings, experiences, struggles of the prophets, as if they were nothing—who forget that they were human beings—who look upon them merely as utterers of certain divine dogmas, or as foretelling certain future events. He has a right to say that such persons overlook the letter of the books, while they profess to honor the letter; that they change their substance, while they think that they are taking them just as they are. But no real devout reader of the prophets ever forgets that they are men. Their human feelings, sufferings, rejoicings, are parts to him of the divine revelation. The struggles of the prophet with his own evil—the consciousness and confession that the vile is mixed with the precious—help more than all formal teaching to show him and us how the higher mind is distinct from the lower, as well as how the one is related to the other. We see how the prophet arrived at a certainty about the divine will and purpose through the very doubts and contradictions in himself.^[15]

Also the Reverend Joseph Armitage Robinson, D. D., dean of Westminster and chaplain of King Edward VII of England, respecting the manner in which the message of the Old Testament was received and communicated to man, as late as 1905, said:

The message of the Old Testament was not written by the divine hand, nor dictated by an outward compulsion; it was planted in the hearts of men, and made to grow in a fruitful soil. And then they were required to express it *in their own language, after their natural methods, and in accordance with the stage of knowledge which their time had reached.* Their human faculties were purified and quickened by the divine Spirit; but

they spoke to their time in the language of their time, they spoke a spiritual message, accommodated to the experience of their age, a message of faith in God, and of righteousness as demanded by a righteous God.^[16]

I take occasion at this point to observe that because a writer or speaker claims to be under the inspiration of God it does not follow that in giving expression to what the Lord puts into his heart he will always do so in grammatical terms, any more than the orthography of an inspired writer will always be accurate. We have many illustrations of this fact among the inspired men that we have known in the Church of Jesus Christ in these last days. Those of us who have listened to the utterances of prophets and apostles cannot doubt of their inspiration, and at the same time some of those who have been most inspired have been inaccurate in the use of our English language. The same seems true of the ancient apostles, also. The writer of the Acts, at the conclusion of a synopsis of a discourse which he ascribes to Peter, says, "Now, when they [the Jews] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled."^[17] The commentators upon this passage say that the listening Jews perceived that Peter and John were uninstructed in the learning of the Jewish schools, and were of the common sort of men, untrained in teaching.^[18] And again, "Their language and arguments prove that they were untaught in the Rabbinical learning of the Jewish schools."^[19] But in what way could the Jews have discerned the ignorance and absence of learning in Peter and John except through the imperfections of their language? And yet those imperfections in language may not be urged in evidence of the absence of inspiration in the two apostles. Surely with God it must be that the matter is of more consequence than the form in which it is expressed; the thought of more moment than the word; it is the Spirit that giveth life, not the letter. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."^[20]

The view of the manner of translating the Book of Mormon here set forth furnishes the basis of justification for those verbal changes and grammatical corrections which have been made since the first edition issued from the press; and would furnish justification for making many more verbal and grammatical corrections in the book; for if, as here set forth, the meaning of the Nephite characters was given to Joseph Smith in such faulty English as he, an uneducated man, could command, while every detail and shade of thought should be strictly preserved, there can be no reasonable ground for objection to the correction of mere verbal errors and grammatical construction. There can be no reasonable doubt that had Joseph Smith been a finished English scholar and the facts and ideas represented by the Nephite characters upon the plates had been given him by the inspiration of God through the Urim and Thummim, those ideas would have been expressed in correct English; but as he was not a finished English scholar, he had to give expression to those facts and ideas in such language as he could command, and that was faulty English, which the Prophet himself and those who have succeeded him as custodians of the word of God have had, and now have, a perfect right to correct.^[21]

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Wentworth letter, *Millennial Star*, vol. 19, p. 118.
- [2.](#) Wentworth letter, *History of the Church*, vol. IV, ch. 31.
- [3.](#) Book of Mosiah 8:13.
- [4.](#) The above statement was made by Oliver Cowdery, at a special conference held at Kaneshville, Iowa, Oct. 21, 1848. It was first published in the *Deseret News* of April 13, 1859: Bishop Reuben Miller, who was present at the meeting, reported Cowdery's remarks.
- [5.](#) From *An Address to all Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, A Witness to the Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, published at Richmond, Missouri, 1887, p. 12.
- [6.](#) Harris' Statement to Edward Stevenson, *Millennial Star*, vol. 44, p. 87.
- [7.](#) Cannon's *Life of Joseph Smith*, p. 56.
- [8.](#) Nearly all the anti-"Mormon" works dealing with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon speak of the "Seer Stone" and reiterate the falsehood that the Prophet stole it from the children of Willard Chase, for whom Joseph and Hyrum were digging a well.
- [9.](#) Statement of Martin Harris, to Edward Stevenson, *Millennial Star*, vol. 44, pp. 86, 87.
- [10.](#) Harris' Statement to Edward Stevenson, *Millennial Star*, vol. 44, pp. 78, 79; 86, 87.
- [11.](#) *Address to All Believers in Christ*, p. 30.
- [12.](#) Braden and Kelley, *Debate on Divine Origin of Book of Mormon*, p. 186. The above debate took place in 1884, several years before the death of David Whitmer, and the statement from which the above is taken was quoted in full.
- [13.](#) D. & C., sec. 8:1-3, 11.
- [14.](#) D. & C., sec. 9:7-9.

[15.](#) *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, vol. II, pp. 397-399.

[16.](#) *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Sunday, March 19, 1905—The discourse is published at length.

[17.](#) Acts 4:13.

[18.](#) Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, *Commentary*, Acts 4:13.

[19.](#) *International Commentary of the New Testament*, Acts 4.

[20.](#) Jeremiah 23:28.

[21.](#) The manner of translating the Book of Mormon above set forth, gave rise to considerable discussion within the Church, and led to the publication of a number of papers in the *Improvement Era*, a monthly magazine published in Utah, in defense of the views here advocated. These papers were finally collected and published in the author's *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, vol. I, pp. 255-311, to which the reader is referred for a more exhaustive consideration of the question above discussed. Moreover, this whole question was subsequently reviewed at a meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles, and accepted as the most reasonable explanation that had been offered on the subject of the translation of the Book of Mormon, and its publication approved.—*Roberts*.

CHAPTER VIII.

PUBLICATION OF THE RECORD.

The exact time when the translation of the Book of Mormon was completed cannot be ascertained. According to the history of the Prophet it was early in June, 1829, when David Whitmer, took Joseph and his wife and Oliver Cowdery to his father's home near Waterloo, at the north end of Seneca Lake, to the neighborhood called Fayette.^[1] There the Prophet remained until the translation was completed and the copyright secured. Since David Whitmer arrived at Harmony "in the beginning of June," to take the Prophet and his wife and Oliver Cowdery to his father's home, and as Mr. John H. Gilbert (the chief compositor on the Book of Mormon), says in a signed statement^[2] that he commenced the work of setting the type for the Book of Mormon in August, 1829, the translation was completed between those dates, that is, between the early part of June, 1829, and August of the same year, as the work of translation was completed before the work of printing began.

The contract for printing was made with Mr. Egbert B. Grandin, of Palmyra, the edition to be five thousand copies, and the price \$3,000, Martin Harris guaranteeing the payment of that sum to the publisher.

As soon as arrangements were completed for publishing the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Joseph started for Harmony, Pennsylvania, but before his departure he left the following directions to be followed respecting the work of printing:

First, that Oliver Cowdery should transcribe the whole manuscript.

Second, that he should take but one copy at a time to the office, so that if one copy should get destroyed there would still be a copy remaining.

Third, that in going to and from the [printing] office, he should always have a guard to attend him, for the purpose of protecting the manuscript.

Fourth, that a guard should be kept constantly on the watch, both night and day, about the house, to protect the manuscript from malicious persons, who would infest the house for the purpose of destroying the manuscript. All these things were strictly attended to as the Lord commanded Joseph.^[3]

These precautions, at first glance, may seem excessive, and under ordinary circumstances would be totally unnecessary; yet the following communication to the *Signs of the Times*, by J. N. T. Tucker, who was employed in the printing establishment of the *Wayne Sentinel*, in the establishment at which the Book of Mormon was printed, in Palmyra, will demonstrate that the precaution in this case was necessary; and incidentally tends to prove true the statement of the revelation in which the Prophet Joseph is warned that the 116 pages of manuscript stolen from Martin Harris were changed by those into whose hands they had fallen, with the intention to make them conflict with the reproduction of them, should the Prophet again translate that part of the work. With these preliminary remarks the following letter will be self-explanatory:

"MORMONISM"—SOME CURIOUS FACTS

Messrs. Editors:—Having noticed in a late number of the *Signs of the Times*, a notice of a work, entitled, *Mormon Delusions and Monstrosities*, it occurred to me that it might, perhaps, be a service to the cause of truth, to state one circumstance in relation to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, which occurred during its publication, at which time I was a practical printer and engaged in the office where it was printed, and became familiar with the men and their principles, through whose agency it was "got up."

The circumstance alluded to was as follows: We had heard much said by Martin Harris, the man who paid for the printing, and the only one in the concern worth any property, about the wonderful wisdom of the translators of the mysterious plates, and resolved to test their wisdom. Accordingly, after putting one sheet in type, we laid it aside, and told Martin Harris it was lost, and there would be serious defection in the book in consequence, unless another sheet like the original could be produced. The announcement threw the old gentleman into quite an excitement. But after a few moments' reflection, he said he would try to obtain another. After two or three weeks, another sheet was produced, but no more like the original than any other sheet of paper would have been, written over by a common schoolboy, after having read, as they did, the manuscript preceding and succeeding the lost sheet.

As might be expected, the disclosure of the plan greatly annoyed the authors, and caused no little merriment among those who were acquainted with the circumstances. As we were none of us Christians, and only labored for the "gold that perisheth," we did not care for the delusion, only so far as to be careful to avoid it ourselves, and enjoy the hoax. Not one of the hands in the office where the wonderful book was printed ever became a convert to the system, although the writer of this was often assured by Martin Harris, if he did not he would be destroyed in 1832.

Yours in the gospel of Christ,

J. N. TUCKER.

"Gorton, May 23, 1842."

"*Signs of the Times*, June 8, 1842."

The description in this letter of Martin Harris' excitement from the loss of the sheet mentioned, and the claim that the reproduced manuscript did not fill the blank created through their hiding that one sheet of type-set matter, will appear at once as a fabrication when it is remembered that Martin Harris must have known that the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon had never left the hands of those having the work in charge, and they were by that precaution prepared against just such emergencies as this whether practiced playfully or in dead earnest to bring the work into disrepute.^[4]

These several precautions relative to the manuscript of the Book of Mormon stated by Lucy Smith in the work quoted, account for several circumstances regarded as peculiar in connection with the publication of the Book of Mormon: The almost entire absence of Joseph Smith the prophet from the printing establishment of Mr. Grandin while the book was being set up and printed; the presence of two persons always when a portion of manuscript was carried to the printers, one of whom was always Hyrum Smith; the guard constantly upon the watch at the Smith homestead; and the existence of two manuscript copies of the Book of Mormon. Oliver Cowdery during the time that the type setting and printing was going on made a copy from the original manuscript for the use of the printer; carefully keeping the original (which, too, in the main, he had written as the prophet Joseph translated from the Nephite plates) in his possession at the home of the Smiths, that if peradventure the copy sent to the printer should be destroyed or stolen it could be copied again from the original.

It is said by Mr. Gilbert that the manuscript as sent to him was neither capitalized nor punctuated, and that the capitalization and punctuation in the first edition was done by him. This statement, however, can only be true in part, as an examination of the printer's manuscript will prove; for that manuscript is very well capitalized and in the main in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. Mr. Gilbert may have capitalized and punctuated to some extent, but it is clear that he did not do all of it, or even the main part of it.^[5] The printer's manuscript, after it had served its purpose, was evidently taken possession of by Oliver Cowdery, while the original manuscript remained in the possession of the Prophet Joseph.

In 1850 Oliver Cowdery, a little before his death, which occurred at Richmond, Ray county, Missouri, on the 3rd of March of that year—gave into the possession of David Whitmer, his brother-in-law and fellow witness of the truth of the Book of Mormon, his printer's manuscript of that book, and the descendants of David Whitmer have it in their possession to this day (1903); regarding it—though in that they are mistaken—as the original manuscript.^[6] The original manuscript having been preserved by the Prophet Joseph, it was, on the 2nd of October, 1841, in the presence of a number of elders, deposited by him in the northwest cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, with a number of coins, papers and books, in a cavity made in the corner stone for that purpose. Among those who were present at the time the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon was thus deposited in the corner stone of the Nauvoo House, was Elder Warren Foote,

of Glendale, Kane county, Utah, who quotes from his journal as follows:

October 2, 1841. The semi-annual conference commenced today. After meeting was dismissed a deposit was made in the southeast corner of the Nauvoo house. A square hole had been chiseled in the large corner stone like a box. An invitation was given for any who wished to put in any little memento they desired to. I was standing very near the corner stone, when Joseph Smith came up with the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, and said he wanted to put that in there, as he had had trouble enough with it. It appeared to be written on fools' cap paper, and was about three inches in thickness. There was also deposited a Book of Doctrine and Covenants, five cents, ten cents, twenty-five cents, fifty cents, and one dollar pieces of American coin, besides other articles. A close-fitting stone cover was laid in cement, and the wall built over it. I was standing within three feet of the Prophet when he handed in the manuscript, and saw it very plainly. He intimated in his remarks, that in after generations the walls might be thrown down, and these things discovered, from which the people could learn the doctrines and principles and faith of the Latter-day Saints.^[7]

In a rather curious manner a portion of this original manuscript came into the possession of Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church, and nephew of the Prophet Joseph. The Nauvoo House, begun in the Prophet, was never completed. Mr. Lewis C. Bidamon, who married Emma Smith, widow of the Prophet, came into possession of the unfinished Nauvoo House, and tore down the walls and took up the extensive foundations of the house in order to sell the building stone in them. In the course of tearing out the foundations the southeast corner stone was taken out and the treasures it contained discovered and taken in charge by Mr. Bidamon. Some years later, namely, in the Summer of 1884, Mrs. Sarah M. Kimball visited Nauvoo, and among other landmarks went to the site of the Nauvoo House, the walls and foundation of which were not yet all taken away. She called upon Mr. Bidamon, then living in a temporary four-roomed building erected on the southwest corner of the foundation laid for the Nauvoo House. And now Mrs. Kimball's story, as related in her letter to Elder George Reynolds, dated 19th July, 1884:

I asked why the heavy and extensive foundations around him were being torn up; he [Mr. Bidamon] replied that he had bought the premises, and the rock was torn up to sell, as he was poor and otherwise would not have been able to build. I said, I am interested in this foundation, because I remember there were treasures deposited under the chief corner stone. He said, yes, I took up the stone box and sold it to Mr. — (I do not remember the name.) It had been so long exposed to the wet and weather that its contents were nearly ruined, I gave the coin to Joe [Joseph]^[8] and told him he could have the pile of paper. He said it was the manuscript of the Book of Mormon; but it was so much injured that he did not care for it. While we were talking, Mr. Bidamon's wife brought a large pasteboard box and placed it on my lap. It contained a stack of faded and fast decaying paper, the bottom layers for several inches were uniform in size, they seemed to me larger than common fools' cap, the paper was coarse in texture and had the appearance of having lain a long time in water, as the ink seemed almost entirely soaked into the paper. When I handled it, it would fall to pieces. I could only read a few words here and there, just enough to learn that it was the language of the Book of Mormon. Above this were some sheets of finer texture folded and sewed together, this was better preserved and more easily read. I held it up, and said: "Mr. B., how much for this relic?" He said: "Nothing from you, you are welcome to anything you like from the box." I appreciated the kindness, took the leaves that were folded and sewed together, also took two fragments of the *Times and Seasons*, published by Don Carlos Smith.^[9] I send with this a fragment dated January, 1840, for your acceptance, containing the prophetic lamentation of P. P. Pratt, while chained in prison.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) SARAH M. KIMBALL.^[10]

This fragment of the manuscript, now in the possession of President Joseph F. Smith, is thus described by Elder George Reynolds, in his *History of the Book of Mormon*:

It consists of twenty-two pages of somewhat rough, unruled writing paper, more resembling narrow bill-cap than any other size of paper now made, being a little less than fifteen and a half inches long and full six and a half inches wide. The paper is now tinged brown or yellow by time and damp, and the writing in some places is undecipherable. The pages are numbered 3 to 22, pages 1 and 2 having been lost. The manuscript commences at the second verse of the second chapter of the First Book of Nephi, and continues to the thirty-fifth verse of the thirteenth chapter of the same book. * * * The manuscript is in two, if not three, handwritings. Pages 7 to 18, inclusive, appear to have been written by Oliver Cowdery. Pages 3 to 6 are written in what looks like a woman's hand, possibly that of Emma Smith; while the handwriting on pages 19 to 22, if not the same, very much resembles that of pages 3 to 6. The only division made in the manuscript is into chapters; the sentences are not divided by punctuation marks and are seldom commenced with capital letters.

It may be thought that the care of the manuscript during the process of printing was not only extraordinary but unnecessary. The experiences of the prophet, however, in the matter of

keeping possession of the plates of the Book of Mormon, and the efforts that were made to take them from him, together with the loss of the one hundred and sixteen pages of manuscript he had for a short time entrusted to the care of Martin Harris, taught him caution. It is well it did, for having failed in their efforts to wrest the plates from him, several conspiracies were formed by his enemies to obtain the manuscript of the book and prevent its publication.^[11] And notwithstanding all the precautions taken an enemy nearly succeeded in publishing the Book of Mormon in garbled form before the printing of the book was completed. An ex-justice of the peace by the name of Cole started to publish a weekly periodical which he called *Dogberry Paper on Winter Hill*. In his prospectus he promised his subscribers to publish one form of "Joe Smith's Gold Bible" each week, and thus furnish them with the principal part of the book without their being obliged to purchase it from the Smiths. The *Dogberry Paper* was printed at Mr. Grandin's establishment, where the Book of Mormon was being printed, and as the press was employed all the time except at night and on Sundays, Mr. Cole printed his paper at those times. The arrangement also enabled him to keep what he was doing from the knowledge of the Prophet and his associates; and it is said that several numbers of his paper containing portions from the Book of Mormon which he had pilfered, were published before his rascality was found out. Joseph, who was at Harmony, in Pennsylvania, was sent for, and on arriving at Palmyra quietly but firmly asserted his copyrights which he had been careful to secure, and Mr. Cole gave up his attempt to publish the book or any portion of it. After settling this difficulty Joseph again returned to Pennsylvania, only to be again summoned to Palmyra to quiet the fears of his publisher, Mr. Grandin, who had been made fearful that the Prophet would not be able to meet his obligations for printing the book. The people in the vicinity of Palmyra had held public meetings and passed resolutions not to purchase the Book of Mormon, if it ever issued from the press. They appointed a committee to wait upon Mr. Grandin and explain to him the evil consequences which would result to him because of the resolutions they had passed not to buy the books when published, which would render it impossible for "the Smiths" to meet their obligations to him. They persuaded him to stop printing, and Joseph was again sent for. On the Prophet's arrival he called upon Mr. Grandin in company with Martin Harris, and together they gave the frightened publisher such assurance of their ability to meet their obligation to him that printing was resumed;^[12] and finally, in the spring of 1830, the book issued from the press.

Thus, from start to finish, difficulty and danger beset the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. But at last every obstacle was surmounted; every difficulty overcome; every device of the enemy thwarted; every danger to the record of the Nephites past. It was published—a five thousand edition of it. Henceforth, thanks to "the great art preservative"—printing—it would be indestructible. To the world was given the testimony of sleeping nations that the Lord is God; that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world; that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The fervent prayers of the prophets and other righteous men among the ancient inhabitants of America were answered. The Gentile nations which, by the spirit of prophecy, they knew would at some time occupy their land, would become informed as to them; of their origin; of the promises of God to the remnant of their seed, which the Gentiles would find upon the land. So, too, would the Jews know of the ancient inhabitants of the land; and would know of the decrees of God respecting the land and the inhabitants thereof; and would have the testimony of these ancient nations of Israelites in America that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had crucified, was indeed the Messiah, the hope of Israel, and the world's Savior. But what was of more immediate interest to these ancient worthies of the western hemisphere, their descendants remaining in the land would, through their record, be brought to a knowledge of their forefathers, and of the goodness and favor and severity of God towards them. They would be brought to a knowledge of how their fathers had departed from the ways of the Lord; why the disfavor of God was upon them; and how they might return into his favor through obedience to that gospel which their fathers had rejected. For these several things righteous men among the Nephites earnestly prayed; and obtained a promise from the Lord that he would preserve their records and at the last bring them to the remnant of their seed, to the Jews and to the Gentiles that their testimonies to the truth of God might not be lost to the world.^[13] And now the hopes and promises were fulfilled. Their record was published and was destined to be read in all the languages spoken by the children of men, and stand as a Witness for God to all the world.

Footnotes

[1.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, pp. 48, 49.

[2.](#) The Statement referred to was given to Elder Francis M. Lyman, of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who called upon Mr. Gilbert at Palmyra on October 23, 1897. Mr. Gilbert wrote with his own hand in Elder Lyman's Journal, and signed the following:

Palmyra, N. Y., Oct. 23, 1897.

At the request of Elder F. M. Lyman of Utah, I make the following certificate: I was born in the town of Richmond, Ontario county, April 13, 1802. I assisted E. B. Grandin in estimating the expense of printing 5,000 copies of the "Mormon" Bible, and the price agreed upon—\$3,000. I was the principal compositor of said Bible, commencing on the same in August, 1829, and finishing the same in March, 1830.

(Signed) *John H. Gilbert.*

I am indebted to Elder Lyman for access to his Journal for the above statement.

3. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by his mother, chap. 31.
4. Tucker's letter is produced in Bennett's *Mormonism Exposed*, (1842), pages 112, 123.
5. The writer saw and examined the printer's manuscript in the possession of David Whitmer in 1884, and speaks from personal knowledge on this point in the text.
6. It has since been deposited with the President of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, son of the Prophet Joseph, by the grandson of David Whitmer, George Schwiech.
7. The above excerpt from Elder Foote's Journal is published by George Reynolds in a series of articles under the title "History of the Book of Mormon," in the *Contributor*, for 1884.
8. *i. e.* Joseph Smith, son of the Prophet.
9. The Prophet's brother, and for a time editor of the *Times and Seasons*.
10. Mrs. Kimball's letter is published by Elder Geo. Reynolds in his articles on the *History of the Book of Mormon, Contributor*, vol. V, No. 10.
11. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, chaps. 32 and 33.
12. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, chap. 33.
13. See Book of Mormon, Book of Enos, chap. 1:12-18; Mormon 8:24-26; and 9:36, 37; and 5:9-24; I Nephi 13:30-42.

CHAPTER IX.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

With reference to its construction the Book of Mormon separates into three divisions:

1. The small plates of Nephi, a record kept upon gold plates made by the first Nephi upon which he purposed to record and have recorded more especially the work of the holy ministry among the Nephites, the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, and the exhortations to righteousness by the prophets who should arise among his people. As compared with his plates on which he designed to have recorded the secular history of his people, they were small, and doubtless comparatively few in number, hence their name—"The Smaller Plates of Nephi." The historical data contained in these small plates of Nephi extends over a period of about four hundred years, or from the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem to the reign of King Benjamin, the second king of the Nephite-Zarahemla nation. But chiefly these plates were filled with prophecies and exhortations to righteousness, and many transcriptions from the writings of Isaiah, and other prophets, while historical data—though sufficient to give a general idea of the movement of Lehi's colony, and the subsequent march of events among the peoples that sprang from that colony—are meager.

The translation of these small plates, in current editions, occupies the first one hundred and fifty-seven^[1] pages of the Book of Mormon, fractional pages aside; and with two pages of explanatory matter by Mormon, under the title "Words of Mormon," make 133 pages of the book. The books of this first division of the Book of Mormon are six in number, *viz*: I. Nephi, II. Nephi, Book of Jacob, Book of Enos, Book of Jarom, Book of Omni. Though there are but six books in this division, there are nine writers, as follows:

The first Nephi, who writes one hundred and twenty-seven and a half pages^[2] of the one hundred and fifty seven in this division.

Jacob, brother of Nephi, twenty-one and a half pages.

Zenos, son of the above Jacob, two and one-half pages.

Jarom, son of the above Zenos, two pages.

In the Book of Omni there are but three and one half pages, but there are five writers, each of whom records merely a few lines:

Omni, son of the above Jarom;

Amaron, son of the above Omni;

Chemish, brother of the above Amaron;

Abinadom, son of Chemish;

Amaleki, son of the above Abinadom.

Amaleki writes about two pages out of the three pages and a half comprising the Book of Omni, and gives the important information concerning the second hegira of the righteous Nephites, their union with the people of Zarahemla and the formation of the Nephite-Zarahemla nation.

Although there are nine writers in this division of the Book of Mormon, the writing is chiefly done by the first two, Nephi and Jacob, of which the first writes 127 1/2 pages; and the second 21 1/2 pages, leaving but eight pages to be written by the other seven writers.

2. Mormon's abridgment of the Large Plates of Nephi comprises the second division of the Book of Mormon. This is a condensed record made from the various books written or engraved upon the Large Plates of Nephi, which plates, it will be remembered, were made by the first Nephi, as well as the Smaller Plates of Nephi, that upon them might be recorded the secular history of the people, their wars and contentions, their affairs of government and the migrations of their people. This part of the Book of Mormon—the abridgment—is the work of one man, Mormon, from whom this whole record of the Nephites takes its name, and yet the abridgment of Mormon occupies but 390 1/2 out of the 632 pages; his own book, bearing his own name, makes 15 1/2 pages making in all 406 out of the 623 pages which comprise the whole book.

The style of Mormon's abridgment is very complicated. It consists mainly of his condensation of the various books which he found engraven upon the Larger Plates of Nephi—the Book of Mosiah, Book of Alma, Helaman, III. Nephi, IV. Nephi, etc. Because Mormon retained the names of these respective books in his condensation or abridgment of them, many readers of the Book of Mormon have been led to suppose that there was a separate writer for each book, overlooking the fact that these books, so-called, in the Book of Mormon, are but brief abridgments of the original books bearing those names. Occasionally, however, Mormon came upon passages in the original annals that pleased him so well that he transcribed them verbatim in the record he was writing. An example of this is to be found beginning at page 163 (current edition), in the second line of the ninth paragraph, and ending with page 169—the words of King Benjamin to his people.

The modern method of writing would be, of course, to make the abridgment of Mormon the regular text of the book, put the verbatim quotations from the old Nephite books that were being abridged within quotation marks, and throw the occasional remarks or comments of the abridger into foot notes. But these devices in literary work were not known, apparently, among the Nephites.

After completing his abridgment of the books written upon the Larger Plates of Nephi, down to this own day, Mormon made a record of the things which came under his own observation, and engraved them upon the Larger Plates of Nephi, and called that the Book of Mormon; but upon the plates on which he had engraven his abridgment of all the books found in the Larger Plates of Nephi, and which he had made with his own hands, he recorded but a brief account of the things which he had witnessed among his people, and that, too, he called the Book of Mormon.^[3] It occupies fourteen and a half pages; which, with the other three hundred and ninety and one half pages, as above stated, makes four hundred and five pages of the Book of Mormon written by the hand of Mormon.

3. The third division of the Book of Mormon is made up of writings of Moroni, the son of Mormon. He finishes the record of his father, Mormon, in which he occupies seven and a half pages. After that he abridges the history of the people of Jared, who were led from the Tower of Babel to the north continent of the western hemisphere, and whose record was found by a branch of the Nephite people.^[4] This abridged history of the Jaredites occupies thirty-eight pages; and in character of composition is much like the complex style of Mormon's abridgment of the Nephite records. It was modeled doubtless after that work.

Then follows his own book, the Book of Moroni, which occupies fifteen and a half pages, making in all sixty-one pages written by Moroni.

The following is a summary of the three divisions:

I. Direct translation from the Small Plates of Nephi, nine writers (of whom two write 149 of the 157 pages)...157 pages

II. Mormon's abridgment of the various books written upon the Large Plates of Nephi...390 1/2 pages

III. Mormon's personal account of events that occurred in this own day...14 1/2 pages

IV. Moroni's writings—completion of this father's record, abridgment of the Jaredite History, his own book, called the Book of Moroni...61 pages

Total...623 pages

The total number of writers in the Book of Mormon is eleven, of whom four do the principal part of the writing, these are the First Nephi, Jacob, Mormon and Moroni.

Of these four, Mormon does the major part. For purposes of reference I make the following summary:

Mormon writes...405 pages

Moroni...61 pages

Nephi...127 1/2 pages

Jacob...21 1/2 pages

The other seven writers...8 pages

Total...623 pages

Such is the Book of Mormon as to its construction—the number of its writers, and the style employed in the parts that are abridgments from the larger records of the Nephites and Jaredites. All this may now seem unimportant to the reader, but he will find when I come to the argument for the truth of the Book of Mormon, and the consideration of the objections urged against it, this analysis will become an important factor in that work.

Footnotes

1. One hundred and fifty-one in the first edition.
2. That is of the current editions of the book. The references in the analysis throughout are to current editions.
3. Mormon was born about the year 311 A. D., and was killed by the Lamanites after delivering his writings to his son Moroni, about 385 A. D.
4. See p. 142 [Chapter X—Transcriber].

CHAPTER X.

MIGRATIONS TO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND THE NATIONS THAT AROSE FROM THEM.^[1]

According to the Book of Mormon there have been three migrations from the old world to the new. These, in their chronological order, are, first, the colony of Jared; second, the colony of Lehi; and third, the colony of Mulek. It is necessary to the completeness of this work to give a brief account of each of these colonies, together with their development into great nations in the western world, a summary of their history, and a brief description of their civilization.

I. THE JAREDITES.

Migration and Place of Landing.

The colony of Jared, according to the Book of Mormon, departed from the Tower of Babel about the time of the confusion of languages; which, if the Hebrew chronology of the Bible be accepted, was an event that took place 2,247 B. C. Through a special favor to the family of Jared and his brother, Moriancumr,^[2] the language of these families, and that of a few of their friends was not confounded. Under divine direction they departed from Babel northward into a valley called Nimrod, and thence were led by the Lord across the continent of Asia^[3] eastward until they came to the shore of the great sea—Pacific Ocean—which divided the lands. Here they remained four years; and then by divine appointment constructed eight barges in which to cross the mighty ocean to a land of promise, to which God had covenanted to bring them; to a land "which was choice above all other lands, which the Lord God had reserved for a righteous people." After a severely stormy passage—continuing for 344 days, the colony landed on the western coast of North America, "probably south of the Gulf of California."^[4]

Soon after their arrival the people of the colony began to scatter out upon the face of the land, and multiply, and till the earth; "and they did wax strong in the land."^[5] Previous to the demise of Moriancumr and Jared, the people were called together and a kingly government founded,

Orihah, the youngest son of Jared, being anointed king.

Capital and Centres of Civilization.

The capital of the kingdom was doubtless the city of Moron, in a province or "land" of the same name, the location of which is unknown except that it was near the land called by the Nephites "Desolation." "Now," says Moroni, "the land of Moron, where the king dwelt, was near the land which is called 'Desolation' by the Nephites;"^[6] and later he informs us that this "land of Moron" was the land of the "first inheritance" of the Jaredites.^[7] This locates the land of Moron near the land called by the Nephites "Desolation," and the land Desolation, according to the Nephite records, bordered on the north of the land Bountiful, at that point where it was but a day and a half's journey for a Nephite from the sea east to the sea west.^[8] This would bring the southern borders of the land Desolation well down towards the continent of South America, perhaps to some point on that narrow neck of land known to us as the Isthmus of Panama. The northern limits of what the Nephites called the land Desolation may not be so easily ascertained. Whether it extended north and westward beyond the peninsula of Yucatan or ended south and east of that peninsula may not be definitely determined; but from the general tenor of the references to it in the Book of Mormon, it was, when compared with the whole country, occupied by the Nephites, a small division of the country, a local province, and bounded on the north by what the Jaredites called the land of Moron, the land of the Jaredites' first inheritance.^[9]

According to the late Elder Orson Pratt the place of the Jaredites' "first inheritance," or landing, was "on the western coast, and probably south of the Gulf of California,"^[10] though he gives no reason for his statement. Elder George Reynolds, speaking of the land of Moron, "where the Jaredites made their first settlement," says: "It was north of the land called Desolation by the Nephites, and consequently in some part of the region which we know as Central America."^[11] This conclusion, of course, is based upon the idea that the land Desolation was comparatively but a small Nephite province, an idea that, as already remarked, is forced upon the mind from the general tenor of the Book of Mormon references to it.

This land Desolation, so named by the Nephites because of the evidence of ruin and destruction that everywhere abounded in it, when first discovered by them, not because its lands were not fertile, was evidently a great centre of population in Jaredite times. About 123 B. C. a company of Nephites—forty-three in number—sent out by one Limhi, came into the land afterwards called Desolation and described it as "a land which was covered with dry bones, yea, a land which had been peopled, and which had been destroyed."^[12] Another description of the land found by Limhi's expedition is that they "discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with the ruins of buildings of every kind; * * * a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel."^[13] "And for a testimony that the things they said were true, they brought from the land twenty-four plates which were filled with engravings, and the plates were of pure gold. And behold, also, they brought breast plates, which were large, and they were of brass and of copper, and perfectly sound. And again, they brought swords, the hilts of which had perished, and the blades were cankered with rust; but no one in the land could interpret the language or the engravings that were on the plates."^[14]

It is evident that the land of Moron, north of Desolation, was the chief centre of Jaredite civilization, and the principal seat of government from the time of their first landing in America—some twenty-two centuries B. C.—to the last civil war which ended in the destruction of the nation, in the sixth century B. C. The evidence of the foregoing statement is seen in the fact that Moron is the land of their first inheritance; and also that nearly all their great civil wars throughout their national existence, down to and including the last, raged in and about the land of Moron^[15]—except the last great battles of the last war which were fought about the Hill Ramah, the Hill Cumorah of the Nephites. This fixes the center of Jaredite civilization for a period of some sixteen centuries in Central America. True, there is evidence that the Jaredites occupied at one time very much of the north continent,^[16] but the land Moron, in Central America, was the seat of government and the center of civilization of the great empire. In the reign of the fourth king of the Jaredites, Omer, a conspiracy overthrew his authority; and would doubtless have ended in his assassination; but, warned of God in a dream, he departed out of the land with his family, and "traveled many days," and "came over by the place where the Nephites were destroyed"—that is, by the Hill Cumorah, south of Lake Ontario, in the state of New York—"and from thence eastward, and came to a place that was called Ablom, by the sea shore, and there he pitched his tent."^[17] Here he was joined later by others who fled from the tyranny of those who had usurped the kingdom.^[18] This land of "Ablom", the late Elder Orson Pratt suggested, was "probably on the shore of the New England states."^[19] So far as known this marks the northern limits of Jaredite occupancy of the north continent.

In the reign of the sixteenth king—in whose days "the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants,"^[20] a "great city was founded at the narrow neck of land," that is, at some point on the Isthmus of Panama. That city marked the southern limits of the Jaredite empire. They never entered South America for the purpose of colonization, but preserved it "for a wilderness," in which "to get game."^[21]

The width of the empire east and west, north of the Gulf of Mexico, may not be determined. Whether it extended from ocean to ocean, or was confined to the Missouri-Mississippi valleys,

and thence eastward south of the great lakes to the Atlantic, may not be positively asserted; but personally I incline to the latter opinion, notwithstanding the statement of the Book of Mormon to the effect that "the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants." This I believe to be merely a general expression meant to convey the idea of a very extensive occupancy of the north continent by the Jaredites; but as it does not compel us to believe that the writer had in mind Labrador, the regions of Hudson's Bay and Alaska, so I do not think it requires us to believe that the Jaredites occupied the Rocky mountains, and regions westward of them. My principal reason for thinking that the Jaredite empire was limited northward to the great lakes, eastward from the Rocky mountain slopes—northward of the Gulf of Mexico—to the Atlantic, and southward to the Isthmus of Panama, is because—as will appear later—to that territory, magnificent in its extent, are more strictly confined what I regard as the evidences of Jaredite occupancy.

Extent and Nature of Civilization.

The extent of Jaredite civilization would be coextensive with the territory they occupied, the limits of which have already been considered. Of its nature one may judge somewhat when it is remembered that they were colonists from the Euphrates valley, shortly after the flood; and very likely the nature of their buildings, especially of their public buildings, temples and other places of worship, would take on the general features of the buildings in ancient Babel modified in time, of course, by their own advancement in architecture.

That they were a prosperous and civilized race in their new home in the western hemisphere is quite clear. In the reign of the fifth monarch, Emer, the people had become strong and prosperous, "insomuch that they became exceeding rich, having all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linen, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things; and also all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man. They also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man; * * * and thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land [North America], which was choice above all other lands."^[22]

In the reigns of Riplakish and Morianton, their tenth and eleventh monarch respectively—there were twenty-eight legitimate kings in all, besides a number of usurpers who held authority for a season in the Jaredite nation—many spacious buildings were erected and many cities were built; and the people "became exceeding rich" under those reigns; while in the reign of the sixteenth monarch, Lib, they seemed to have reached a very high state of civilization, which extended over the "whole face of the land northward:—"

They were exceedingly industrious, and they did buy and sell and traffic one with another, that they might get gain. And they did work in all manner of ore, and they did make gold, and silver, and iron, and brass, and all manner of metals; and they did dig it out of the earth; wherefore, they did cast up mighty heaps of earth to get ore, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of copper. And they did work all manner of fine work. And they did have silks, and fine-twined linen; and they did work all manner of cloth, that they might clothe themselves from their nakedness. And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth. * * * And they did make all manner of tools with which they did work their beasts. And they did make all manner of weapons of war. And they did work all manner of work of exceedingly curious workmanship. And never could be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord.^[23]

This represents a people far advanced in civilization, in agriculture, in mining, in manufactures, and in the arts. This blessed condition was in fulfilment of the promise of the Lord; for when he called out of Babel Jared and his brother, Moriancumr, the Lord promised the latter that he would lead them "into a land which is choice above all the lands of the earth." "And there will I bless thee and thy seed," said the Lord, "and raise up unto me of thy seed, and of the seed of thy brother, and they who shall go with thee, a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth."^[24]

If we take this brief glimpse of the civilization of the Jaredite nation quoted above, and couple it with the promise of God to Moriancumr, we have every reason to believe that the Jaredites became a very great, prosperous, and powerful people. Their occupancy of the western world, however, was confined to the northern continent. Here their civilization rose, and here it fell, after enduring between fifteen and sixteen hundred years, if we accept the Hebrew chronology for the date of the confounding of language at Babel.

Numbers.

The number of Jaredites, of course, varied at different periods of their long national existence. In the reign of the fourth king, Omer, a grievous civil war broke out among them which "lasted for the space of many years," and led to "the destruction of nearly all the people of the kingdom."^[25] From time to time they were subject to these civil wars which very naturally checked the increase in their population. Still they became very numerous, sufficiently so, as already shown, to occupy an immense empire of country, extending from the Isthmus of Panama northward, including Central America, Mexico, thence northward to the great lakes, and from the eastern

slopes of the Rocky mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. In their last great civil war, after it had raged many years, we are informed by the sacred historian that there had been slain by the sword "two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children."^[26] Upon which the late Orson Pratt remarks, in a foot note on the passage, that including the wives and children of the two millions of men who were slain, "the numbers would probably have been from ten to fifteen millions." Their numbers may have been even greater than this at other periods of their history.

Literature.

The Jaredites also had a literature. When the Nephite king Mosiah translated some of their records—the twenty-four plates of Ether, brought by Limhi's expedition from the land Desolation—it is stated that they gave an account not only of the people who were destroyed (the Jaredites) from the time they were destroyed back to the building of the great Tower at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth, but they also gave an account of events beyond that time "even up to the creation of Adam." It is only reasonable to conclude that the record engraven on gold plates by the last Jaredite historian, the prophet Ether, was but one of many such records among the Jaredites; for since they came from the Euphrates valley with a knowledge of letters, there is nothing in their history which would lead us to suppose they lost that knowledge; but on the contrary everything to establish the fact that they continued in possession thereof; for not only was Ether, the last of their prophets, able to keep a record, but the last of their kings, Coriantumer, was able to write; for in the days of the Nephite king, Mosiah I, a large stone was brought to him with engravings on it which he interpreted by means of Urim and Thummim; and the record on the stone gave an account of Coriantumer, written by himself, and the slain of his people; and it also recorded a few words concerning his fathers and how his first parents came out from the Tower at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people. So that, from first to last, the Jaredites had a literature.

Government.

Before the demise of the two brothers, Moriancumr and Jared, who led the Jaredite colony to the western hemisphere, the people were called together and a kingly government founded. Monarchical government was not established without remonstrance from Moriancumr, who declared that such government would lead to the destruction of liberty.^[27] But Jared pleaded that the people might have the kind of government they desired, and proposed that they choose from among his own or his brother's sons the man they would have for king. The first choice of the people was Pagag, the eldest son of Moriancumr; but influenced, doubtless by the desire of his father that some other form of government should be established, Pagag declined the kingly honor. So also several of the sons of Jared declined to serve in that office, perhaps for the same reason. Finally, however, one of the sons of Jared, Orihah, accepted and was anointed king. The choice seems to have been a fortunate one, for it is said that Orihah walked humbly before the Lord and he remembered the great things the Lord had done for his fathers, as also did his people; and he executed judgment upon the land in righteousness all his days, and his days were many.^[28] Orihah was succeeded by his son Kib, in whose reign the first rebellion took place; for the son of Kib rebelled against him, and even imprisoned the king until another son born in the old age of the captive monarch gathered sufficient strength to reinstate his father upon his throne. This was the commencement of a long series of such rebellions in the Jaredite dynasty.

Of the nature of Jaredite government little can be learned beyond the fact that after the election of the first king, Orihah, the hereditary principle was recognized; and although there were frequent contestants for the throne, and occasional usurpations of the kingly authority, the legitimate line of hereditary monarchs seems to have been reasonably well maintained. It appears not to have been part of the constitution of the government, however, that the rights of heredity in the royal house should descend to the eldest son. It frequently happened that the son born in the old age of the reigning monarch succeeded to the kingly power, a course which perhaps accounts for the occasional rebellions of their brothers, though the rights of the first born are never urged as the cause of the quarrels.

Of the subordinate officers of the kingdom nothing is said; by what means judicial powers were exercised we are not informed; what the nature of the military organization was, or what system of taxation was adopted, we do not know. On all these matters Moroni's abridgment of the record of Ether is silent.

Religion.

Relative to the religion that obtained among the Jaredites, we are left in well-nigh as much ignorance as we are concerning the nature of the subordinate feature of their government. The two brothers, Moriancumr and Jared, seem to have been among the righteous people of Babel; so much so in fact that Moriancumr was a very great prophet of God, and had direct access to the source of revelation; for by revelation he learned of God's intention to confound the language of the people, and thus stop the impious work in which they were engaged, when building the city of Babel and its tower. It is in consequence of their high favor with God that the language of these brothers and that of their friends was preserved; and they with their families and friends, led away to "a land which was choice above all other lands," where God fulfilled his promise to make

of them a great nation. It is doubtful if a prophet ever lived in ancient times who held more direct communion with God than did this prophet Moriancumr. It will be remembered that he took into the mountain sixteen transparent stones, which he had prepared, and asked God to make them luminous; that in the journey of the colony across the great deep in the eight barges that had been prepared, they might not be in darkness. As the Lord stretched forth his hand to touch the stones, in compliance with the prophet's request, the veil was taken from the eyes of Moriancumr, and he saw the finger of God, and fell prostrate before him in fear. But even his fear could not crush his faith. He so far prevailed with God through faith that he beheld him face to face, and talked with him as a man speaks with his friend. That is, he saw and talked with the pre-existent spirit of the Lord Jesus, for the Lord said to him: "This body which ye now behold is the body of my spirit, * * * and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh." A greater revelation of God than this, previous to the coming of the Lord Jesus in the flesh, no other prophet ever received. Moreover Jesus said to him: "Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood. * * * Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. * * * In me shall all mankind have light, and that eternally, even those who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. * * * Seest thou that ye are created after mine image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image."^[29]

Moriancumr was commanded not to suffer the things he had seen and heard to be revealed to the world until the Lord Jesus should have lived in the flesh. He was commanded, however, to write what he had both seen and heard, and seal it up that it might be preserved to come forth in due time to the children of men. In addition to the revelation of his own person to him, the Lord revealed to the prophet Moriancumr "all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth." While Moriancumr was prohibited from making known to his people the great things thus revealed to him, his knowledge of the things of God must have given him wonderful power and influence in teaching his people the righteous truths which are fundamental and universal. This confidence and strength must also have been imparted to others, for certain it is that the Jaredites had prophets of great power sent to them from time to time to teach and reprove them; and even some of their monarchs were shining examples of spiritual power and righteousness. The fifth monarch, Emer, possessed such faith that he, like Moriancumr, had the blessed privilege of seeing "the Son of Righteousness, and did rejoice and glory in his day."^[30] And of the whole people it is said, "never could [there] be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord."^[31] All of which is good evidence that the Jaredites at this time (in the reign of Lib, the sixteenth monarch) were a righteous people; and this righteousness was doubtless brought about by the preaching of faith in God and his laws as only Moriancumr and other prophets whom God raised up to the Jaredite nation could preach it. But it was with the Jaredites as with other nations. Their righteousness was not continuous, and it is more than likely that their faith ebbed and flowed as the faith of all people seems to ebb and flow. There were times when the prophets of God were rejected; when their severest warnings of coming calamities seemed to produce no effect. In the reign of Com and Shiblom,^[32] the twenty-first and twenty-second monarchs of the Jaredites, respectively, a great calamity befell the people, and the prophets seized upon this circumstance to declare that even greater destruction should befall them, and predicted that "the bones of the Jaredites should become a heap of earth upon the face of the land except they should repent of their wickedness." This declaration, so far from bringing the people to repentance, filled them with rage against the prophets, and they sought to destroy them. Even the priesthood itself seems at times to have become corrupted; for in the closing years of the monarchy, in the reign of Coriantumr, the high priest is charged with murdering one Gilead as the latter sat upon his throne.

Beyond these few facts nothing can be learned from the abridged record of the Jaredites concerning the religion of that people, except that unto some of their prophets, just previous to the destruction of both the nation and the people, was revealed the fact that, unless the Jaredites repented, the Lord God would execute judgment against them to their utter destruction, and that he would bring forth another people to possess the land, after the manner in which he had brought forth their fathers from Babel. Unto Ether, the last of the Jaredite prophets, the son of Coriantor, the last king but one of the Jaredites, the same truth was revealed. To him, also, was shown the days of Christ; and it was revealed to him that upon this blessed land of the western hemisphere would be built up to the remnant of the house of Joseph, a Holy City, to be called New Jerusalem,^[33] or Zion; a city of refuge for the righteous in the last days. These prophecies, I am aware, throw no light upon the nature of the Jaredite religion, but they do establish the fact that God sent forth inspired men among them, to warn them of the calamities that were decreed against them because of their decline from righteousness; and that fact is an important religious truth.

History.

We have in the Book of Mormon but the merest outline of the history of the Jaredites; and this outline is learned from the abridgment made by Moroni, of the Book of Ether. Ether was the last of the Jaredite prophets, and witnessed the destruction of the race. His record, the Book of Ether, was engraven upon twenty-four plates of gold, found by the Nephites in the second century B. C., and finally abridged by Moroni, and made a part of the Book of Mormon, which abridgment Joseph Smith translated into the English language. It stands to reason that the record of Ether,

even if we had it in full, since it consisted of but twenty-four plates, could be but a very incomplete and imperfect history of so great a people and of so long a period of time—extending through sixteen centuries. Yet in the Book of Mormon there is but an abridgment of Ether's record; and that abridgment so brief that Moroni, in speaking of it, says that he had not written an hundredth part of it.^[34] So it is not to be wondered at that the description of the Jaredite government and civilization is so very unsatisfactory. But while all this is admitted, the fact is revealed, in Moroni's abridgment of Ether's record, that from something like twenty-two hundred years before Christ, to some six hundred years before Christ, the North continent of the western world was occupied by a civilized race of people, and that a mighty nation dwelt upon that land through all these centuries; a nation at times highly favored of God, and this because of their righteousness; and then again reduced well nigh to anarchy, with their civilization bordering upon dissolution in consequence of great wickedness and misrule; emphasizing the great truth, to which the history of all nations bears witness, that "righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people." And this is much, and perhaps the sum-total to be learned from the history of nations.

Naturally one is tempted to draw a parallel between this old American nation and various other nations in the old world which paralleled its existence. Surely it is interesting to think that while empires were founding in Assyria and Egypt and Babylon; that while Greece was passing through her heroic ages, in the western world also an enlightened race was building up a national existence and struggling with those problems which through all times and among all people engage the intelligent attention of mankind. Also it would be interesting to note that about the time of the capture of Nineveh, which marked the fall of the Assyrian empire, and but a little before the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, here in our western world an empire which had endured the storms of ages was passing away. Still the main fact to be kept in mind in this work is that such a nation, coeval with the old empires of the eastern world, and with a civilization no less magnificent, existed according to the Book of Mormon in our great northern continent, with its center of civilization in that part of the continent we call Central America. Proof of the existence of such an empire, of such a civilization, and having such a location, will be strong collateral evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon.

II. THE NEPHITES.

Lehi's Colony.

Lehi was one of the many prophets at Jerusalem who predicted the calamities which befell the Jewish nation on the second invasion of Judea by King Nebuchadnezzar, early in the sixth century B. C.^[35] Lehi incurred the wrath of that ungodly people and was warned of God in a vision to depart from Jerusalem with his family, and was also promised that inasmuch as he would keep the commandments of God he should be led to a land of promise.^[36] From the wilderness where Lehi temporarily dwelt, two expeditions to the fated city were made by his sons: one to obtain a genealogy of his fathers, and the Jewish scriptures (which resulted also in adding one more to the colony in the person of Zoram, a servant of Laban, a keeper of the Jewish records); the second, to induce one Ishmael and his family to join Lehi's colony in their exodus from Jerusalem and journey to the promised land. In both of these expeditions they were successful in achieving their object. The colony now consisted of some eighteen adult persons and a number of children.^[37]

From the Book of Mormon and the word of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith it is learned that Lehi's colony traversed from Jerusalem, nearly a southeast direction, until they came to the nineteenth degree north latitude; thence nearly east to the sea of Arabia.^[38] Here the colony built a ship in which to cross the great waters, which separated them from the land of promise. They sailed in a southeasterly direction, and landed on the continent of South America, in about thirty degrees south latitude.^[39]

From Jerusalem their journey to the promised land is supposed to have occupied about twelve years.^[40] On their arrival at the land of promise, the colony went forth upon it, and began to till the earth. The seeds brought from the land of Jerusalem were planted and thrived exceedingly well. The colony also found the land of promise well furnished with beasts of every kind; with the cow, the ass, the horse, the goat, and all manner of wild animals which were for the use of man. They also found all manner of ore, especially gold, silver, and copper. Here they dwelt for some time in prosperity, but scarcely in peace; for there were dissensions in the colony. The elder sons of Lehi, Laman and Lemuel, were of a jealous and skeptical turn of mind; and from the beginning had little faith in the visions of their father, and the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. Nephi, the younger brother, on the other hand, was a man of profound faith in his father's revelations, and in the things of God, and sought for a personal knowledge of the things revealed. This knowledge he received through the revelations of God, which, coupled with the native qualities that go to the making of a leader of men, he became, even before the death of his father, the real head of the community. This aroused the displeasure and even hatred of the elder brothers, who, on various occasions sought his overthrow and even his life. This division between the sons of Lehi extended also to the community, and made a division of the colony ultimately inevitable. Accordingly, after some years spent upon the promised land, Nephi was warned by the Lord to depart from his elder brothers into the wilderness, with all those whom he could persuade to go with him. Neither the distance nor the direction of this first remove of the righteous part of the colony from the more wicked part, can be definitely determined from the

Book of Mormon, except from the location of the people of Nephi in subsequent times; and as this location was far northward from their first place of landing, it is generally supposed that this first remove was northward. Perhaps at the first the partisans of the elder brothers were well contented to be relieved of the presence of the younger brother and his following; but for no great length of time; for they followed in their wake, and before forty years had passed away (supposedly from the time that Lehi's colony left Jerusalem; and if so then twenty-eight years from their landing in the western hemisphere) the two divisions of the colony had wars and contentions with each other.^[41]

Nephi, as would reasonably be expected, took with him the Jewish scriptures which had been brought from Jerusalem, the genealogy of his fathers, together with all the records kept upon the journey to the promised land. Nephi's policy tended to civilization; for he taught his people to erect buildings, "and to work all manner of wood and of iron and of copper and of brass and of steel and of gold and of silver and of precious ores, which were in great abundance." He also built a temple, somewhat after the pattern of the temple of Solomon, and ordained as priests his two younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph, born to Lehi in the wilderness, after the departure of the colony from Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding the protests of Nephi against such a proceeding his people insisted upon his becoming their king, an office he discharged all his days purely in the interest of his people. His policy inculcated industry and encouragement of arts and civilization. Knowing, however, the implacable hatred of his elder brothers, Nephi did not fail to make preparations for vigorous defense in the event of war, and accordingly manufactured both arms and armor for his people. In consequence of the high esteem in which Nephi was held, the kings of the Nephites thereafter took the name of Nephi, as their official or regal name, and were distinguished by being called II Nephi, III Nephi, IV Nephi, and so following.

While the course of Nephi and his people tended to the establishment of civilization, the course of the elder brothers and their following tended to barbarism. They delighted in idleness; and as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind; and a curse fell upon them, even the curse of a dark skin, so that they became loathsome in appearance as in habits. As the followers of Nephi took upon them the name of their leader and were called Nephites, so, in course of time, the followers of the elder brothers took the name of their leader and were called Lamanites, after Laman, the eldest son of Lehi; hence two people from Lehi's colony, Nephites and Lamanites. The Lamanites lived upon the fruits of the chase, hence were nomadic and predatory in their habits. They were full of envy, strife, malice; they were fierce, warlike, murderous. Between these two peoples there was almost constant warfare. The Lamanites the more fierce and numerous; the Nephites fewer in number, but better armed, and protected by armor; the former were the aggressors, the latter acted on the defensive, and usually were conscious of the better cause. At times, however, the Nephites lapsed into wickedness and on such occasion the Lamanites truly were a scourge unto them, in fulfilment of God's word to that effect.^[42] A particularly severe judgment is said to have overtaken the Nephites in the first quarter of the fourth century from the time Lehi left Jerusalem, in which the more wicked part of the people were destroyed.^[43] Some time in the fourth century from the time Lehi left Jerusalem occurred also a second great removal of righteous Nephites from the midst of their brethren and the Lamanites. The first separation in Lehi's colony, it will be remembered, was made under the I Nephi. The second was made under the prophet-king known as I Mosiah, and resulted in the Nephites finding the people of Zarahemla, of which more hereafter.

It is supposed that the first remove of the Nephites from their brethren covered no great distance; as only a few years passed before they were in contact with one another again, at least in warfare. Indeed Elder George Reynolds, in his *Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*, holds to the theory that there may have been several removals of the Nephites between their first separation from the Lamanites under the First Nephi, and the very noted hegira under Mosiah I, about the fourth century of the Nephite annals.^[44] The author of the *Dictionary* urges as the reasons for his theory that it would be inconsistent with the story of the record (Book of Mormon), and with good judgment, to believe that in their first journey the Nephites traveled as far north as they were found four hundred years later,^[45] when the very noted remove was made under Mosiah I. I believe the reasons of Elder Reynolds are quite sufficient for his theory. The movements of the Nephites were most probably as follows: Whatever of conquest was made by the Lamanites upon Nephite possessions, during the first four centuries of their occupancy of the promised land, was made upon their southern borders. On the other hand the Nephite settlements were extended on that side of their possessions least likely to be assailed by their enemies, where there was least danger, that is, on the north. These two circumstances combined to give their colonization movement a northerly direction; until about the close of the fourth Nephite century they are supposed to have been in possession of that part of the continent of South America corresponding to the country now called Ecuador.^[46] This country that the Nephites occupied at the close of the fourth century of their annals, as also that which they had slowly colonized, and from time to time abandoned to their enemies—the whole distance from the place selected by the First Nephi after separating from his brothers to the place they occupied at the close of the fourth century of their annals—this whole country—the Nephites called the Land of Nephi, or the Land of their father's first inheritance.^[47]

The story of the second great hegira of righteous Nephites from their less righteous brethren is a very brief one. It was undertaken in response to a warning and commandment of God to one

Mosiah, who is celebrated in Nephite history as the first king of what I shall call the Nephite-Zarahemla nation—Mosiah I. How great the distance covered in this second great hejira of the Nephites may not be definitely determined; but later a colony under conditions somewhat similar, that is, encumbered with women and children, flocks, herds, and quantities of grain, etc., covered practically the same journey in about twenty-two days, in two separate stages; one of eight and the other of fourteen days.^[48]

Mosiah's people, when they reached the great and beautiful valley drained by what was subsequently called among the Nephites the river Sidon,^[49] found it inhabited by a numerous people, whose chief city was named (at least from that time forth) Zarahemla. At this point it becomes necessary to suspend the account of Mosiah's people in order to say a word of the people inhabiting the valley of the Sidon, for they are the descendants of the third colony which, according to the Book of Mormon, came to the land of promise.

Mulek's Colony.

According to the Bible narrative of King Zedekiah's reign, when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the king of Babylon (588 B. C.), King Zedekiah himself well-nigh made his escape. For when the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night, by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden, the king went the way toward the plain. But his flight being betrayed by an enemy among his own people,^[50] the army of the Chaldeans pursued Zedekiah early in the morning and overtook him in the plain near Jericho. The king's army was scattered from him at the time he was captured; for "those friends and captains of Zedekiah who had fled out of the city with him, when they saw their enemies near them, they left him, and dispersed themselves, some one way and some another, and every one resolved to save himself; so the enemy took Zedekiah alive, when he was deserted by all but a few, with his children and his wives."^[51] The unfortunate king was taken before the king of Babylon, whose headquarters were then at Riblah, in Syria, where "they gave judgment upon him." The sons of Zedekiah were slain in his presence; after which his eyes were put out; he was bound in fetters and carried to Babylon, where subsequently he died. But among the king's friends who escaped were a number who carried with them one of Zedekiah's sons, named Mulek; and according to the Book of Mormon, this company "journeyed in the wilderness and were brought by the hand of the Lord across the great waters,"^[52] into the western hemisphere. It is learned by an incidental remark in the Book of Mormon that the colony of Mulek landed somewhere in the north continent of the western hemisphere; and for that reason the north continent was called Mulek, by the Nephites; and the south continent, Lehi; and this for the reason that the Lord brought the colonies bearing these names to the north and south land^[53] respectively. How many years the colony of Mulek traveled, and in what direction, cannot be learned from the Book of Mormon. But it is quite evident that they landed in the north continent of the western world, most likely in the southern part of that continent, say in the region of what is known in modern times as Central America.^[54] Thence they drifted southward to the valley of the Sidon, where they were found by the migrating hosts of Nephites under Mosiah.

It was a Nephite custom to call their cities and even their villages after the name of him who founded them.^[55] Thus the first city founded by the first Nephi, was called "Nephi," or "the City of Nephi;" the city founded by Melek was called "the City of Melek;" and so following. From this custom arose another, that of naming large districts of country after the chief city therein: thus the country in which the city of Nephi was located was called "the land of Nephi;" the country surrounding the city of Melek was called the land of Melek; see also "the land of Gideon;" "the land of Ammonihah," etc. Following this custom, when the migrating Nephites under Mosiah came into the valley of Sidon, and found the chief man of its principal city to be named Zarahemla, they straightway called the city "The City of Zarahemla;" and ever afterwards among them the surrounding country was called "the land of Zarahemla."

Mulek's colony—the name is derived from that of the young prince it carried with it, not because he was really the leader of the colony, but doubtless out of a sense of loyalty and national pride on the part of those who would regard themselves as being entrusted by Providence with the fortunes of a prince of Israel—Mulek's colony, I repeat, in their hurried flight from Judea brought no records with them, no scriptures, no genealogies. The circumstances under which they made their escape from the Babylonians considered, it is not difficult to understand that records, scriptures, concerned them not at all. Flight, escape alone occupied their thoughts. In consequence of having no records, no written language of any kind, their language was much changed in the course of the centuries that had elapsed since their departure from Judea. So much so, in fact, that the Nephites could not understand them; neither could the people of Zarahemla understand the Nephites, until instructed by the latter in the Nephite tongue. Moreover, having been without both written scriptures and a living priesthood for centuries, Zarahemla's people not only no longer believed in God, but denied even the existence of a Creator. In a word, through ignorance and the demoralizing influence of contentions and internecine wars, they had deteriorated to semi-civilized and irreligious conditions. All this, however, in the course of time was changed. The people of Zarahemla soon learned the Nephite language, it being a language akin, of course, to their own. They were also taught in the Nephite faith; and instructed in the scriptures which Lehi's colony had brought with them from Jerusalem, and which Mosiah had brought with him in his northward journey. The happiest results followed this union of the two peoples. The people of Mosiah were so augmented in numbers by the

addition of their new found friends that they could feel secure from aggressions of the Lamanites, who, in time, might follow them; and, on the other hand, to the people of Zarahemla, the Nephites brought the knowledge of God; a true priesthood; the scriptures of their forefathers; government; civilization. These two peoples, really of the same race, be it remembered, readily united under the Nephite form of government, a limited, and at times elective, monarchy; Mosiah, the Nephite leader, notwithstanding the people of Zarahemla were the more numerous, being chosen king.

The colony of Mulek previous to their removal southward from the place of their first landing, were visited by the sole survivor of the Jaredite race, Coriantumr, who resided some nine months with them before his demise.

Shortly after the arrival of the Nephites under Mosiah in Zarahemla, a large stone with engravings upon it was brought to the king; and Mosiah I, being a Seer, translated the engravings upon the stone and learned that they gave an account of Coriantumr, whom Mulek's colony found; and of his forefathers who came from the tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages; and of the goodness and severity of God upon them; and of the destruction that befell them because of their wickedness.^[56] Afterwards a more perfect knowledge of the Jaredites was obtained through the twenty-four plates of Ether, found by Limhi's expedition into the north land (noted before);^[57] and which were translated by King Mosiah II, who was also a seer.

The colony of Mulek was touched by the other two peoples who had been brought by the providences of God to the western hemisphere; the Jaredite race, through its sole survivor, Coriantumr; and the Nephite race, through the people of Mosiah I. It should be remarked of these three peoples that they were really of a common race. The two brothers who had led the colony from the Tower of Babel, Jared and Moriancumr, were doubtless descendants of Shem, the son of Noah.^[58] The colony of Mulek was unquestionably made up of Jews, hence descendants of Shem; Lehi's colony was made up of descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim,^[59] sons of Joseph, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, who was a direct descendant of Shem.^[60]

Thus eventually the races which, according to the Book of Mormon, have been brought to the western hemisphere under the providences of God, are traceable to one source, to one race; and may be expected to possess certain qualities which will be in harmony with the fact of racial unity.

Footnotes

[1.](#) It is to be understood that in this chapter I deal merely with the migrations spoken of in the Book of Mormon; and by no means enter upon consideration of the migrations to the western hemisphere during the last two thousand years.

[2.](#) See sixth letter of Oliver Cowdery on "Early Scenes and Incidents in the Church," *Messenger and Advocate*, vol. I, p. 112, 1835, where the above name is given as the name of the "Brother of Jared."

[3.](#) Such is the theory of the late Orson Pratt. See foot note "h" Book of Ether, chap. 2. There is nothing in the Book of Ether which positively determines the course of their travels, but as there is some reason for believing that the Jaredite colony landed on the western shores of North America, there seems to be some grounds for the belief that they were led eastward across the continent of Asia to the shores of what is to us the Pacific Ocean.

[4.](#) According to Orson Pratt. See foot note "h," Book of Ether, chap. 6:12. Also Book of Ether, chap. 7:6.

[5.](#) Ether 6:18.

[6.](#) Ether 7:6.

[7.](#) Ether 7:16.

[8.](#) Alma 22:32.

[9.](#) Ether 7:6, 16, 17.

[10.](#) Note "h" on Ether 6:12.

[11.](#) *Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*, Art. Mormon, p. 245.

[12.](#) Mosiah 21:25, 26.

[13.](#) Mosiah 8:8-11, also Helaman 3:6.

[14.](#) Mosiah 7:8-11. These plates were afterwards translated by the Nephite King, Mosiah, who was a seer; that is, one who could use Urim and Thummim. The record which he translated gave an account of the people who were destroyed, "from the time they were destroyed back to the building of the great Tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people. * * * Yea, and even from that time until the creation of Adam." (Mosiah 28:11, 17). Subsequently

Moroni gave an abridged translation of the same record which he called the "Book of Ether," Ether being the name of the prophet who wrote the book so translated.

- [15.](#) See the whole Book of Ether.
- [16.](#) Ether 10:21.
- [17.](#) Ether 9:1-3.
- [18.](#) Ether 9:9.
- [19.](#) See foot note to Ether 9:3.
- [20.](#) Ether 10:21.
- [21.](#) Ether 10:21.
- [22.](#) Ether 9:16-20.
- [23.](#) Ether 10:22-28.
- [24.](#) Ether 1:42, 43.
- [25.](#) Ether 9.
- [26.](#) Ether 15 and foot note "b" p. 606.
- [27.](#) Ether 6:23.
- [28.](#) Ether 6 and 7.
- [29.](#) Ether 3:9-16.
- [30.](#) Ether 9:22.
- [31.](#) Ibid. 10:28.
- [32.](#) The orthography of the word cannot be determined, it is spelled "Shiblom" in the passage above, and Shiblun in another.
- [33.](#) Ether 13.
- [34.](#) Ether 15:33.
- [35.](#) The story of Zedekiah's reign in Jerusalem, the conditions that obtained among the people, and the warnings which God sent by many prophets (Lehi among the rest) is thus told in II Chronicles, chapter 36: "Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the Lord. And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."
- [36.](#) Nephi 2:20.
- [37.](#) See synopsis First Book Nephi, heading chapter 1.
- [38.](#) Richards' and Little's *Compendium*, p. 273; I Nephi 16:13, 14, 43. Also chapter 17:1.
- [39.](#) Richards' and Little's *Compendium*, p. 272-273. The accuracy of this is questioned.
- [40.](#) Reynolds, *B. M. Chronology*, Richards' and Little's *Compendium*, p. 273.
- [41.](#) II Nephi 5.
- [42.](#) II Nephi 5:22-25.
- [43.](#) Book of Omni 4:7.
- [44.](#) That is, four hundred years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem the latter event being 600 B. C.
- [45.](#) *Dict. of B. of M.*, Art. Nephi, Land of p. 295.
- [46.](#) Such is the theory of Orson Pratt—see note "g," Book of Omni, old edition Book of Mormon.

- [47.](#) II Nephi 5:8, Omni 1:12, 27. Mos. 7. Mos. 9:1. See collection of ref. under "b." II Nephi 5.
- [48.](#) See Mosiah 23:1-5, 19. Also Mos. 24:20, 24. Also foot note "t" in ch. 24, by Orson Pratt; and *Dict. of B. of M.*, pp. 198, 199.
- [49.](#) It is supposed by some that this River Sidon is identical with the River Magdalena in the northern part of South America. (See *Dictionary of Book of Mormon*, p. 339, and Orson Pratt's note "g," Alma 2:15 old edition.)
- [50.](#) Josephus, *Antiq.*, bk. 10:8.
- [51.](#) Josephus, *Antiq.*, bk. 10, ch. 8. See also II Kings, ch. 25.
- [52.](#) Omni 1:14-17.
- [53.](#) Helaman 6:10.
- [54.](#) This is upon the supposition that what is known among the Nephites especially as the land "Desolation," in contradistinction to the Nephite land "Bountiful," is identical with the region known to moderns as Central America; and the consideration of Alma 22:29-33. See also *Dict. B. of M.*, p. 110.
- [55.](#) Alma 8:7.
- [56.](#) Omni 1:20-22.
- [57.](#) Mosiah 28:7-14 and Mosiah 28.
- [58.](#) See *Dictionary of B. of M.* (Reynolds), p. 165 *et seq.*
- [59.](#) Lehi is plainly declared to be of the stock of Manasseh, (Alma 10:3); and it is supposed that Ishmael and his family, who joined Lehi and his family in the journey to the promised land, were of the tribe of Ephraim (See *Dict. Book of Mormon*, p. 155, Art. Ishmael). There are promises respecting Ephraim which cannot be realized except through the seed of Ephraim dwelling upon the land of America. See Orson Pratt's *Prophetic Evidences of the Book of Mormon*.
- [60.](#) See Gen. 11.

CHAPTER XI.

BOOK OF MORMON LANDS.^[1]

The location of many cities mentioned in the Book of Mormon, and the districts of Nephite lands that would correspond to departments and provinces in the political nomenclature of modern times, may not now be definitely fixed upon. This circumstance arises largely out of the fact that the Nephite historians have said nothing explicitly as to the extent of those mighty changes which were wrought in the form of Book of Mormon countries by the awful convulsions of nature at the time of Messiah's crucifixion. That the changes were considerable no one can question; for while certain allowances must always be made for language used in describing such events as then took place, the very definite statements of the Book of Mormon with reference to these events leave no room for doubt as to the great transformations wrought in the physical aspects of the land by those great cataclysms. Three different writers make mention of the physical changes wrought at Messiah's crucifixion, two prophetically, and one gives two descriptions of the physical changes that took place through the convulsions of nature. I remark, in passing, that it must be remembered that the prophetic descriptions must be accounted as real as the historical descriptions; for as the prophets saw it, so indeed it came to pass. The first Nephi, in his description of the great cataclysms, says:

I saw a mist of darkness on the face of the land of promise; and I saw lightnings, and I heard thunderings, and earthquakes, and all manner of tumultuous noises; and I saw the earth and the rocks, that they rent; and I saw mountains tumbling into pieces; and I saw the plains of the earth, that they were broken up; and I saw many cities that they were sunk; and I saw many that they were burned with fire; and I saw many that did tumble to the earth, because of the quaking thereof.^[2]

The following is the prophet Samuel's description of the physical changes in the western hemisphere at the crucifixion of Christ:

Behold, in that day that he shall suffer death, the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light

upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead. Yea, at the time that he shall yield up the ghost there shall be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours, and the earth shall shake and tremble; and the rocks which are upon the face of this earth, which are both above the earth [surface] and beneath, which ye know at this time are solid, or the more part of it is one solid mass, shall be broken up; yea, they shall be rent in twain, and shall ever after be found in seams and in cracks, and in broken fragments upon the face of the whole earth, yea, both above the earth and beneath. And behold, there shall be great tempests, and there shall be many mountains laid low, like unto a valley, and there shall be many places which are now called valleys which shall become mountains, whose height is great. And many highways shall be broken up, and many cities shall become desolate. * * * And behold, thus hath the angel spoken unto me; for he said unto me that there should be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours. And he said unto me that while the thunder and the lightning lasted, and the tempests, that these things should be, and that darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days.^[3]

Mormon's abridged description of the great cataclysms, after they had occurred, taken from the book of III Nephi, is as follows:

And it came to pass in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land. And there was also a great and terrible tempest; and there was terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to divide asunder. * * * And the city of Zarahemla did take fire. And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof were drowned. And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah that in the place of the city there became a great mountain. And there was a great and terrible destruction in the land southward. But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward; for behold, the whole face of the land was changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the exceeding great quaking of the whole earth; and the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough. And many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shaken till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate. And there were some cities which remained; but the damage thereof was exceeding great, and there were many in them who were slain. * * * And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth. And behold, the rocks were rent in twain; they were broken up upon the face of the whole earth, insomuch that they were found in broken fragments, and in seams and in cracks, upon all the face of the land.^[4]

The second description of these truly awful occurrences in III Nephi is one that is attributed to the voice of God heard throughout the land by the survivors of that dreadful time:

And it came to pass that there was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth, upon all the face of this land, crying: Wo, wo, wo unto this people; wo unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of their iniquity and abominations that they are fallen! Behold, that great city of Zarahemla have I burned with fire, and the inhabitants thereof. And behold, that great city of Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof to be drowned. And behold, that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth, and the inhabitants thereof, to hide their iniquities and their abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come any more unto me against them. And behold, the city of Gilgal have I caused to be sunk, and the inhabitants thereof to be buried up in the depths of the earth; yea, and the city of Onihah and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Mocom and the inhabitants thereof, and the city of Jerusalem and the inhabitants thereof, and waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them. And behold, the city of Gadiandi, and the city of Gadiomnah, and the city of Jacob, and the city of Gimgimno, all these have I caused to be sunk, and made hills and valleys in the places thereof; and the inhabitants thereof have I buried up in the depths of the earth, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up any more unto me against them. * * * And many great destructions have I caused to come upon this land, and upon this people, because of their wickedness and their abominations.^[5]

But notwithstanding all that is said in these passages about the mighty changes which took place in the land, nothing is set down that helps us to determine definitely the nature of the physical changes as affecting Nephite lands. I believe, however, those changes were considerable; enough at least to render worthless, except in a very general way, the conjectures sometimes made respecting Nephite lands and cities.

I am aware that the science of geology, while clearly granting the instability of our earth's crust, quite generally insists that the uplifting of continents and mountain ranges from the ocean's bed, and the subsidence of islands and continents into the ocean bottom is accomplished so slowly that long geological periods are required for the changes effected; and that the periods of time are so great that it is useless to measure them in time of which years shall be regarded as units.^[6] But notwithstanding the very sound reasons, in the main, which are advanced for the slowness of this work, there is evidence of the fact, and also respectable authority for it, that sometimes very great changes of wide extent are made quite suddenly.

Sir Charles Lyell says:

While these proofs of continental elevation and subsidence, by slow and insensible movements, have been recently brought to light, the evidence has been daily strengthened of continued changes of level effected by violent convulsions in countries where earthquakes are frequent. There the rocks are rent from time to time, and heaved up or thrown down several feet at once, and disturbed in such a manner, that the original position of strata may, in the course of centuries, be modified to any amount.^[7]

Our modern world is fast coming to recognize Plato's story of the subsidence of the island-continent of Atlantis as something more than a fable. The story of that so-called island which by the Egyptian priest who related the tradition to Solon was represented as larger than "Lybia and Asia put together," is told in Plato's *Timaeus*,^[8] as follows:

In those days the Atlantic was navigable; and there was an island situated in front of the straits which you call the columns of Heracles; the island was larger than Lybia and Asia put together, and was the way to other islands, and from the islands you might pass through the whole of the opposite continent which surrounded the true ocean; for this sea which is within the straits of Heracles is only a harbor, having a narrow entrance, but the other is a real sea, and the surrounding land may be most truly called a continent.^[9]

Plato represents that in this land there was a great and wonderful empire which had dominion over the whole island and its armies attempted to subjugate Egypt and Europe to its authority. In this conflict the very ancient Greeks won the applause of Europe and Egypt by withstanding well nigh alone the aggressions of the Atlantic empire. The Greeks are represented as having defeated and triumphed over the invaders, and now Plato:

But afterwards there occurred violent earthquakes and floods; and in a single day and night of rain all your warlike men in a body sank into the earth, and the island of Atlantis in like manner disappeared, and was sunk beneath the sea. And that is the reason why the sea in those parts is impassable and impenetrable, because there is such a quantity of shallow mud in the way; and this was caused by the subsidence of the island.^[10]

On the acceptance of Plato's story of Atlantis, both by ancient and modern writers, P. De Roo, in his *History of America Before Columbus*, has an interesting chapter, from which I quote the following:

Not to speak of other ancient authors to whom we shall refer in the sequel, we may remark that the Jewish writer Philo (20 B. C.—54 A. D.), and the Platonist Crantor, were inclined to admit the literal interpretation of Plato's Atlantidic description. Tertullian (second century A. D.) and Arnobius (fourth century A. D.) agreed with the pagan savant Ammianus of Plato's island, Atlantis; and we have noticed that Cosmas Indicopleustes believed our continent [America] to be the cradle of the human race. It would not be difficult to find several authors of the first Christian centuries and of the middle ages who relied on Plato's narrative in their prophecies of discoveries in the mysterious west, and Christopher Columbus himself was undoubtedly encouraged by his belief in the objective truth of Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*; but after our continent was again discovered at the end of the fifteenth century, almost every European scientist accepted the literal interpretation of the Athenian philosopher's description of countries in and beyond the Atlantic Ocean.^[11]

This passage is followed by a number of pages on the same subject, and many authorities are quoted in the margin, to which I commend the reader.

Elisee Reclus, author of *The Earth, a Descriptive History of the Phenomena of the Life of the Globe*, and one of the highest authorities on physical geography, in speaking of an isthmus which once connected "the few clumps of mountains which formed, as it were, the rudiments of our Europe," with the American coast, also says:

This isthmus was the Atlantis, and the traditions which Plato speaks of about this vanished land were perhaps based upon authentic testimony. It is possible that man may have witnessed the submergence of this ancient continent, and that the Gunches of the Canary Islands were the direct descendants of the earliest inhabitants of this primeval land.^[12]

I also commend to the reader a recent volume on the subject by Ignatius Donnelly, published by Harpers, 1898, under the title *Atlantis*, and while I do not accept all the theories advanced by the author with reference to Atlantis, I recognize the fact that he has collected a great amount of evidence tending to establish the existence and the subsidence of Plato's island-continent. Of course, for many ages Plato's story has been regarded as a fable, but, as Donnelly remarks, "there is an unbelief which grows out of ignorance, as well as a skepticism which is born of intelligence," and then he adds:

For a thousand years it was believed that the legends of the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were myths: they were spoken of as "the fabulous cities." For a thousand years the educated world did not credit the accounts given by Herodotus of the wonders of the ancient civilizations of the Nile and the Chaldaee. He was called "the father of liars." Even Plutarch sneered at him. Now, in the language of Frederick Schlegel, "the deeper and more comprehensive the researches of the moderns have been, the more their regard and esteem for Herodotus has increased." Buckle says, "His minute information about Egypt and Asia Minor is admitted by all geographers." There was a time when the expedition sent out by Pharaoh Necho to circumnavigate Africa was doubted, because the sun was north of them; this circumstance, which then aroused suspicion, now proves to us that the Egyptian navigators had really passed the equator, and anticipated by 2,100 years Vasquez de Gama in his discovery of the Cape of Good Hope.^[13]

It is not, however, upon the probability of the elevation and subsidence of this island-continent that I depend for support of my views with reference to the changes being considerable that have taken place in the western continents in comparatively modern times. There is enough evidence that is matter of record within recent years to establish the possibility of such changes having taken place. Le Conte, in his *Compendium of Geology*, says:

But great earthquakes are oftener associated with bodily movements of extensive areas of earth-crust. Thus, for example, in 1835, after a severe earthquake on the western coast of South America, it was found that the whole coast-line of Chili and Patagonia were raised from two to ten feet above sea-level. Again, in 1822, the same phenomenon was observed in the same region after a great earthquake. Again, in 1819, after a severe earthquake which shook the delta of the Indus, a tract of land fifty miles long and sixteen miles wide was raised ten feet, and an adjacent area of 2,000 square miles was sunk, and became a lagoon. In commemoration of the wonderful event the elevated tract was called "Ullah Bund," or "mound of God." Again, in 1811, a severe earthquake—perhaps the severest ever felt in the United States—shook the valley of the Mississippi. Coincidentally with the shock, large areas of the river-swamp sank bodily, and have ever since been covered with water. In commemoration of the event, this area is still called the sunken country. In all these cases, probably, and in the last two certainly, there was a great fissure of the earth-crust, and a slipping of one side on the other.^[14]

Passing a number of descriptions of land elevations and subsidences which Sir Charles Lyell relates as occurring in Chili, in the nineteenth century, in order that I may give more attention to the lands supposed to have been occupied by the Nephites, I quote the following statement of this eminent geologist concerning the earthquake at Bogota, in 1827:

On the 16th of November, 1827, the plain of Bogota, in New Granada, or Colombia, was convulsed by an earthquake, and a great number of towns were thrown down. Torrents of rain swelled the Magdalena, sweeping along vast quantities of mud and other substances, which emitted a sulphurous vapor and destroyed the fish. Popayan, which is distant two hundred geographical miles south-southwest of Bogota, suffered greatly. Wide crevices appeared in the road of Guanacas, leaving no doubt that the whole of the cordilleras sustained a powerful shock. Other fissures opened near Costa in the plains of Bogota, into which the river Tunza immediately began to flow. It is worthy of remark, that in all such cases the ancient gravel bed of a river is deserted and a new one formed at a lower level; so that a want of relation in the position of alluvial beds of the existing water-courses may be no test of the high antiquity of such deposits, at least in countries habitually convulsed by earthquakes. Extraordinary rain accompanied the shocks before mentioned; and two volcanoes are said to have been in eruption in the mountain chain nearest to Bogota.^[15]

The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, referring to the geographical formation of Colombia, also says:

The fundamental formations throughout Colombia are igneous and metamorphic, the great mass of the cordilleras consisting of gneiss, granite, porphyry and basalt. In many places the carboniferous strata have attained considerable development, though they have been thrown into strange confusion by some unknown disturbance.^[16]

The writer in *Chamber's Encyclopedia*, in speaking of Colombia, also says:

The geology of the country is very extraordinary. "Everywhere," we are told, "are found traces of stupendous cataclysms and a disarrangement and intermixture of primitive and sedimentary rocks, which assume to put all classification at defiance."^[17]

Professor Winchell says:

We are in the midst of great changes, and are scarcely conscious of it. We have seen worlds in flames, and have felt a comet strike the earth. We have seen the whole coast of South America lifted up bodily ten or fifteen feet and let down again in an hour. We have seen the Andes sink 220 feet in seventy years. * * * Vast transpositions have taken place in the coastline of China. The ancient capital, located, in all probability, in an accessible position near the centre of the empire, has now become nearly surrounded by water, and its site is on the peninsula of Corea. * * * There was a time when the rocky barriers of the Thracian Bosphorus gave way and the Black Sea subsided. It had covered a vast area in the north and east. Now this area became drained and was known as the ancient Lectonia: it is now the prairie region of Russia, and the granary of Europe.^[18]

Referring to Donnelly again:

The earthquake of 1783 in Iceland destroyed 9,000 people out of a population of 50,000; twenty villages were consumed by fire or inundated by water, and a mass of lava thrown out "greater than the bulk of Mont Blanc."^[19]

Professor Lyell, referring to the great earthquake which occurred on the island of Java, near the mountain of Galung Gung, on the 8th of October, 1822, says:

A loud explosion was heard, the earth shook, and immense columns of hot water and boiling mud, mixed with burning brimstone, ashes, and lapilli, of the size of nuts, were projected from the mountain like a water-spout, with such prodigious violence that large quantities fell beyond the river Tandoi, which is forty miles distant. * * * The first eruption lasted nearly five hours; and on the following days the rain fell in torrents, and the rivers densely charged with mud, deluged the country far and wide. At the end of four days (October 12), a second eruption occurred, more violent than the first, in which hot water and mud were again vomited, and great blocks of basalt were thrown to the distance of seven miles from the volcano. There was at the same time a violent earthquake, the face of the mountain was utterly changed, its summits broken down, and one side, which had been covered with trees, became an enormous gulf in the form of a semicircle. Over 4,000 persons were killed and 114 villages destroyed.^[20]

The following account of seismic disturbances is taken from Donnelly's work *Atlantis*.

The Gulf of Santorin, in the Grecian Archipelago, has been for two thousand years a scene of active volcanic operations. Pliny informs us that in the year 186 B. C. the island of "Old Kaimeni," or the Sacred Isle, was lifted up from the sea; and in A. D. 19 the island of "Thia" (the Divine) made its appearance. In A. D. 1573 another island was created, called "the small sunburnt island." * * * A recent examination of these islands shows that the whole mass of Santorin has sunk, since its projection from the sea, over 1,200 feet.^[21]

The fort and villages of Sindree, on the eastern arm of the Indus, above Luckput, was submerged in 1819 by an earthquake, together with a tract of country 2,000 square miles in extent.^[22]

In April, 1815, one of the most frightful eruptions recorded in history occurred in the province of Tomboro, in the island of Sumbawa, about two hundred miles from the eastern extremity of Java. It lasted from April 5 to July of that year; but was most violent on the 11th and 12th of July. The sound of the explosion was heard nearly one thousand miles. Out of a population of 12,000 in the province of Tomboro, only twenty-six individuals escaped. "Violent whirlwinds carried up men, horses, and cattle into the air, tore up the largest trees by the roots, and covered the whole sea with floating timber." (Raffles' *History of Java*, vol. I, 38.) The ashes darkened the air; "the floating cinders to the westward of Sumatra formed, on the 12th of April, a mass two feet thick and several miles in extent, through which ships with difficulty forced their way." The darkness in daytime was more profound than the blackest night. "The town called Tomboro, on the west side of Sumbawa, was overflowed by the sea, which encroached upon the shore, so that the water remained permanently eighteen feet deep in places where there was land before. The area covered by the convulsion was 1,000 English miles in circumference. "In the island of Amboyna, in the same month and year, the ground opened, threw out water, and then closed again." (Raffles' *History of Java*, vol. I, p. 52.)

But it is at the point of the European coast nearest to the site of Atlantis at Lisbon that the most tremendous earthquake of modern times has occurred. On the 1st of November, 1775, a sound was heard underground, and immediately afterward a violent shock threw down the greater part of the city. In six minutes 60,000 persons perished. A great concourse of people had collected for safety upon a new quay, built entirely of marble; but suddenly it sank down with all the people on it, and not one of the dead bodies ever floated to the surface. * * * The water where the quay went down is now 600 feet deep. The area covered by this earthquake was very great. Humboldt says that

a portion of the earth's surface, four times as great as the size of Europe, was simultaneously shaken. It extended from the Baltic to the West Indies, and from Canada to Algiers. At eighty leagues from Morocco the ground opened and swallowed a village of 10,000 inhabitants, and closed again over them.^[23]

Although Mr. Charles Darwin, one of the most conservative of scientists, usually insists that the elevation and subsidence of the earth's crust is accomplished by slow degrees and continues through long geological periods of time, yet in the report of his *Geological Observations*, he records some very important evidences of recent elevations and subsidences as having taken place quite suddenly. One instance is in connection with an elevation on the Island of San Lorenzo, off the coast of Peru near Lima, in which he reaches the conclusion that the beach on that island has been raised 85 feet since Indian men inhabited Peru.^[24] He gives another instance of a recent elevation of land on the Island of Chiloe;^[25] and still another on the Island of Lemus.^[26] In speaking in a general way of the elevation on the western side of the South American continent, Mr. Darwin also says:

On the shores of the Pacific, upraised shells of recent species, generally, though not always, in the same proportional numbers as in the adjoining sea, have actually been found over a north and south space of 2,075 miles, and there is reason to believe that they occur over a space of 2,480 miles. The elevation on this western side of the continent has not been equable; at Valparaiso, within the period during which upraised shells have remained undecayed on the surface, it has been 1,300 feet, whilst at Coquimbo, 200 miles northward, it has been within this same period only 252 feet. At Lima, the land has been uplifted at least eighty feet since Indian man inhabited that district; but the level within historical times apparently has subsided.^[27]

Coming to more recent seismic disturbances I call attention to the one which occurred in 1883, on an island in the straits of Sunda:

A great cloud was seen to rise above the island, and spreading out obscured the sun, while ash fell from the air. Upon the neighboring land the ground was shaken, while upon the low coasts, a great water wave rushed, destroying thousands of lives. Krakatoa, which had not been in eruption in this century, had again broken forth, with the most terrific explosion that man had recorded. Ash rose miles in the air, and spreading out, fell on the surrounding land and water, and for a while it was so thick upon the surface of the sea, in the Straits of Sunda, that the progress of vessels was impeded. So high did it rise that the light ash, floating about by the upper winds, staid suspended in the air for months, some of it falling in America and Europe. A great water wave, generated by the explosion, crossed the Pacific to the California coast, and it was observed on the shores of Africa and Australia. When the eruption had ceased it was found that Krakatoa had been split into two parts, one of which had disappeared into the air, leaving ocean water where there had been dry land. The part of the island that remained was covered with a deep coating of ash, and not a living thing was left, neither plant nor animal.^[28]

Speaking of the same event W. J. McGee, vice-president of the National Geographical Society, and ethnologist in charge of the Bureau of American Ethnology, says:

This stupendous outburst cast up a cloud of gas and dust to a height of seventeen miles or more which darkened the sun for 150 miles in every direction, raised a sea wave reaching 135 feet in height on adjacent coasts, resounded in every direction for a thousand miles, and in one direction for 2,968 miles (if not indeed to the Antipodes), and sent out a series of great atmospheric waves rolling in both directions three times around the globe.^[29]

The authority last quoted also says that the New Madrid earthquake of 1811-12 shook an area of a million and a quarter square miles; and that the Charleston earthquake of 1886 was felt over nearly one-half million square miles of land, and far out at sea. He gives at length also a description of the recent earthquake in the island of St. Vincent, West Indies, which shook all Martinique by the force of its explosion. The magnetic disturbances swept in swift undulations for thousands of miles, passed Maryland and Kansas in a few seconds, and reached Honolulu a minute or two later; while the ensuing rain of rock-dust stretched eastward a hundred miles beyond Barbadoes, westward to Jamaica, northward to Texas, and to the South American continent.^[30]

The conclusions to be reached from the facts here presented are, first, that while elevations and subsidences of the earth's crust are usually accomplished by slow degrees and through long periods of time, it is also true that very extensive changes are effected by internal forces of the earth in a very short period of time; and second, that there is reason for the belief that the seismic disturbances described in the Book of Mormon as taking place at the crucifixion of Messiah, effected very great changes in the physical character of the land occupied by the Nephites. If it should be contended that while the cases of earthquake disturbances cited in this chapter tell of widespread areas of country being suddenly and greatly effected, yet nowhere (except in the case of Atlantis) do those changes approach the magnitude of the physical changes called for in the views here set forth, the answer would be that nowhere else in the records kept

by men is there an account of such terrible, such long-continued, and such widespread cataclysms in the earth as those described in the Book of Mormon. The terrible seismic disturbances which at the time of Messiah's crucifixion took place in the western hemisphere continued through three hours of time (instead of a few minutes, as in the case of some of the most noted earthquake instances cited above); and affected the western continents from end to end, and were followed by three days of total darkness.^[31] And as the forces then operative surpass in their magnitude and time of continuance all other known instances of the kind, so too, may it be reasonably argued that the changes would be correspondingly greater than those effected by similar instances of less magnitude and continued through briefer periods of time.

In concluding this chapter—even though I have not yet arrived at the argumentative stage of my treatise—I would suggest that the cases of seismic disturbances here cited are sufficient both in their character and extent to warrant belief in the possibility of the terrible cataclysms described in the Book of Mormon, and that they effected great physical changes in the continents of America.

Footnotes

[1.](#) My treatment of the subject here has simply to do with the physical character of the great divisions of the western hemisphere in Book of Mormon times. I make no attempt to definitely locate particular lands mentioned in the Book of Mormon, for the reason that the plan of my treatise does not require the consideration of that subject, except in a very general way; and however interesting it might be to know definitely the location of particular Jaredite and Nephite lands—the extent of their kingdoms, empires and republics; the location of special provinces and other political districts or divisions therein, together with a knowledge of the exact location of their capitals, and metropolises, I do not believe those things can be learned with any degree of certainty, for reasons set forth in the text of this chapter.

[2.](#) I Nephi 12:4.

[3.](#) Helaman 14:20-27.

[4.](#) III Nephi 8:5-18.

[5.](#) III Nephi 9:1-8, 12.

[6.](#) "With regard to the ages necessary for the accomplishment of the immense geological processes, the history of which is disclosed to us in the earth's strata, they certainly must have been of prodigious duration; for all the annals of humanity are but as a passing moment compared with the cycles of the globe. * * * Professor Houghton, a mathematician, has endeavored to establish, according to the formula of Dulong and Petit, that the mere fall in the temperature of 25, occurring previously to the present epoch of our planet, would require about 18 million of years. In the same way, the formation of each of the strata, which constitutes the sum-total of the geological records of the earth's surface must have taken up a long series of centuries before which the mind recoils in perplexity. *The Earth*, Reclus, vol. I, p. 32.

[7.](#) *Manual of Elementary Geology*, p. 46, 1852 edition.

[8.](#) Reference is also made to Atlantis in his *Critias*. (Jowett's Trans, vol. II.)

[9.](#) *Dialogues of Plato* (Jowett's translation), vol. II, p. 520.

[10.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 521.

[11.](#) *History of America before Columbus*, p. 127, (Lippincott Co., pubs., 1900).

[12.](#) *The Earth*, vol. I, p. 36.

[13.](#) *Atlantis*, Donnelly, p. 3.

[14.](#) *Compend. of Geology*, Joseph Le Conte, pp. 145 and 146. See also p. 153. The disturbance in the Mississippi valley is also mentioned by Lyell (*Principles of Geology*, 1856 edition p. 446). He adds, that the ground on which New Madrid stood, and the river bank for fifteen miles above, sank eight feet below their former level.

[15.](#) *Principles of Geology*, Lyell, p. 457, 1856 edition.

[16.](#) Art. Colombia.

[17.](#) *Chamber's Ency.*, Art. Colombia.

[18.](#) *The pre-Adamites*, p. 437.

[19.](#) *Atlantis*, p. 35.

[20.](#) *Principles of Geology*, p. 430.

[21.](#) *Atlantis*, p. 37.

- [22.](#) p. 38.
- [23.](#) *Atlantis*, p. 40.
- [24.](#) *Geological Observations*, third edition, pp. 268, 269.
- [25.](#) *Geological Observations*, p. 233.
- [26.](#) *Ibid.*, pp. 232, 233.
- [27.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 599. Also *The Earth*, vol. II, pp. 646, 647.
- [28.](#) *First Book of Physical Geography*, R. S. Tarr, pp. 347, 348.
- [29.](#) *The World Today*, (Magazine), vol. II, no. 1, July, 1902.
- [30.](#) For full description see the magazine entitled "The World To Today," Vol III., No, 1, July 1902.
- [31.](#) It should be noted that the darkness accompanied some of the seismic disturbances cited in the foregoing accounts of earthquakes, notably in that of April, 1815, in the island of Sumbawa, see page 211, where "the darkness in the day time" is described as being more profound than the blackest night.

CHAPTER XII.

INTER-CONTINENTAL MOVEMENTS OF BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLE.

The inter-continental movements of the Book of Mormon peoples must next be considered.

Of the movements of the Jaredites and the people of Mulek but little can be learned. The center of Jaredite civilization and national power was in that part of the north continent known to the Nephites as the land Desolation, a country which corresponds, as we have seen, to modern Central America,^[1] and of which Moron was the capital. From this point the Jaredites evidently colonized in great part the north continent; for it is said in the reign of King Lib that "the whole face of the land northward was covered with inhabitants."^[2] But this is the widest extent of their colonization, as they confined themselves to occupancy of the north continent, and nothing more than hunting excursions ever carried them into the south continent.

Of the movements of Mulek's colony we have nothing more definite than that having landed first at some point in the south part of the north continent, they afterwards removed into the north part of the south continent—to the valley of the Sidon, and were permanently settled there when they were found by the migrating Nephites under Mosiah I.

As for the movements of the Nephites we have already traced them from Lehi's landing place to the valley of the Sidon, where they joined the people of Zarahemla, the descendants of Mulek's colony, and formed the Nephite-Zarahemla monarchy under Mosiah I.

Hereafter we shall find their movements tending chiefly in two directions: to the southward, and into the north.

NEPHITE MOVEMENTS SOUTHWARD.

The movements of the Nephites southward were prompted by two chief incentives: first, by a desire on the part of some restless, over-zealous spirits, who came with Mosiah to the valley of the Sidon, to regain possession of the Land of Nephi—the land of their forefathers; a choice land in itself, and made dear to some of them, doubtless, by many tender and sacred recollections; second, by a pious desire on the part of zealous missionaries to convert their brethren, the Lamanites, to the truth of their fathers' faith in God, and the truth of their fathers' traditions concerning the future coming of the Christ to bring to pass the redemption of the world.

The first, and perhaps the largest of these movements, having in contemplation the re-occupancy of the land of Nephi, was made under Zeniff, a man who describes himself as "overzealous" to inherit the land of his fathers.^[3] This expedition was most likely undertaken during the reign of the second king of the Nephite-Zarahemla nation, viz., King Benjamin, who succeeded Mosiah I. In King Benjamin's reign there was a serious war between the Lamanites and the newly formed Nephite-Zarahemla nation. The Lamanites invaded the land of Zarahemla bent on ravaging the country, and the subjugation of the people. They were repulsed and driven back to their own lands, but not without much bloodshed.^[4] During the war, but likely after the repulse of the Lamanites, Zeniff, with others, was sent among the Lamanites to locate their forces and ascertain

their strength, that the Nephite-Zarahemla army might destroy them. But Zeniff, impressed with the many virtues of the Lamanites, desired that they might not be destroyed, and urged upon the leader of the Nephite expedition to enter into a friendly treaty with them. This, however, was so far from the mind of the Nephite leader that he ordered Zeniff to be slain, doubtless upon the charge of treason, or insubordination; whereupon there was a revolt in the expedition. The leader himself was killed; and Zeniff was rescued after much bloodshed. Fifty of the expedition—all that survived the unhappy conflict—returned to Zarahemla to relate the sad event that had befallen them. Zeniff now gathered a company about him who were desirous of repossessing the land of their forefathers, and with them he departed from Zarahemla. On the journey they suffered from famine, which much reduced their numbers; but finally they reached the land of Lehi-Nephi, and of Shilom, which was the place from which the Nephites under Mosiah departed northward in their second great heira.^[5]

The Lamanites received the expedition of Zeniff with favor, entered into treaty relations with them, and vacated the land of Lehi-Nephi and Shilom, that Zeniff and his people might possess it. It must not be thought, however, that the action of the king of the Lamanites was altogether disinterested; his ulterior motive was plunder of the Nephites as soon as their well-known industry should bear fruit. He allowed them to take possession of the cities and lands of their fathers only that he might bring them into bondage, and make their industry a source of revenue to himself and people.

The people of Zeniff rebuilt the walls of the ancient Nephite cities in the land of Nephi, as also the cities themselves, and brought the fruitful lands of their fathers again under cultivation; for under Lamanite occupancy they had been neglected. The cities also had fallen into decay, and the walls thereof had partly crumbled into ruins. As soon, however, as Nephite industry began to redeem the waste places and produce prosperity in the land, the Lamanites attempted their subjugation; but though they suffered some from their conflicts with the Lamanites, the Nephites, so long as Zeniff lived, maintained their independence. So also they did during part of the reign of their second king, Noah, son of Zeniff. During the reign of this second king, though he himself was a dissolute, unrighteous man, he greatly beautified the city of Lehi-Nephi, embellished the temple, and also built for himself a magnificent palace. He also erected many and magnificent buildings in the land of Shilom.^[6] To carry out these improvements King Noah taxed his people to the extent of one-fifth of all their possessions, and of their income. He surrounded his dissolute court with a corrupt priesthood, and in every way demoralized his people and made his reign infamous. Still he successfully expelled the predatory bands of Lamanites which invaded his territory from the south, and who had for a time preyed upon his people.

About this time God sent a prophet among King Noah's people to warn them of impending calamity. Him they burned, not heeding his warning. But the mission of Abinadi, for such was the prophet's name, was not wholly in vain, for the heart of one priest, Alma, was touched; and he, repenting of his own wickedness, brought others to repentance. As might be expected, this course displeased King Noah, and he sought to destroy young Alma and his people. But Alma being warned of God of the king's intentions, fled with his people (numbering about four hundred and fifty souls) into the wilderness, some eight days' journey, where they founded a city which they called Helam.^[7] Here they dwelt in security for a number of years. Finally, however, they were discovered by the Lamanites, who placed them under bondage, and appointed task masters over them. From this thralldom they were finally released by the interposition of the Lord, who directed Alma to take his flight in the direction of Zarahemla, which is reached in twelve days from Helam, where he was most heartily received by King Mosiah II, who made him High Priest over the Church throughout Zarahemla.

Meantime a large army of Lamanites invaded the land of Lehi-Nephi, before whom King Noah and his people fled; but being encumbered with their wives and children they were soon overtaken. Noah ordered an abandonment of the women and children; but this order part of the men of his army refused to obey, choosing rather to die with their wives and children. The remainder followed the king. When the Lamanites saw the helplessness of the Nephites, and being moved with compassion by the pleading of their women, they abandoned the slaughter of them, and permitted them to return to their cities, under covenant that they would deliver up one-half of their property, and thereafter pay annually one-half of the products of their labors. These hard conditions were accepted; and the people returned to their possessions; one Limhi, son of Noah, was chosen to be their ruler—their king, if such a title, under the circumstances, be not mockery.

The Nephite men who obeyed the orders of King Noah in the matter of abandoning their wives and children soon repented of their cowardice, and resolved to return and share their fate or avenge their death; and when King Noah opposed their manly resolutions they burned him at the stake. On returning to Lehi-Nephi it was to find, of course, that their people had gone into bondage to the Lamanites, under the circumstances already detailed—a bondage these returning fugitives readily shared.

Hard, indeed, was the fate of the Nephites under Lamanite bondage. The treaty stipulation prevented the Lamanites from making open war upon them; but the one-half of the products of their labor due their masters under the treaty they had formed was collected under every circumstance of cruelty, and the Lamanites themselves directed the labors of the unfortunate Nephites, placing task masters over them, who in every way insulted and oppressed them, even

to the binding of heavy burdens upon their backs, and the application of the lash on the slightest provocation.

Under these circumstances it can be easily understood that the Nephites were restive and anxious for deliverance. Naturally their eyes and hearts turned to Zarahemla, where the great body of their brethren dwelt in security. Once King Limhi fitted out a small expedition of forty-three men and sent them to find Zarahemla, and bring deliverance. The expedition was a failure as far as its immediate object was concerned. It was lost in the wilderness, passed by the land of Zarahemla—evidently on the west of it, and went into the land northward, where it found the ruins of the Jaredite race—destroyed cities, ruined temples, fallen walls, a land covered with the bones of men and beasts. They also found breast-plates of brass and copper; swords, the hilts of which had perished; and the blades of which were cankered with rust. But what was of more importance they found what afterwards proved to be the record of Ether, consisting of twenty-four plates of gold, on which the last prophet of the Jaredite race had engraved an outline history of his people, and which subsequently King Mosiah, by use of the Urim and Thummim, translated into the Nephite language; so that the Nephites at Zarahemla were acquainted with the history of the people who had preceded them in the occupancy of the western hemisphere.^[8]

It would naturally be expected that the people of Zarahemla would feel an interest in their brethren who went up to re-occupy the land of Nephi; and when, year after year passed away and no word came of their fate or fortunes, there were those who petitioned the king of Zarahemla to send an expedition in search of them. The repeated petitions at last met with favorable action, and one Ammon, a descendant of Zarahemla, with fifteen others started for the land of Nephi. After forty days' journey they reached Shilom, at which place King Limhi was sojourning at the time of their arrival. The joy of the meeting was mutual. Ammon and his associates rejoiced that their mission had such a happy termination; Limhi and his people, that they could now hope for deliverance from Lamanite bondage; and also they had joy in the proof which Ammon brought them that the Nephites of Zarahemla were not destroyed; for when Limhi's expedition returned from the land northward, where they found the ruins and bones of an extinct people, they supposed they had found Zarahemla, but that the Lamanites had destroyed that people.

Soon after the arrival of Ammon in the land of Nephi the people of Limhi devised plans for their escape from their Lamanite oppressors. The plans were successfully carried into effect, and Limhi and his people were welcomed to Zarahemla by King Mosiah II. Thus ended the most notable effort of the Nephites to repossess the land of their fathers' first inheritance, the land of Nephi. The occupancy of that land by Zeniff's people extended over a period of about eighty years.

Of the missionary expeditions that ventured into the land of Nephi for the conversion of the Lamanites, one of the most notable, as also one of the most successful, was begun and carried to its successful termination under the leadership of the four sons of King Mosiah II, named respectively, Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni. These young men, and Alma, son of the High Priest of the same name, in their youthful days were unbelievers in the traditions of their fathers; and they sought to destroy the Church of God which the elder Alma with so much toil had established through a faithful ministry. No parental authority, no persuasion of preaching, prevailed against the pride and skepticism of these young princes and the younger Alma. Gifted with eloquence, politic, large-minded, generous in word and deed, gracious and condescending to the people, Absalomlike he was rapidly stealing the hearts of the Nephites, threatening the very existence of the Church of God. At this juncture, out of respect for the prayers of the elder Alma, God visited these young men by sending an angel to reprove them, and warn them of impending calamities. The manifestation of God's power in this visitation was such that the young men were over-whelmed. Their conviction of sin was such that they repented thoroughly; and, Paul-like, from being persecutors of those who served God, they became zealous teachers of the truth, and sought with all their power to undo the wretched mischief they had done in seeking the destruction of the Church. This accomplished, so far as was possible, in the land of Zarahemla, their thoughts turned to the hosts of unbelieving Lamanites in the land of Nephi, more numerous than the Nephites and the people of Zarahemla combined. A holy desire took possession of them to preach salvation through the gospel to those hosts of Lamanites. Renouncing, therefore, all their claims as princes, and abdicating all rights of succession to the throne of their father, Mosiah II, these' princes headed the aforesaid missionary expedition to the Lamanites. In the midst of many afflictions, attended with much persecution, the sons of Mosiah and their companions preached the gospel extensively throughout Lamanite lands, and had a rich harvest of souls for their hire. They established a Church among the Lamanites; but such was the oppression practiced by the unconverted Lamanites upon those who accepted the teachings of the Nephites, that, under divine direction and to preserve their people from destruction, the young princes conducted an exodus of the Church from the land of Nephi, then in possession of the Lamanites, to Zarahemla, where they were welcomed by the Nephites, especially by Alma the High Priest; and a land—the land of Jershon, north of Zarahemla—was set apart for the home^[9] of this body of Lamanite converts.

NEPHITE MOVEMENT NORTHWARD

The Nephites in the land of Zarahemla early appreciated the strategic importance of holding possession of the narrow neck of land—the isthmus which connected the southland with the northland. They perceived that if hard-pressed by their Lamanite enemies, who out-numbered

them to the extent of two for one,^[10] the narrow neck of land afforded them a means of escape into the great land northward, while by fortifying the narrow passage their enemies, however numerous, could be held in check, while they themselves would have a whole continent behind them in which to expand. The Lamanites also saw the strategic importance of this isthmus, and in some of the great wars in the last half of the century immediately preceding the coming of the Messiah, they sought to possess it, and the Nephites as strenuously sought to prevent them from taking possession of it.^[11]

The first extensive migration of Nephites into the north continent occurred in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth year of the reign of the Nephite judges, a period which corresponds to fifty-five B. C. That year five thousand four hundred men, together with their wives and children, left the land of Zarahemla for the northland. That same year one Hagoth, spoken of in Nephite annals as a "curious man," established ship-building yards on the borders of the land Bountiful, on the west side of the isthmus connecting the two continents. Here he constructed a number of large vessels, in which great bodies of immigrants were carried northward, to found new homes. Two of Hagoth's vessels that started northward never returned, nor was anything ever afterwards heard of them. The Nephites believed them to have been wrecked at sea. It is supposed by some that these Nephite vessels may have drifted westward and that their occupants may have peopled some of the islands of the Pacific.

About ten years after this first great migration northward the movement of population in that direction received a fresh impetus; for great numbers went from Zarahemla and extended their journey farther northward than heretofore. Contentions in the land of Zarahemla—contentions born of pride, seem to have been responsible in some way for this movement. Doubtless in the old centers of Nephite civilization the possession of large wealth led to class distinctions, and inequalities, most distasteful to a people who from the first arrival of their fathers on the promised land had been taught to look upon each other as equals. Migration from the land where distinctions based upon the possession of wealth, and the pride it fosters, presented itself perhaps as the easiest solution of the difficulty, and hence the impetus to the northward movement in this year 46 B. C.^[12]

The Nephite historian, Mormon, in speaking of conditions that obtained about this time, gives one of those rare glimpses of Nephite civilization that I consider of sufficient importance to quote at length:

And it came to pass in the forty and sixth year, * * * there was much contention and many dissensions; in the which there were an exceeding great many who departed out of the land of Zarahemla, and went forth unto the land northward to inherit the land. And they did travel to an exceeding great distance, insomuch that they came to large bodies of water and many rivers. Yea, and even they did spread forth into all parts of the land, into whatever parts it had not been rendered desolate, and without timber, because of the many inhabitants who had before inherited the land. And now no part of the land was desolate, save it were for timber; but because of the greatness of the destruction of the people who had before inhabited the land it was called desolate. And there being but little timber upon the face of the land, nevertheless the people who went forth, became exceeding expert in the working of cement; therefore they did build houses of cement, in the which they did dwell. * * * And it came to pass that they did multiply and spread, and did go forth from the land southward to the land northward, and did spread insomuch that they began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south to the sea north, from the sea west to the sea east. And the people who were in the land northward did dwell in tents, and in houses of cement, and they did suffer whatsoever tree should spring up upon the face of the land that it should grow up, that in time they might have timber to build their houses, yea, their cities, and their temples, and their synagogues, and their sanctuaries, and all manner of their buildings. And it came to pass as timber was exceeding scarce in the land northward, they did send forth much by the way of shipping. And thus they did enable the people in the land northward, that they might build many cities, both of wood and of cement. And it came to pass that there were many of the people of Ammon who were Lamanites by birth, did also go forth into this land. And now there are many records kept of the proceedings of this people, by many of this people, which are particular and very large, concerning them. But behold, a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping and their building of ships, and the building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries, and their righteousness, and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robbings, and their plundering, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms, cannot be contained in this work.^[13]

Here it will be proper to dispel what I regard as a misapprehension of the extent of Nephite occupancy of the north continent, at this period of Nephite history. From the fact that in the foregoing quotation it is said that the Nephites removing from Zarahemla traveled "to an exceeding great distance, insomuch that they came to large bodies of water, and many rivers," some have supposed that the Nephites at this time extended their colonization movements as far north as the great lakes in the eastern part of North America;^[14] and from the fact that it is also said that "they began to cover the face of the whole earth, from the sea south, to the sea north,

from the sea west, to the sea east," it has been supposed that these expressions meant to convey the idea that the Nephites at this time had extended their settlements over both continents; and that "from the sea south to the sea north" meant from the sea at the southern extremity of South America (south of Cape Horn), to the Arctic Ocean, north of North America.^[15] There is no evidence, however, in the Book of Mormon that warrants such a conclusion as to the extent of Nephite occupancy of the western hemisphere in 46 B. C. Allowance for hyperbole must be made in the expression, "They began to cover the face of the whole earth," since the facts set forth in the whole history of the Nephites in the Book of Mormon are against the reasonableness of such an expression if taken literally. From the landing of Lehi's colony early in the sixth century B. C., to the date corresponding to the year 55 B. C., when the first considerable migration into the north land took place, Nephite occupancy of the promised land was confined to portions of the west and the extreme north part of what is now the south continent of America; and as compared with the rest of South America, as now known to us, the extent of country occupied was but a very small part of the continent. The migrations from Zarahemla, from the year 55 B. C., to 46 B. C., though considerable, are not sufficient to warrant the belief that the Nephites spread over and occupied the whole face of the north continent. By reference to the map the reader, if he will consider the parts of the country now known as the south part of Mexico and Central America, will there find all the conditions that answer to the terms of the description in the passage quoted complied with as to "the sea south, and the sea north; the sea east and the sea west;" while the physical character of the same land, even now, will answer the requirements of the description of its being a land of "large bodies of water and many rivers;"^[16] and more abundantly may have been so before the convulsions of nature which took place in Nephite lands at Messiah's crucifixion.

I conclude, therefore, that this migration of Nephites at this time extended no further northward than southern parts of Mexico, say about the twenty-second degree north latitude; in other words, the Nephites were occupying the old seat of Jaredite empire and civilization, and the land of Moron which the Nephites called "desolate," not because of its barrenness—save for the absence of forests of timber—"but because of the greatness of the destruction of the people who had before inhabited the land;" that is, the Jaredites.

The next important event affecting the movement of population and the possession of the land north and south was a war between the Nephites and Lamanites, that began with the invasion of Nephite lands by the Lamanites in 35 B. C. Owing to dissensions among the Nephites, many of that people had deserted to the Lamanites. It is quite possible that this was owing to the resentment felt by the dissenting Nephites because of the class distinctions which arose on account of wealth and pride; and instead of the dissatisfied joining in the movement northward, as many did, some of them went southward, joined their fortunes with the barbarous Lamanites, and fomented the spirit of war against their brethren. In this war the Nephites were destined to meet with a new experience. Hitherto in their wars with the Lamanites, since uniting with the people of Zarahemla, at least, the Nephites had been able to hold their lands against the Lamanite invasion; and though they had lost here and there a battle, they were uniformly successful in their wars. In the war of 35-32 B. C., however, the Lamanites drove the Nephites from all their lands in the south continent. Even Zarahemla was taken, and the cities in the land Bountiful, extending, be it remembered, northward from the land of Zarahemla to the isthmus connecting the two continents. The Nephites were thrown wholly on the defensive. They concentrated their forces at the narrow neck of land; hastily fortified it, and by that means prevented the invasion of the north continent.^[17]

In the year 32-31 B. C. the fortunes of war changed somewhat, and the invading hosts of Lamanites were forced out of the most northern cities of the Nephites in the land Bountiful and Zarahemla; but the city Zarahemla, so long the capital of the Nephite-Zarahemla nation, remained in possession of the Lamanites; nor could the Nephites further prevail by force of arms than to win back and hold about one-half of their possessions in the south. At this point still another event, important in Nephite history, occurred. The Chief Judge of the land, whose name was Nephi, resigned his office in order to join his younger brother, Lehi, in the work of preaching the gospel. Unrighteousness is assigned as the cause of Nephite failure in the war of 35-32 B. C.; wealth, love of luxury, pride, injustice to the poor, internal dissensions, manifold treasons, and civil strife are enumerated as among Nephite sins and afflictions. If unrighteousness was the cause of Nephite weakness and failure—and it was—then clearly the logical thing to do was to bring the people to repentance, re-establish them in righteousness, and by these steps restore them to the favor of God. Evidently so reasoned these two priests and prophets of God, Nephi and Lehi; and to the achievement of this end they bent their energies. They were successful; but successful in a direction least to be expected, viz, successful in converting the Lamanites. Partially successful in converting the Nephites, in the northern cities of the southland, they went into the land of Zarahemla, still held by the Lamanites, and so far convinced the Lamanites of the error and wickedness of the traditions of their fathers that eight thousand were baptized in the land of Zarahemla and the regions round about. Thence the two prophets went further southward into the land of Nephi; and though they met with some persecutions, such was the marvelous display of God's power in their deliverance, that the greater part of the Lamanites were converted; and restored to the Nephites the cities and lands they had taken in the recent war. Many of the Lamanites themselves engaged in the work of the ministry, and preached to the Nephites both in Zarahemla and in the north continent. Nephi and Lehi also preached in the northland, but with no great success. Still peace prevailed; and for the first time since the separation of the Nephites from the Lamanites, in the first half of the sixth century B. C., there

was unrestricted intercourse between the two peoples:

And behold, there was peace in all the land, insomuch that the Nephites did go into whatsoever part of the land they would, whether among the Nephites or the Lamanites. And it came to pass that the Lamanites did also go whithersoever they would, whether it were among the Lamanites or among the Nephites; and thus they did have free intercourse one with another, to buy and to sell, and to get gain, according to their desire. And it came to pass that they became exceeding rich, both the Lamanites and the Nephites; and they did have an exceeding plenty of gold, and of silver, and of all manner of precious metals, both in the land south and in the land north. Now the land south was called Lehi, and the land north was called Mulek, which was after the son of Zedekiah; for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north, and Lehi into the land south. And behold, there was all manner of gold in both these lands, and of silver, and of precious ore of every kind; and there were also curious workmen, who did work all kinds of ore and did refine it; and thus they did become rich. They did raise grain in abundance, both in the north and in the south; and they did flourish exceedingly, both in the north and in the south. And they did multiply and wax exceedingly strong in the land. And they did raise many flocks and herds, yea, many fatlings. Behold their women did toil and spin, and did make all manner of cloth, of fine-twined linen and cloth of every kind, to clothe their nakedness.

The next event which affected Nephite occupancy of the land north and south was one of their many robber wars. By the sixteenth year from the time the sign^[18] of the birth of Christ^[19] had been given (therefore 16 A.D.) wickedness had so far increased among the people of the western world, and there had been so many dissensions from those who once had favored law and order, that the robber bands which infested the country considered themselves so powerful that they called upon the Chief Judge of the land to abdicate government and accept the order of things that obtained in their societies. This demand led to a serious war between the supporters of the government on the one hand, and the outlaws on the other. The Nephite leaders gathered their people both from the north and the south into the central part of their country—into the land Bountiful, and the land Zarahemla; and the cities of these lands the Nephites and the Lamanites standing for law, order, and the maintenance of government, fortified and stocked with an abundance of provisions against the opening of the impending war. The war began in the year 18 A. D., and lasted for more than two years. In it the robber bands were not only defeated, but annihilated, by being destroyed in battle, executed under the provisions of the law, or by being compelled to enter into covenant to abandon their robberies and murders. This war, in some respects the most terrible in Nephite history, was followed by an era of prosperity. In the course of a few years the Nephites had moved back upon their lands whence they had been called by the exigencies of the recent war. "And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew, and there were many old cities repaired. And there were many highways cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land."^[20]

No sooner were the terrors of war removed, however, than the people who had been so marvelously delivered from their enemies lapsed again into unrighteousness.

For there were many merchants in the land, and also many lawyers, and many officers. And the people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning; yea, some were ignorant because of their poverty, and others did receive great learning because of their riches. Some were lifted up in pride, and others were exceedingly humble; some did return railing for railing, while others would receive railing and persecution, and all manner of afflictions, and would not turn and revile again, but were humble and penitent before God. And thus there became a great inequality in all the land, insomuch that the church began to be broken up; yea, insomuch that in the thirtieth year the church was broken up in all the land save it were among a few of the Lamanites who were converted unto the true faith; and they would not depart from it, for they were firm, and steadfast, and immovable, willing with all diligence to keep the commandments of the Lord. Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this, Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. * * * * Now they did not sin ignorantly, for they knew the will of God concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore they did wilfully rebel against God.^[21]

The people of the western world, in brief, had entered upon that final stage of their wickedness which was to terminate in those awful convulsions of nature that should make their lands desolate, and well-nigh destroy the inhabitants thereof. The government itself had become corrupt; so, too, had the priesthood, save a few faithful ones—men of God, who testified that the Messiah had come, and that the time of his passion and resurrection approached. These were secretly haled before the judges, and both priests and lawyers leagued against them for their destruction. When it was feared that the Chief Judge would not sign their death warrants—a thing needful under the Nephite law to make executions legal—they privily put them to death, and thus were guilty of judicial murders. An attempt to overthrow the commonwealth, now perpetuated through more than a hundred and twenty years, ended in anarchy; and thence to the establishment of a sort of tribal government, which maintained an uncertain peace by means of mutual fears rather than by any inherent strength in the system—if system, indeed, it could be

called. Such were the conditions that obtained among the people of the western world when those mighty cataclysms occurred which destroyed so many Nephite cities, effaced so much of Nephite civilization, and so greatly changed in some places the physical character of the continents of the western hemisphere, of which the Book of Mormon account has been already given.

Shortly after these great cataclysms the Savior made his appearance among the Nephites and established his Church, which event was followed by a long period of righteousness and the loss of all race and party distinctions, such as "Nephite" and "Lamanite," etc.; and the people occupied the lands north and south without restraint according to their good pleasure. True, in the year 350, A. D., when wickedness had again made its appearance among the people, and old distinctions were received, a treaty was made in which it was stipulated that those calling themselves Lamanites and Gadianon robbers would possess the south land. The treaty, however, was not long respected by the Lamanities, for at the end of ten years they violated it by attempting to invade the north and war was renewed. Back and forth surged the tide of armed conflict, but raged chiefly in what was known to the Nephites as the land of Desolation, the old seat of Jaredite empire and civilization. The Nephites at last having been driven from their southern strongholds in the north continent, proposed through their leader, Mormon, Mormon,^[22] that they be permitted to gather their people at Cumorah—the Ramah of the Jaredites—that they might trust their fate to the dreadful arbitrament of one great conflict. The request was granted; the hosts were gathered, the armies which fought under the Nephite name were destroyed, save such as were mingled with the Lamanites. Anarchy followed, and then savagery for ages claimed the western hemisphere as its own.

Footnotes

1. See Ether 7:6 and *Dict. B. of M.*, Art. Desolation.
2. Ether 10:21.
3. Mosiah 9:1-4.
4. Omni 1:24.
5. For the authority of the foregoing narrative compare Omni 1:26-30, Mosiah 9:1-6, and "Words of Mormon" between the Books of Omni and Mosiah. Also Mosiah 11:13.
6. Mosiah 11.
7. The city of Helam and the surrounding country which was called "the land of Helam," was doubtless named from Helam, who was the first to receive baptism at the hands of Alma. Mos. 18.
8. Compare Mosiah 8, with Mosiah 21, and Mosiah 28.
9. Elder Reynolds suggests that this land north of Zarahemla was set apart to them because it would place Zarahemla between them and the Lamanites who might attempt pursuit.—*Dict. Book of Mormon*, p. 172.
10. Mosiah 25:2, 3.
11. Alma 51, 52. Helaman 1.
12. Forty and sixth year of the reign of the judges; corresponding to the year forty-six B. C. (Reynolds' B. of M. Chronology, Richards' *Compendium*, p. 195.)
13. Book of Helaman, 3:3-15.
14. To Lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, Ontario.
15. See Orson Pratt's notes "i" and "j" Helaman III.
16. The land visited by Limhi's expeditions in search of Zarahemla, and who went to the land desolation, on their return described that as a land "among many waters," Mosiah 8:8.
17. Helaman 4.
18. A Lamanite prophet five years B. C., declared that a sign of Messiah's birth would be given to the people of the western hemisphere, which he described as follows: "This will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his (Messiah's) coming; for behold, there shall be great lights in heaven, insomuch that in the night before he cometh there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day. Therefore, there shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night, and this shall be unto you for a sign. * * And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you" (of Messiah's birth). All of which came to pass as predicted. (See Helaman 14:3-6; also III Nephi 1:15-21.)
19. The Nephites began to reckon their time from the sign of Messiah's birth in the ninth year

from that event. See III Nephi 2. Compare verses 3-7 with verses 8-10.

[20.](#) III Nephi 6.

[21.](#) III Nephi 6:11-15, 18.

[22.](#) Mormon was born in the north land about 311 A. D. To him was entrusted the Nephite records by one Ammaron; and while they were in his possession he made the abridgment which bears his name, "The Book of Mormon." All the sacred Nephite records he did away except his abridgment of those records; and that he delivered to his son Moroni.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION AMONG THE NEPHITES.

Nephite Government.

Some twelve or fifteen years after Lehi's colony arrived in the new world, Nephi with that part of the colony which he could influence—the more righteous part, by the way—separated from the elder sons of Lehi and their following, and established a separate community. Such was the esteem in which Nephi was held by his following that his people besought him to be their king. Nephi appears not to have favored the establishment of this kind of government, but yielded to the desire of his people. Perhaps he had inherited the prejudices of the Hebrew prophets against the kingly form of government,^[1] and would gladly have seen his people live under an administration of government by judges, as in ancient Israel. This, however, is but an inference drawn from the fact of Nephi's expressed desire that his people would have no king.

Succession to the kingly dignity was made hereditary in Nephi's family,^[2] and the kings on their accession to the kingly power took the title of Nephi I, Nephi II, Nephi III, Nephi IV, etc.^[3] What the nature of this kingly government was, what secondary officers existed in it, and what means were employed for the administration of its laws cannot be learned from the Nephite record. For some time the community over which the established government held sway was but a small one, hence the kingly office had no such dignity as attaches to it in more extensive governments; but was most likely akin to the petty kingdoms which existed in Judea^[4] at various times and with which Nephi and some few of those who had accompanied him from Jerusalem were acquainted. The Nephites had the scriptures containing the law of Moses, and were taught to some extent in some of the customs of the Jews, but not in all of them.^[5] And these customs, and the law of Moses administered with no very great amount of machinery, I apprehend, constituted the character of the Nephite government. Under it the Nephites lived for a period of more than four hundred and fifty years.

The transition from a kingly form of government to what may be called a democracy was made at the death of Mosiah II, 509 years from the time Lehi left Jerusalem, or 91 years B. C. The Israelitish genius in matters of government inclines them to the acceptance of what men commonly call a theocracy, which is defined as meaning literally "a state governed in the name of God." The election of this form of government by Israelities as most desirable, grows out of the fact of the Mosaic legislation; for Moses received the law by which Israel was governed direct from Jehovah; its regulations were carried out in Jehovah's name, by the administration of judges, both during the life time of Israel's great prophet and also after his demise. Living thus under the divine law, administered in the name of Jehovah by judges divinely appointed, was to be governed of God. And so completely was this form of government recognized as the government of God, that to reject it was held to be rejecting God as the ruler of the state, as witness the words of the Lord himself in the closing years of the prophet Samuel's life when Israel clamored for a king. The Lord said unto Samuel: "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."^[6]

No one, it appears to me, could have a clearer conception of the evils that grow out of kingly government than the Nephite king, Mosiah II. Nor a clearer conception of the strength and advantages of that form of government. I give a summary of his reasoning upon two sides of this question: "It is better that a man be judged of God than of man; for the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of men are not always just." This is said in support of the old Israelitish idea of government—a theocracy: "If it were possible that you could have just men to be your kings, who would establish the laws of God and judge this people according to his commandments, * * * * then it would be expedient that you always have kings to rule over you;" but "because all men are not just, it is not expedient that you should have a king or kings to rule over you. * * * * Behold, how much iniquity doth one wicked king cause to be committed, yea and what destruction!" Moreover Mosiah understood the strength of those forces behind which an ungodly king could intrench himself. "Behold, * * * * ye cannot dethrone an iniquitous king, save

it be through much contention, and the shedding of much blood; for behold, he has his friends in iniquity, and keepeth his guards about him, * * * and he enacteth laws, and sendeth them forth among his people; yea, laws after the manner of his own wickedness; and whosoever does not obey his laws, he causeth to be destroyed; and whosoever doth rebel against him, he will send his armies against them to war, and if he can, he will destroy them: and thus an unrighteous king doth pervert the ways of all righteousness." "Behold, I say unto you the sins of many people have been caused by the iniquities of their kings."

These were the considerations which led him to recommend the abandonment of kingly government and establish a reign of judges chosen by the voice of the people. By this arrangement Mosiah held that the people would bear the responsibility of the government. "It is not common," he reasons, "that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the smaller part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law, to do your business by the voice of the people; and if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgment of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction, even as he has hitherto visited this land." All of which is a clear setting forth of the responsibilities of self-governing communities.

It should be pointed out, however, that there were some other events which led to the consideration of the propriety of changing the form of the Nephite government, at this time. The sons of Mosiah, who were heirs to the Nephite throne, were miraculously converted to the gospel, and so thoroughly imbued had they become with the importance of the work of the ministry of the Church that they abandoned their rights of succession to the kingly dignity, and departed from the land of Zarahemla to perform missions among the Lamanites. In consequence of the action of these young princes, Mosiah II was confronted with the problem of succession to the Nephite throne, since those to whom belonged the right refused to accept the honor. He feared that if another were appointed instead of one who had constitutional claims to the throne, there might arise contentions over the question of succession. "And who knoweth," said he, "but what my son to whom the kingdom doth belong, shall turn to be angry, and draw part of this people after him, which would cause wars and contentions among you, which would be the cause of shedding much blood?" He therefore recommended the election of a chief judge or president of the theocratic-democracy, who would be possessed of both administrative and judicial powers, in the hope that such action, taken by the people themselves, would obviate all difficulty or question about the legitimacy of the government about to be established.

It is difficult to determine with precision the entire character of the constitution of the Nephite democracy. But from what is written in the Book of Mormon this much may be learned: The chief judge, elected by the people, was the supreme governor of the land, the chief executive.^[7] His oath of office bound him "to judge righteously, and to keep the peace and the freedom of the people, and grant unto them the sacred privileges to worship the Lord their God; to support and maintain the laws of God all his days, and to bring the wicked to justice, according to their crimes." A similar oath was doubtless administered to the inferior judges. To a limited extent also legislative powers were granted to the chief judge, but these powers appear to have been limited to framing laws, which were not of force until ratified by the voice of the people. No limit seems to have been set to the term of office of the chief judge, but as the voice of the people placed him in office, the same power could also dismiss him from it; and it may be that the power of impeachment, vested in a certain number of inferior judges—as explained later—extended to deposing even the chief judge. In any event it may be concluded that he held his position only during good behavior.

Just how the inferior judges were graded cannot be ascertained, but that they were graded is evident, since Mosiah II, in explaining the character of the constitution of the democracy he proposed to his people, said: "And now if ye have judges, and they do not judge you according to the law which has been given, ye can cause that they may be judged of a higher judge. If your higher judges do not judge righteous judgments, ye shall cause that a small number of your lower judges should be gathered together, and they shall judge your higher judges, according to the voice of the people."^[8] A salutary provision this, for it made all amenable to the law, but the manner in which the judges were graded is unknown, as well as what number of inferior judges were designated to try the superior judges.

These administrators of the law were paid for their services "according to the time which they labored to judge those who were brought before them to be judged, * * * a senine of gold for a day," or its equivalent in silver—a senuum of silver.^[9] It is, of course, impossible to determine the value of these denominations of Nephite coins, and therefore impossible to determine the value of the *per diem* of the judges. The nearest approach that can be made to an estimate is that a senine of gold or a senuum of silver was equal in value to "a measure of barley and also for a measure of any kind of grain."^[10] This is again indefinite, as neither the bulk nor the weight of "a measure of grain" is known; but it does convey the idea that it was no very great amount; and, indeed, in all that is said upon the subject of compensation for public service in the state, it is manifest that the Nephite government was administered on the strictest lines of economy.^[11]

The organization of the military forces among the Nephites would be a subject of great interest, since, by reason of the constant aggressions of the Lamanites, they were often forced into war, and would be classed as a defensively warlike state. Of their military organization, however, but

little can be definitely known. Two items, however, connected with the commander-in-chief of the armies, are quite clear: First, that he was nominated for his position by the Chief Judge of the land,^[12] which nomination had to be ratified by the voice of the people; second, that on occasions the people delegated to him absolute power, created him military "dictator" in fact. This has ever been the means by which republics have sought to remedy one of the chief defects of their system, viz., ineffectiveness of administration—a tardiness in executing the law, or meeting an emergency not technically provided for in the constitution or law. In order to obviate this difficulty democracies have not infrequently adopted the plan of creating trusted leaders dictators; clothing them with all the authority of an absolute monarch during periods of special peril to the government. Thus did the Romans a number of times during the existence of their republic, when occasions arose that required prompt executive action, and by an authority that would be unquestioned. And such, I believe, was the power conferred upon the commander-in-chief of the Nephite armies, when occasion arose for it.

Relative to the body of the laws that obtained among the Nephites, whether under the monarchy or the republic, I apprehend that it was made up of the Mosaic legislation,^[13] with some slight modification, and some especial enactments of their kings. As for instance it was enacted in the law of Mosiah (most likely Mosiah II) that the judges should receive wages according to the time they devoted to their office.^[14] So doubtless other special acts obtained, which, with the general laws of the Mosaic legislation formed the Nephite jurisprudence.^[15] And in the transition from the monarchy to the republic, Mosiah was careful to stipulate for this body of jurisprudence: "Let us appoint judges to judge this people according to our law."^[16]—i. e., the law which had obtained under the monarchy, the law of God. "We will appoint wise men to be judges, that will judge this people according to the commandments of God."^[17] So the body of the law that obtained under the reign of the kings went over into the jurisprudence of the republic.

From the Nephite record it appears that murder was punished with death; robbery, theft, and adultery were also punished, but with what penalties is not stated. But the law provided that men should be judged—and therefore punished—according to their crimes.^[18] One thing stood out unique in the Nephite policy: that was the recognition of the right of the subject to the enjoyment of religious liberty. The scripture—"choose ye this day whom ye will serve"^[19]—seems to have impressed the Nephites with the idea that the right of choice in the matter of worship was left with the individual; and hence "if a man desired to serve God, it was his privilege;" "but if he did not believe in him [God], there was no law to punish him"^[20]—hence religious liberty.

The history of the Nephite republic was a stormy one, especially during the first quarter century of its existence. It was assailed by traitors from within, who sought to re-establish a monarchy; and by the Lamanites from without, who often joined with the royalists to overthrow the republic. But if traitors assailed, patriots defended; and the republic was preserved for about one hundred and twenty years, from 91 B. C. to 30 A. D. An attempt then made to displace the republic by a monarchy, ended in anarchy for a time, followed by the establishment of a sort of tribal government, which conditions prevailed at the time the land was visited with that terrible destruction which took place at the crucifixion of Messiah, and well nigh swept out of existence the entire population.

What form of government obtained among the people of the western hemisphere after the appearance of the risen Messiah among them must be left largely to conjecture, since the Nephite records now in our hands are silent upon that subject. Neither monarchy nor republic is referred to; and the most reasonable conclusion is that the people, after the establishment of the Church of Christ among them, found its institutions and authority sufficient as well in secular as in ecclesiastical affairs; for the entire people were converted to the gospel, and were members of the Church. A righteous people have small need of government. The necessity for government is born of men's vices and wickedness, that lead to the disorders of society, which government must needs be called upon to regulate, and, if possible, suppress. For two centuries the people of the western world were most righteous, prosperous and happy. "There were no envyings," says their chronicler, "nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God."^[21]

In consequence of these conditions nothing is said of government, and nothing may be learned of its nature beyond what has been suggested in the foregoing. As to what was done in the matter of government when this period of general righteousness drew to its close, and pride and wickedness hastened the disintegration of the Church; and pushed society headlong into disorders, may not be known, as our present Nephite records on this subject are again silent. We only know that secret organizations sapped the foundations of society; that security of person and property vanished; that anarchy and tribal relations usurped the place of orderly government; and that darkness spread over the land and gross darkness over the minds of the people.

Religion.

Religion among the Nephites consisted in the worship of the true and living God, the Jehovah of the Jews, whose revelations to the children of Israel through Moses and all the prophets to Jeremiah were brought with them into the new world. They therefore accepted into their faith all the Bible truths, and in its historical parts they had before them the valuable lessons which Bible history teaches. It furnished also a foundation for literature among them. For not only by the

Bible were their prophets instructed in the law of God, but copies of some parts of it were multiplied and read by the people.^[22] What is more they were possessed of some other books not now in our so-called canon of the Old Testament, such as the books of the Prophets Zenock, Neum and Zenos; all referred to by the first Nephi, who quotes some of their prophecies concerning the coming of Messiah in the flesh, and of three days of darkness to be given unto some of the inhabitants of the isles of the sea as a sign of the Christ's death.^[23] The Nephites also had the writings of Ezias referred to by one of the Nephite prophets in the Book of Helaman.^[24] Elder Orson Pratt, in a foot note on the passage, suggests that Ezias "may have been identical with Esaias, who lived contemporary with Abraham."^[25] These books contained very precious truths concerning the coming and mission of the Messiah; and when information on this subject was lacking in the books which the Nephites brought with them from Jerusalem, it was abundantly made up to them by the things which the Lord revealed directly to their own prophets; for in the clearest manner possible the Lord made known to this branch of the house of Israel in the western world, the future coming and mission of the Messiah, together with the effectiveness of the atonement which he was appointed to make for mankind. While the Nephites kept the law of Moses previous to the advent of Messiah, as to its sacrifices and ordinances, yet they understood that these things but shadowed forth the real sacrifice to be made for them by the Savior of the world; and that these ordinances in which they administered were only of virtue by reason of the things which were to be done by Messiah afterwards.

In order to offer sacrifices and administer in the other ordinances of the law of Moses (which the Nephites were commanded to observe),^[26] it was necessary, of course, that they have a priesthood, and this they had; but not the priesthood after the order of Aaron; for that was a priesthood that could only properly be held by Aaron's family and the tribe of Levi; while Lehi was of the tribe of Manasseh.^[27] Lehi held the priesthood, however, the higher priesthood, which was after the order of Melchizedek, and was a prophet and minister of righteousness. This Lehi conferred upon his son Nephi; and Nephi, shortly after his separation from his elder brothers on the land of promise, consecrated his two younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph, to be priests and teachers unto his people.^[28] Jacob, when explaining his calling to his brethren, states that he had been called of God, "and ordained after the manner of his holy order."^[29] What the significance of the phrase "His holy order" means, is learned very distinctly from other parts of the Book of Mormon. Alma, for instance, before giving up the chief judgeship of the land, is represented as confining himself "wholly to the priesthood of the holy order of God, to the testimony of the word, according to the Spirit of revelation and prophecy."^[30] Again Alma explains, "I am called * * * according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus; yea, I am commanded to stand and testify unto this people."^[31] All of which is made still clearer by what Alma says later. Having given an explanation of the plan of redemption which was laid for man's salvation, and which he represents as having been understood from earliest times, Alma adds: "I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests after his holy order, *which was after the order of his Son* [meaning Jesus Christ], to teach these things unto the people. * * * This holy priesthood, being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world, or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity. * * * Thus they become the high priests forever after the order of the Son, the only begotten of the Father, who is full of grace, equity and truth." Alma then admonishes his people to be humble, "even as the people in the days of Melchisedek, who was also a high priest after the same order [of which he had spoken]. * * * And he was the same Melchisedek to whom Abraham paid tithes." The Nephite priesthood, then, was not a priesthood after Aaron's order, but of a higher order, even the priesthood after the order of the Son of God; the same kind of priesthood held by Melchizedek, by Moses, by Lehi, and many other prophets in Israel.

That this higher priesthood was competent to act in administering the ordinances under what is known as the law of Moses, is evident from the fact that it so administered before the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood proper was given; and the fact that there was given to the household of Aaron and the tribe of Levi a special priesthood, by no means detracts from the right and power of the higher or Melchizedek priesthood to officiate in the ordinances of the law of Moses; for certainly the higher order of priesthood may officiate in the functions of the lower, when necessity requires it. All the sacrifices and ordinances under the law of Moses, administered by the Nephite priesthood, I say again, were observed with due appreciation of the fact that they were of virtue only as they shadowed forth the things to be done by Messiah when he should come to earth, in the flesh, on his great mission of atonement. And in order that the reader may see how full Nephite knowledge was of the Messiah and of his life on earth, through the prophecies uttered concerning him—and prophecies, of course, are but history reversed—I present herewith a statement of the items known to them, collected by the patient labors of Elder George Reynolds, to whom I am indebted for the following passage:

One of the most remarkable things connected with the history of the Nephites is the great plainness and detail with which the coming of the Redeemer and the events of his life in Judea were revealed to their prophets, who lived before the time of his advent.

Among other things connected with his mortal existence it was declared of him that:

God himself should come down from heaven among the children of men and should redeem his people.

He should take upon him flesh and blood.

He should be born in the land of Jerusalem, the name given by the Nephites to the land of their forefathers, whence they came.

His mother's name should be Mary.

She should be a virgin of the city of Nazareth; very fair and beautiful, a precious and chosen vessel.

She should be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost.

He should be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

At his birth a new star should appear in the heavens.

He should be baptized by John at Bethabara, beyond Jordan.

John should testify that he had baptized the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world.

After his baptism, the Holy Ghost should come down upon him out of heaven, * * * * and abide upon him.

He should call twelve men as his special witnesses, to minister in his name.

He should go forth among the people, ministering in power and great glory, casting out devils, healing the sick, raising the dead, and performing many mighty miracles.

He should take upon him the infirmities of his people.

He should suffer temptation, pain of body, hunger, thirst and fatigue; blood should come from every pore of his body by reason of his anguish because of the abominations of his people.

He should be cast out and rejected by the Jews; be taken and scourged, and be judged of the world.

He should be lifted upon the cross and slain for the sins of the world.

He should be buried in a sepulchre, where he should remain three days.

After he was slain he should rise from the dead and should make himself manifest by the Holy Ghost, unto the Gentiles.

He should lay down his life according to the flesh and take it up again by the power of the Spirit, that he might bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

At his resurrection many graves should be opened and should yield up their dead; and many of the saints, who had beforetime passed away, should appear unto the living.

He should redeem all mankind who would believe on his name.

In the above we have not mentioned the sayings of Isaiah and other Jewish prophets, which are inserted in the Book of Mormon, but which also appear in the Bible.^[32]

After the resurrection, in fulfilment of many predictions of Nephite prophets that he would appear among the people of the western world,^[33] Jesus Christ made his advent among the Nephites. The great event occurred some time after those awful cataclysms, which so changed the face of the western world, had ceased. It appears that a number of Nephites had gathered together near a temple in the land Bountiful, and were contemplating the changes that had been wrought in the land by the aforesaid cataclysms, and conversing about the Messiah, the signs of whose death had been so marvelously given—I quote the account of the appearing of Jesus unto this multitude, as it is found in the Nephite record:

And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn. And it came to pass that again they heard the voice, and they understood it not. And again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were towards the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came. And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them: Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him. And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came

down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them. And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying: Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning. And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, the whole multitude fell to the earth; for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should shew himself unto them after his ascension into heaven.^[34]

After thus manifesting himself to the Nephites in this most palpable manner, Messiah continued his ministry by teaching them the gospel, and instituting baptism for the remission of sins, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as symbolizing the sacrifice and atonement he had made. He also authorized the organization of a Church among them—himself conferring divine authority to do all these things upon twelve disciples, who held power similar to that of the twelve whom he had chosen at Jerusalem. He also taught them the moral law of the gospel; informed them of his work among their brethren, the Jews; declared to them also his intention of visiting and ministering to those who are called the "Lost Tribes of Israel," declaring that in this personal appearing to them (the Nephites), and to the Lost Tribes of the house of Israel, he was but fulfilling his own words to the twelve at Jerusalem as found in the testimony of John, wherein he said: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold:^[35] them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."^[36]

Thus the gospel was proclaimed among the Nephites, by Jesus Christ, in person, and by divinely inspired men, directly called and appointed by Jesus to the holy office of the ministry. The Church of Christ was established among the Nephites, to teach the truth, and perfect the lives of those who accepted it—for such is the mission of the Church of Christ in all ages of the world. How successful it was through the first two Christian centuries, and how, after the expiration of that time, the Nephite race began to decline in righteousness, deny the faith once delivered to them, until they lost favor with God and were left to degenerate into anarchy and barbarism, has already been stated.

THE PEOPLE OF MULEK.

Government and Religion.

Of the government and religion of the people of Mulek in the western hemisphere we know even less than of the Jaredites or the Nephites. Mulek himself was of royal lineage, being the son of King Zedekiah of Jerusalem; but whether the prerogatives of prince and king were enjoyed and exercised by him in the new world we cannot learn, nor is there any glimpse afforded us in the Nephite records of the nature of government among their people. Still, government of some sort must have subsisted among them, for when found by the Nephites in the valley of the Sidon they lived in association—chiefly in the great city of Zarahemla—a thing inconceivable apart from government of some sort. The gregarious instincts of man impel him to live in society, but the experience of the race is warrant for the truth of the fact that government is necessary to the perpetuity of that society. Hence when society of any permanent character is found, there, it may be taken for granted, government of some sort also exists. Hence the people of Mulek, since it is evident that they lived in a permanent society, had a government, but the nature of it is unknown.

The people of Mulek came from the old world without scriptures or records of any kind. That is no matter of surprise, however, since they were fugitives escaping from the wrath of the king of Babylon. Their anxiety looked not to the future, but to the present. To them was committed the protection of one of the princes of Judah. To reach a place of safety for him would be their one, absorbing thought. But the experience of this colony illustrates the value of the written word of God. By reason of having no records or books, and no opportunity, or inclination, perhaps, to teach letters, the language they spoke—the language prevalent in Judea in the sixth century B. C.—in course of time very much deteriorated.^[37] But that was not the worst consequence of their being without the written word. By the time the descendants of Mulek's colony were discovered by the migrating hosts of Nephites under Mosiah I—four hundred years from the time they left Judea—they were so far sunk in unbelief as to deny "the being of their Creator." Their condition of unbelief sustains the views on the value of the written word expressed by King Benjamin—son of Mosiah I—when teaching his people the importance of the records brought by Lehi's colony from Jerusalem. He held that had it not been for these sacred writings, the Nephites themselves would have been in ignorance of the mysteries of God; that it would have been impossible for Lehi to have taught all the things of God, but for the help he received from the written word; that but for this, their fathers would have dwindled in unbelief.^[38] It may be taken for granted also that with a people who had no religion—who "denied the being of their Creator"—their morality was of a very low order; for it is a truth, attested over and over again in the history of nations, that national morality cannot prevail in exclusion of religion, which teaches the recognition of moral duties as commandments of God. But these observations are based upon the universal experience of man, rather than upon anything in the Nephite record; for that is silent upon the matters of government, religion, and morality of the people of Mulek, except in so far as stated in

the foregoing.

THE LAMANITES.

Civilization, Government, Religion.

Civilization, government and religion among the Lamanites should not be overlooked. It is true that they were idle; that they loved the wilderness and, for the most part, dwelt in tents; that they depended upon the fruits of the chase and such products of the earth as the rich lands they occupied produced without the labor of man, as the principal means of their sustenance; still they came in contact now and then with Nephite civilization, which must have modified somewhat their inclination to utter barbarism. It must be remembered that the Lamanites frequently invaded Nephite lands and prospered by the fruits of war. Moreover, as the Nephites repeatedly removed from their possession to escape Lamanite aggression, the latter took possession of their deserted cities and country, and dwelt in their habitations. When the righteous Nephites under Mosiah I departed northward from the "Land of Nephi," in which land was located the great cities of Lehi-Nephi, Shilom, and doubtless many other cities of less importance, these fell into the hands of the Lamanites. When a colony from Zarahemla returned under Zeniff to re-occupy these lands of their fathers, they were tricked into bondage to the Lamanites, who laid heavy tribute upon their labor, and flourished for a period of well nigh eighty years upon the industry of the practically enslaved Nephites. This occasional contact with Nephite civilization must have had a modifying effect upon Lamanite life and Lamanite character.

That there was some system and regularity in Lamanite government must be apparent from the degree of efficiency with which that people conducted the protracted wars with the Nephites. The largeness of their armies, the length of the wars, and the extensive scale on which they were projected and prosecuted, would indicate the existence of some strong, central government capable of making its authority respected. That such a government existed among the Lamanites is disclosed through the facts that are brought to light by the mission of the young Nephite princes, the sons of Mosiah II, in the century preceding the birth of Messiah. It appears that at that time what I shall venture to call the Lamanite empire was divided into a number of petty kingdoms whose kings, as is always the case among semi-civilized peoples, were possessed of great and arbitrary power; but these in turn seem to have been subject to a central ruler whose dominion extended over all, and whose power in his large sphere was as absolute as that of the petty kings in the smaller states.

The religion of the Lamanites is more difficult to determine than their government. It is chiefly the absence of religion and of its influence that must be spoken of. Taught to believe that the traditions of their fathers respecting God, the promised Messiah, and the belief in a future life were untrue; persuaded to believe that their fathers had been induced to leave fatherland, and their rich possessions therein because of the dreams of the visionary Lehi; firm in their conviction that the elder sons of Lehi had been defrauded of their right to govern the colony by the younger son, Nephi; and that through the force of the religious influence he learned to wield by following the spiritual example (to them, perhaps, the trickery) of his father—it was in the spirit of hatred of religion that the Lamanites waged war upon the Nephites, to subvert religion and free men from its restraints. But the Lamanites were true to human instincts.^[39] They freed themselves, as they supposed, from one superstition, only to plunge into others that were really contemptible—the superstition of idolatry; for they were an idolatrous people.^[40] This remark, however, must be understood in a general sense, and as applying to the Lamanites proper, previous to the coming of Messiah—of the followers, and the descendants of the followers, of the elder brothers of the first Nephi, Laman and Lemuel. After the coming of Messiah, when in the third century A. D., the old distinctions of Nephite and Lamanite were revived, after the long period of peace and righteousness following the advent of Christ, said distinctions could have no reference to race or family, as they had when first employed; but were strictly party distinctions; used, when adopted again in the period named, to indicate the Church or religious party, and the anti-religious party, respectively. But even this significance passed away in time, in the latter phase of the history of the people of the western hemisphere; for the Nephites went into transgression as well as the Lamanite party, and no longer stood as the champions of religion and the Church: and hence the names then stood for the respective parties, strangely bent on each other's destruction. It must also be understood that the term "idolatrous people" does not apply to all the Lamanites previous to the coming of Messiah, through the whole period of their history; for at times there were very widespread conversions among them to faith in the true God, as at the time of the mission of King Mosiah's sons among them, three-quarters of a century B. C.; and again as the result of the labors of Nephi, the son of Helaman, and his brother Lehi (31 B. C. to 2 B. C.). In this last named successful ministry, the Lamanites reversed for a time the historic relations of the two parties, the Lamanites more universally accepting the faith taught by the prophets of God than the Nephites, exceeding them in righteousness of life and in zeal as champions of the cause of God and truth. But, speaking broadly, after noting the foregoing limitations and exceptions, from the first separation of the Nephites from the Lamanites, down to the coming of Messiah, the Lamanites were an idolatrous people. And again from the time of the destruction of the Nephite party, about 400 A. D., to the coming of the Europeans, near the close of the fifteenth century, superstition and the darkness of idolatry (enlightened here and there, perhaps, with a fragment of truth cherished in the traditions of the people) held the inhabitants of the western world under its dominion.

By way of recapitulation, allow me here to say, in closing this second division of my treatise, that I have now considered the value of the Book of Mormon as a witness for God; the purposes for which it was written; the manner of its coming forth through the agency of Joseph Smith; the manner of its translation, and the account of its publication; the migrations of its people to the western world; the lands they occupied; the intercontinental movements of its peoples; their government, literature and religion. All this, it is hoped, sets forth what the Book of Mormon is, and its value as a volume of history and scripture; and naturally leads up to the great questions to be considered in this treatise, viz.: Is the Book of Mormon what it purports to be? Is it an abridged history of the ancient people who inhabited the western hemisphere? Does it really give an account of God's hand-dealing with them? Is it the voice of sleeping nations testifying to the truth of God's existence, to the verity of Messiah's mission, to the power of salvation in the gospel of Jesus Christ? Is it verily a volume of scripture? Is it true?

These are the solemn questions to be considered in the next division; and it is believed by the writer that in the presentation of the evidence then to be considered, and the argument there to be made, that the importance of this merely preliminary part of the work will become more apparent.

Footnotes

- [1.](#) I Samuel 8:1-9 and 19-22; II Nephi 5:17, 18.
- [2.](#) Mosiah 25:13.
- [3.](#) Book of Jacob 1:9-11.
- [4.](#) Gen. 14. In many cases these Judean "kings" ruled but a single city.
- [5.](#) II Nephi 25:2.
- [6.](#) I Samuel 8:7.
- [7.](#) Mosiah 29. Alma 4:16. Alma 30:29.
- [8.](#) Mosiah 29:28, 29
- [9.](#) Alma 11:1-4.
- [10.](#) Ibid. 11:7.
- [11.](#) This is true not only with reference to the republic, but also with reference to the monarchy. Mosiah 29:40. Mosiah 2:12-14. Compare Alma 30:32, 33.
- [12.](#) Alma 46:34, 35. Also Alma 51:15-21.
- [13.](#) Alma 30:3.
- [14.](#) Ibid. 11:1.
- [15.](#) Ibid. 30:3; II Nephi 5:10; II Nephi 25:4, 25; Jacob 4:4, 5; Jarom 1:5; Mos. 2:3; Mos. 13:27, 35; 16:14, 15; Alma 25:14, 16*et seq.*
- [16.](#) Mos. 29:11.
- [17.](#) Mos. 29:11.
- [18.](#) Alma 30:10, 11.
- [19.](#) Joshua 24:15.
- [20.](#) Alma 30:7-9.
- [21.](#) IV Nephi 1:16.
- [22.](#) Alma 13:12. Helaman 3:13-15. Commenting on this passage Elder Orson Pratt says: "These numerous copies of the sacred books were undoubtedly transcribed directly from, or compared with, the records on the original metallic plates."
- [23.](#) I Nephi 9:10-17. Reference is made to these same prophets in Alma 33:15, Alma 34:7, Helaman 8:20, III Nephi 10:16.
- [24.](#) Helaman 8:20.
- [25.](#) Elder Pratt quotes Doc. and Cov., 84:11-13 in evidence.
- [26.](#) Alma 30:3.
- [27.](#) Ibid. 10:3.

- [28.](#) II Nephi 5:26.
- [29.](#) II Nephi 6:2.
- [30.](#) Alma 4:20.
- [31.](#) Ibid. 5:44.
- [32.](#) *Dict. B. of M.*, Reynolds, Art. Jesus Christ, pp. 168-169.
- [33.](#) I Nephi 12:6; II Nephi 26:1, 9; Alma 16:20.
- [34.](#) III Nephi 11:3-12.
- [35.](#) That is, not of this fold in Palestine.
- [36.](#) John 10:16.
- [37.](#) Omni 1:17.
- [38.](#) Mosiah 1.
- [39.](#) "We know, and it is our pride to know, that man by his constitution is a religious animal; that atheism is against not only our reason, but our instincts; and that it cannot prevail long. But if, in the moment of riot, and in a drunken delirium from the hot spirit drawn out of the alembic of hell, * * * * we should uncover our nakedness by throwing off that Christian religion which has hitherto been our boast and comfort, and one great source of civilization amongst us, and among many other nations, we are apprehensive (being well aware that the mind will not endure a void) that some uncouth, pernicious, and degrading superstition might take the place of it." (Edmund Burke, *Works*, vol. III, p. 351.)
- [40.](#) Enos 1:20.

PART III.

The Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLASSIFICATION OF EVIDENCES.

The evidences to be presented for the truth of the Book of Mormon naturally separate into two great divisions, each of which will admit of a number of subdivisions. The two great divisions of the evidence are:

1. External Evidences.
2. Internal Evidences.

Of course, by evidences in general I mean those facts or things which either directly or indirectly, considered separately or collectively, constitute proof of the truth to be contended for in these pages—the truth of the Book of Mormon.

By external evidences I mean those facts outside the book itself, which tend to establish its truth; such as the testimony of the Special Witnesses whom God raised up and qualified by direct revelation to testify of the truth of the book. Also the testimony of those who by reason of seeing and handling the Nephite plates, were made competent to testify of their existence and appearance. This evidence will include the agreement between the Book of Mormon location of ancient American centers of civilization and the existence of the ruins of temples, pyramids, mounds, works of old fortifications, roadways and cities—in a word, the evidence of American archaeology. The evidences of the traditions and customs of the inhabitants of America found in possession of the land at the advent of the Europeans, and who are in large part the descendants of the enlightened people of whom the Book of Mormon is an abridged history. The evidences to

be found in the revelations, prophecies, and promises of the Hebrew scriptures—the evidence of the Bible, in other words, to the truth of the book. The institutions to which the book may be said to have given birth—the testimony which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints bears to its truth.

By Internal Evidence I mean those facts which may be gathered from the book itself, from its structure, and its consistency with the theory of its construction; from its doctrines and their agreement with the revelations of God in the Jewish scriptures; from its moral tone and spiritual influence; from the manner in which it interlocks with the history of the past, and is entwined with the future purposes of God as made known in the revelations of God to man; from the fulfilment of its prophecies and promises; from the general character of its contents, the truths it emphasizes, and the importance of its message to mankind.

I shall have occasion to speak of direct and indirect evidences; of positive and presumptive evidences; but all this will be developed as the statement of the evidences and the argument proceed. I would say, however, before closing these preliminary remarks, that it is not my intention to rely upon any one branch of the evidence to establish the truth of the Book of Mormon; it is intended that the evidence shall be cumulative; and I certainly hope, by a careful consideration of all the evidence, external and internal, direct and indirect, under each division, to so establish the truth of the Book of Mormon that all fair-minded people will see reasonable grounds for faith in it as an additional volume of Holy Scripture, another Witness for the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CHAPTER XV.

DIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE THREE WITNESSES.

In the mouth of two or three Witnesses shall every word be established.—Paul.

Of the external evidences to the truth of the Book of Mormon, the testimony of the Three Witnesses is of first importance. Speaking in the way of prophecy the first Nephi says:

At that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken,^[1] the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that Three Witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered;^[2] and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men; for the Lord God hath said, that the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to bring forth the words of the book; and in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good will he establish his word; and wo be unto him that rejecteth the word of God!^[3]

Moroni, who had in his care the Book of Mormon, who was God's messenger to Joseph Smith, and gave into his possession the gold plates from which the book was translated, says, in his abridgment of the book of Ether, addressing the one who should be commissioned to translate the Nephite Record:

And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work; and unto three shall they be shown by the power of God; wherefore they shall know of a surety that these things are true. And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day.^[4]

From these passages in the Book of Mormon itself, it appears that there are to be two classes of special Witnesses to its truth, besides the one who shall bring forth the book:

I. Three Witnesses who shall behold the plates of the record "by the power of God."

II. A "Few" others, according to the will of God, shall behold them, that they may bear testimony to the word of God unto the children of men.

There seems to be indicated this distinction between the first and second class of these Witnesses—between the "Three" and the other "Few:" the first are to see the plates under some circumstance attended by a demonstration of the power of God; while no promise of such a

demonstration is given to the second class.

As these special Witnesses, according to the prophecy, were to be chosen from among those who would assist in bringing forth the work, meaning the Book of Mormon, it is not surprising that Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris desired to be the Three Special Witnesses, as they were most prominent in assisting to bring forth the work. They besought the Prophet Joseph Smith, therefore, to inquire of the Lord if they might attain unto this honor, and for an answer the following revelation was received for them:

Behold, I say unto you, that you must rely upon my word, which if you do with full purpose of heart, you shall have a view of the plates, and also of the breast plate, the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared^[5] upon the mount, when he talked with the Lord face to face, and the miraculous directors^[6] which were given to Lehi while in the wilderness, on the borders of the Red Sea. And it is by your faith that you shall obtain a view of them, even by that faith which was had by the prophets of old.

And after that you have obtained faith, and have seen them with your eyes, you shall testify of them, by the power of God; and this you shall do that my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., may not be destroyed, that I may bring about my righteous purposes unto the children of men in this work. And ye shall testify that you have seen them, even as my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., has seen them; for it is by my power that he has seen them, and it is because he had faith. And he has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him, and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.

Wherefore, you have received the same power, and the same faith, and the same gift like unto him; and if you do these last commandments of mine, which I have given you, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; for my grace is sufficient for you, and you shall be lifted up at the last day. And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it unto you, that I might bring about my righteous purposes unto the children of men.^[7]

As soon as the translation of the book was completed the Prophet Joseph dispatched a messenger from the home of the Whitmers, at Fayette, near Waterloo, in Seneca country, to his parents, still living at Manchester, with the pleasing intelligence that the work of translation was completed, and asked them to come to him. This information they conveyed to Martin Harris, who determined to accompany the Prophet's parents to the home of the Whitmers. Accordingly the little party started the next morning, and before sunset met with the Prophet and Oliver at the residence of Peter Whitmer, the father of David.^[8] According to the statement of Lucy Smith, mother of the Prophet, it was the day following the arrival of the above party from Manchester that the Three Witnesses obtained their view of the plates, but neither in her work nor in any of our annals is the date of the occurrence given.^[9] Lucy Smith, however, relates the following circumstance connected with Martin Harris becoming one of the Three Witnesses:

The next morning (i. e. following the arrival of the party from Manchester township), after attending to the usual services, namely, reading, singing, and praying, Joseph arose from his knees, and approaching Martin Harris with a solemnity that thrills through my veins to this day, when it occurs to my recollection, said: "Martin Harris, you have got to humble yourself before your God this day, that you may obtain a forgiveness of your sins. If you do, it is the will of God that you should look upon the plates, in company with Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer."^[10]

When the pride, egotism, and stubbornness of Martin Harris is taken into account, this preliminary admonition of the Prophet to him is eminently fitting and necessary and in harmony with all the circumstances of Martin's character and the subsequent facts to be related.

Lucy Smith, continuing her narrative, says:

In a few minutes after this, Joseph, Martin, Oliver, and David, repaired to a grove, a short distance from the house, where they commenced calling upon the Lord, and continued in earnest supplication, until he permitted an angel to come down from his presence, and declare to them, that all which Joseph had testified of concerning the plates was true. When they returned to the house, it was between three and four o'clock p. m. Mrs. Whitmer, Mr. Smith and myself, were sitting in a bedroom at the time. On coming in Joseph threw himself down beside me, and exclaimed: "Father, mother, you do not know how happy I am; the Lord has now caused the plates to be shown to three more besides myself. They have seen an angel, who has testified to them, and they will have to bear witness to the truth of what I have said, for now they know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people, and I feel as if I was relieved of a burden which was almost too heavy for me to bear, and it rejoices my soul, that I am no longer to be entirely alone in the work. Upon this, Martin Harris came in: he seemed almost overcome with joy, and testified boldly to what he had both seen and heard. And so did David and Oliver, adding, that no tongue could express the joy of their hearts, and the greatness of the things which they had both seen and heard."^[11]

From this statement it will be seen that the Prophet and the Three Witnesses were from some

time in the morning until three or four o'clock in the afternoon in obtaining the testimonies.

The Prophet's own account of the circumstances attendant upon the revelation to the Three Witnesses, is both interesting and important. After making reference to the revelation already quoted, which promised the three men named, Cowdery, Whitmer and Harris, that they should view the plates of the Book of Mormon, and the other sacred things named the Prophet in his history says:

Not many days after the above commandment was given, we four, viz., Martin Harris, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and myself, agreed to retire into the woods, and try to obtain by fervent and humble prayer, the fulfilment of the promises given in the revelation—that they should have a view of the plates. We accordingly made choice of a piece of woods convenient to Mr. Whitmer's house, to which we retired, and having knelt down we began to pray in much faith to Almighty God to bestow upon us a realization of these promises. According to previous arrangements, I commenced by vocal prayer to our heavenly Father, and was followed by each of the others in succession. We did not, at the first trial, however, obtain any answer or manifestation of divine favor in our behalf. We again observed the same order of prayer, each calling on and praying fervently to God in rotation, but with the same result as before. Upon this our second failure, Martin Harris proposed that he should withdraw himself from us, believing, as he expressed himself, that his presence was the cause of our not obtaining what we wished for. He accordingly withdrew from us, and we knelt down again, and had not been many minutes engaged in prayer, when presently we beheld a light above us in the air, of exceeding brightness; and behold, an angel stood before us. In his hands he held the plates which we had been praying for these to have a view of, he turned over the leaves one by one, so that we could see them, and discover the engravings thereon distinctly. He then addressed himself to David Whitmer, and said, "David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps his commandments." When, immediately afterwards, we heard a voice from out of the bright light above us, saying: "These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear."

I now left David and Oliver, and went in pursuit of Martin Harris, whom I found at a considerable distance fervently engaged in prayer. He soon told me, however, that he had not yet prevailed with the Lord, and earnestly requested me to join him in prayer, that he also might realize the same blessings which we had just received. We accordingly joined in prayer, and ultimately obtained our desires, for before we had yet finished, the same vision was opened to our view, at least it was again opened to me, and I once more beheld and heard the same things, whilst at the same moment Martin Harris cried out, apparently in an ecstasy of joy, "'Tis enough; 'tis enough; mine eyes have beheld; mine eyes have beheld; and jumping up, he shouted, Hosannah, blessing God and otherwise rejoiced exceedingly.^[12]

Concerning the manner in which the plates and other sacred things were shown to him, beyond what is stated in the testimony of the Three Witnesses published in the first and every subsequent edition of the Book of Mormon, Oliver Cowdery, so far as I know, has left nothing on record further than to say:

I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it (the Book of Mormon) was transcribed. I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the holy interpreters (the Urim and Thummim).^[13]

Martin Harris, so far as any direct personal statement is concerned, is silent as to the manner in which the plates were shown to him; but Elder Edward Stevenson, of the First Council of the Seventy of the Church, who was much interested in Mr. Harris during the closing years of that gentleman's life, states that at a gathering of friends at his (Stevenson's) house, in Salt Lake City, Harris was asked to explain the manner in which the plates containing the characters of the Book of Mormon were exhibited. The response he made is thus described:

Brother Harris, said that the angel stood on the opposite side of the table on which were the plates, the interpreters, etc., and took the plates in his hand and turned them over. To more fully illustrate this to them, Brother Martin took up a book and turned the leaves over one by one. The angel declared that the Book of Mormon, was correctly translated by the power of God, and not of man, and that it contained the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Nephites, who were a branch of the House of Israel and had come from the land of Jerusalem to America. The Witnesses were required to bear their testimony of these things, and of this open vision, to all people, and he [Harris] testified not only to those present, but to all the world, that these things were true, and before God, whom he expected to meet in the day of judgment, he lied not.^[14]

David Whitmer made a statement to Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith in the course of an interview at Richmond, Missouri, on the 7th of September, 1878, in which he gives quite a minute description of the manner in which the plates and the other sacred things were shown to himself and Oliver Cowdery in the presence of Joseph Smith. Mr. Whitmer's account of the event as related by Elders Pratt and Smith is as follows:

Elder Orson Pratt: Do you remember what time you saw the plates?

David Whitmer: It was in June, 1829—the latter part of the month, and the Eight Witnesses saw them, I think, the next day or the day after (i. e. one or two days after). Joseph showed them the plates himself, but the angel showed us (the Three Witnesses) the plates, as I suppose to fulfill the words of the book itself. Martin Harris was not with us at this time; he obtained a view of them afterwards (the same day). Joseph, Oliver and myself were together when I saw them. We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon, but also the brass plates, the plates of the Book of Ether, the plates containing the records of the wickedness and secret combinations of the people of the world down to the time of their being engraved, and many other plates. The fact is, it was just as though Joseph, Oliver and I were sitting just here on a log, when we were overshadowed by a light. It was not like the light of the sun nor like that of a fire, but more glorious and beautiful. It extended away round us, I cannot tell how far, but in the midst of this light about as far off as he sits (pointing to John C. Whitmer, sitting a few feet from him), there appeared, as it were, a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the sword of Laban, the directors—i. e., the ball which Lehi had, and the interpreters. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God.

Elder Orson Pratt: Did you see the angel at this time?

David Whitmer: Yes, he stood before us. Our testimony as recorded in the Book of Mormon is strictly and absolutely true just as it is there written.^[15]

As a result of this revelation, given under such remarkable circumstances and demonstrations of the power of God, the Three Witnesses who had viewed the plates and the engravings thereon, and who had heard the voice of God from the midst of the glorious light surrounding them at the time, declare that the plates had been translated by the gift and power of God—published the following statement to the world:

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

BE IT KNOWN unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,

DAVID WHITMER,

MARTIN HARRIS.

This testimony was published in the first and in every subsequent edition of the Book of Mormon. It has never been refuted; and, of course, from the very nature of the testimony it cannot be refuted. No one can rise up and say these men did not receive this revelation; that they did not see an angel from heaven; that he did not show to them the plates; that they did not see the glorious light in which the angel stood; that they did not hear the voice of God saying that the translation of the record was true, and was accomplished through the gift and power of God. No one can say any one of these things. An argument may be formulated against the probability of such an occurrence. It may be alleged that they were ignorant, uncritical, incompetent and therefore unworthy of belief. All this may be done, nay, it has been done; but no one can stand up and say that he knows what they say is not true, that what they say they saw, they did not see.

Footnotes

¹. Having reference to the man who should bring forth the Nephite Record to the world, that is, to Joseph Smith.

2. That is to Joseph Smith.
3. II Nephi 27:12-14.
4. Ether 5:2-4.
5. The great prophet who led a colony from the Tower of Babel to the western hemisphere.
6. This was a curious instrument called by the Nephites *Liahona*. It was found by the prophet Lehi at the door of his tent one morning, in the wilderness, not long after the departure of his colony from Jerusalem. It was a round ball of fine brass with two spindles in it, one of which indicated the course to be traveled by the colony. But the instrument worked according to the faith and diligence with which the colony gave heed to it. From time to time also there appeared upon it written instructions or reproofs according as the colony required the one or the other.
7. *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 53, and also Doc. and Cov. Sec. 17.
8. *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 31.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 31.
11. *Joseph Smith the Prophet*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 31.
12. *History of the Church*, vol. I, pp. 54, 55.
13. Statement by Oliver Cowdery, *Deseret News* of 13th April, 1859.
14. Letters of Edward Stevenson to *Millennial Star*, vol. 48, pp. 367-389.
15. *Millennial Star*, vol. 40, nos. 49, 50, report of Pratt and Smith, is signed by them and bears date of Sept. 17, 1878.

CHAPTER XVI.

DIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—THE THREE WITNESSES—SUBSEQUENT LIFE AND TESTIMONIES.

OLIVER COWDERY.

The Witnesses themselves always adhered to the truth of their testimony. They never denied what they in their now celebrated testimony so solemnly affirmed. It was reported at different times during their life time that they had denied their testimony, and such statements are to be found in the earlier editions of such standard works as the *American Encyclopedia* and in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It is evident that the reports about Oliver Cowdery denying his testimony obtained some credence even among the Saints at Nauvoo; for in the *Times and Seasons*, published by the Church at Nauvoo, one J. H. Johnson, in some verses written by him maintaining the fact that the truth stands fast though men may be untrue to it, says:

—Or prove that Christ was not the Lord
Because that Peter cursed and swore,
Or Book of Mormon not his word,
Because denied by Oliver.^[1]

But notwithstanding all this, the fact remains that Oliver Cowdery never denied his testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Whatever his delinquencies in other respects; whatever his grievances, real or imagined; in the Church, and even while out of it, he was true, to his honor be it said, to his testimony to the Book of Mormon. Living he affirmed it, and when dying he renewed the affirmation. It must be said of him that notwithstanding the high favors which God granted him—the favor of being one of these Three Special Witnesses, blessed to see the Nephite plates and the sacred things connected with them under such a remarkable display of God's presence and power; favored to receive with the Prophet the ministration of angels who ordained them both to the Aaronic and to the Melchizedek priesthood;^[2] and favored afterwards to behold in open vision in the Kirtland Temple the Savior himself, and a number of angels who came on that occasion to restore to earth through these men the keys of authority and power which they held;^[3] favored to be the Second Elder of the Church of Christ, and the first to make public proclamation of the restored gospel—notwithstanding all this, I repeat, it must be said of him that he possessed defects of character^[4] which enabled the adversary of men's souls to so far prevail against him that he transgressed some of the laws of God and lost his high station. He was

excommunicated from the Church for his sins,^[5] and for a time stood as a stranger to the Saints, an outcast from Israel; but in those dark days he still remained true to his testimony.

In October, 1848, after an absence of about eleven years, Oliver Cowdery returned to the Church. At that time the movement of the Church to the Rocky Mountains was under way. A large number of the Saints were temporarily located at Kaneshville (now Council Bluffs), Iowa, and on the 21st of October of the year above given, a special conference was called, presided over by Elder Orson Hyde, of the Council of the Apostles, in which the case of Oliver Cowdery was considered. Before that conference, at which some two thousand Saints were present,^[6] Oliver Cowdery said:

Friends and Brethren—My name is Cowdery, Oliver Cowdery. In the early history of this Church I stood identified with her, and one in her councils. True it is that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance; not because I was better than the rest of mankind was I called; but, to fulfil the purposes of God, he called me to a high and holy calling.

I wrote, with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph, as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, or, as it is called by the book, "Holy Interpreters." I beheld with my eyes, and handled with my hands, the gold plates from which it was transcribed. I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the "holy interpreters." That book is true. Sidney Rigdon did not write it. Mr. Spaulding did not write it. I wrote it myself as it fell from the lips of the Prophet. It contains the everlasting gospel, and came forth to the children of men in fulfilment of the revelations of John, where he says he saw an angel come with the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation, kindred, tongue and people. It contains principles of salvation; and if you, my hearers, will walk by its light and obey its precepts, you will be saved with an everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God on high. Brother Hyde has just said that it is very important that we keep and walk in the true channel, in order to avoid the sand-bars. This is true. The channel is here. The holy priesthood is here.

I was present with Joseph when an holy angel from God came down from heaven and conferred on us, or restored the Lesser or Aaronic priesthood, and said to us, at the same time, that it should remain upon the earth while the earth stands.

I was also present with Joseph when the higher or Melchizedek priesthood was conferred by holy angels from on high. This priesthood we conferred on each other, by the will and commandment of God. This priesthood, as was then declared, is also to remain upon the earth until the last remnant of time. This holy priesthood, or authority, we then conferred upon many, and is just as good and valid as though God had done it in person.

I laid my hands upon that man—yes, I laid my right hand upon his head (pointing to Brother Hyde), and I conferred upon him the priesthood, and he holds that priesthood now. He was also called through me, by the prayer of faith, an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This speech was reported by Bishop Reuben Miller, who was present at the meeting where Cowdery spoke, and noted down in his journal at the time what was said, though his notes, it must be remarked, were not published until several years later.^[7] The circumstance of Cowdery's return and the spirit of his speech is also supported by other testimony. In a letter dated at Cambridge Port, U. S. A., December 26, 1848, Wilford Woodruff—at the time one of the Twelve Apostles, and subsequently President of the Church—writing to Orson Pratt, then president of the British Mission, said:

Dear Brother Pratt—I received a letter from Elder Hyde saying that Oliver Cowdery had come to the Bluffs with his family; and made satisfaction to the Church who had voted to receive him into the Church by baptism; and Elder Hyde expected to baptize him the next day. He was assisting Elder Hyde to put the press in operation for printing, expected to send forth the "Frontier Guardian" soon. I was truly glad to hear this, as Oliver Cowdery was the first person baptized into this Church under the hands of Joseph, and is capable of doing good in the kingdom of God; I was truly glad to hear he had returned to the fold.^[8]

The Star which published this letter was issued February 1, 1849.

George A. Smith, writing from Council Bluffs, under date of October 31st, 1848, ten days after Cowdery's speech before the conference, writes to Orson Pratt of this meeting:

Oliver Cowdery, who had just arrived from Wisconsin with his family, on being invited, addressed the meeting. He bore testimony in the most positive terms of the truth of the Book of Mormon—the restoration of the priesthood to the earth, and the mission of Joseph Smith as the Prophet of the last days; and told the people if they wanted to follow the right path, to keep the main channel of the stream—where the body of the Church goes, there is the authority; and all these lo here's and lo there's have no authority; but this people have the true and holy priesthood; "for the angel said unto

Joseph Smith, Jr., in my hearing, that this priesthood shall remain on the earth unto the end." His testimony produced quite a sensation among the gentlemen present, who did not belong to the Church, and it was gratefully received, by all the Saints. Last evening (Oct. 30th), President Hyde and myself spent the evening with Brother Cowdery. He had been cut off from the Church by a council; had withdrawn himself from it; stayed away eleven years; and now came back, not expecting to be a leader, but wished to be a member and have part among us. He considered that he ought to be baptized; and did not expect to return without it. He said that Joseph Smith had fulfilled his mission faithfully before God until death; he was determined to rise with the Church, and if it went down he was willing to go down with it. I saw him today, told him I was going to write to you. He sends his respects to you; he says, "tell Brother Orson I am advised by the brethren to remain here this winter, and assist Brother Hyde in the printing office, and as soon as I get settled I will write him a letter." I remain, as ever, your brother in the kingdom of patience.

(Signed) GEORGE A. SMITH.^[9]

The "Star" in which this letter was published was issued January 1st, 1849, a little more than two months after Cowdery's speech already quoted.

Oliver Cowdery had been excommunicated by the action of a High Council of the Church some ten years before, and it was held by some that he could only be restored by the action of a High Council.^[10]

Such a council was therefore called. In the course of its proceedings Oliver said:

Brethren, for a number of years I have been separated from you. I now desire to come back. I wish to come humbly and to be one in your midst. I seek no station. I only wish to be identified with you. I am out of the Church. I am not a member of the Church, but I wish to become a member of it. I wish to come in at the door. I know the door. I have not come here to seek precedence, I come humbly, and throw myself upon the decisions of this body, knowing, as I do, that its decisions are right, and should be obeyed.^[11]

On motion of Elder Orson Hyde, Oliver Cowdery was received into the Church by baptism. It was the intention of this Witness of the Book of Mormon to go with the body of the Church to the Salt Lake Valley, but while visiting with his fellow witness, David Whitmer, at Richmond, Missouri, he was taken ill and died, March 3, 1850. Previous to going to Richmond, for the purpose of meeting David Whitmer, his wife's brother, Oliver was detained by snow storms some two weeks at the temporary home of Samuel W. Richards—just then returned from his first mission to the British Isles.

Of his interesting association with Oliver, during this time, Elder Richards says:

To hear him describe in his pleasant but earnest manner the personality of those heavenly messengers, with whom he and the Prophet had so freely had converse, was enchanting to my soul. Their heavenly appearance, clothed in robes of purity, the influence of their presence so lovely and serene; their eyes that seemed to penetrate to the very depths of the soul, together with the color of the eyes that gazed upon them, were all so beautifully related as to almost make one feel that they were then present: and as I placed my hands upon his head where these angels had placed theirs, a divine influence filled the soul to that degree that one could truly feel to be in the presence of something that was more than earthly; and from that day to this—almost fifty years ago—the interest of those glorious truths upon the mind has never been lost, but as a beacon light ever guiding to the home of their glory for a like inheritance.

But before taking his departure he wrote and left with the writer of this the following statement, which we believe to be his last living testimony, though oft repeated, of the wonderful manifestations which brought the authority of God to men on earth:

TESTIMONY

While darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people; long after the authority to administer in holy things had been taken away, the Lord opened the heavens and sent forth his word for the salvation of Israel. In fulfilment of the sacred scriptures, the everlasting gospel was proclaimed by the mighty angel (Moroni) who, clothed with the authority of his mission, gave glory to God in the highest. This gospel is the "stone taken from the mountain without hands." John the Baptist, holding the keys of the Aaronic priesthood; Peter, James, and John, holding the keys of the Melchizedek priesthood, have also ministered for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and with these administrations ordained men to the same priesthood. These priesthoods, with their authority, are now, and must continue to be, in the body of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Blessed is the elder who has received the same, and thrice blessed and holy is he who shall endure to the end.

Accept assurances, dear brother, of the unfeigned prayer of him who, in connection with Joseph the Seer, was blessed with the above ministration and who earnestly and

devoutly hopes to meet you in the celestial glory.

(Signed) OLIVER COWDERY.

To Elder Samuel W. Richards, January 13th, 1849.

Phineas H. Young, a brother of President Brigham Young, was present at Oliver's death, at Richmond, Missouri, and of that event said:

His last moments were spent in bearing testimony of the truth of the gospel revealed through Joseph Smith, and the power of the holy priesthood which he had received through his administrations.

David Whitmer, speaking to Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith, of Oliver Cowdery's death, said:

Oliver Cowdery died the happiest man I ever saw. After shaking hands with the family and kissing his wife and daughter, he said, "Now I lay me down for the last time; I am going to my Savior;" and he died immediately, with a smile on his face.^[12]

This statement also agrees with the one David Whitmer published in his "Address to all Believers in Christ:"

Neither Oliver Cowdery nor Martin Harris ever at any time denied his testimony. They both died reaffirming the truth of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. I was present at the death bed of Oliver Cowdery, and his last words were, "Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon." He died here in Richmond, Missouri, on the 3rd of March, 1850. Many witnesses yet live^[13] in Richmond, who will testify to the truth of these facts, as well as to the good character of Oliver Cowdery.^[14]

Footnotes

[1.](#) *Times and Seasons*, vol. II, p. 482.

[2.](#) See *New Witnesses for God*, vol. I, ch. 11.

[3.](#) See *New Witnesses for God*, vol. I, ch. 11; also Doc. and Cov., sec. 110.

[4.](#) That the Prophet Joseph understood the defects in the character of Oliver Cowdery is evident from some remarks he records in his journal concerning him, under date of December 18, 1833. They are as follows: "Blessed of the Lord is brother Oliver, nevertheless there are two evils in him that he must needs forsake or he cannot altogether escape the buffetings of the adversary. If he forsake these evils he shall be forgiven, and shall be made like unto the bow which the Lord hath set in the heavens; he shall be a sign and an ensign unto the nations. Behold he is blessed of the Lord for his constancy and steadfastness in the work of the Lord; wherefore, he shall be blessed in his generation, and they shall never be cut off, and he shall be helped out of many troubles; and if he keep the commandments, and hearken unto the counsel of the Lord, his rest shall be glorious." (History of the Church, vol. I, p. 465). It will be observed that the promises herein made to Oliver Cowdery are based upon the conditions specified in the above passage. That the conditions were not at least altogether complied with is well known, and is further witnessed by the fact that Oliver did not escape the buffetings to which the Prophet alludes. Still from out of this mist of human frailty, stands clear and strong the virtue which constituted him so dauntless a witness for the truth of God. "Behold he is blessed of the Lord for his constancy and steadfastness in the work of the Lord." Still he lost his station in the Church, and that which had been conferred upon him was finally given to Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet. See Doc. and Cov. 124:95.

[5.](#) *Millennial Star*, vol. 16, p. 133.

[6.](#) *Millennial Star*, vol. 11, p. 14.

[7.](#) Namely, 13th of April, 1859. See *Deseret News* of that date.

[8.](#) *Millennial Star*, vol. 11, p. 43.

[9.](#) *Millennial Star*, vol. 11, p. 14.

[10.](#) Fearing that silence as to the specific offenses of Oliver Cowdery might leave the reader to fancy that his wrong doing was more serious than it really was, I here state the charges against him sustained before the High Council at Far West, in 1838: 1st. "Persecuting the brethren by urging on vexatious law suits against them, and thus distressing the innocent. 2nd. Seeking to destroy the character of Joseph Smith, Jr., by falsely insinuating that he was guilty of adultery. 3rd. Treating the Church with contempt by not attending meetings. 4th. Leaving his calling, to which God had appointed him by revelation, for the sake of filthy lucre, and turning to the practice of law. 5th. Disgracing the Church by being connected in the 'bogus' business, as common report says." (See *Millennial Star*, vol. 16, p. 133; also *Missouri Persecutions*, p. 179.) It should be observed that upper Missouri in 1838 was infested with a gang of sharpers engaged in counterfeiting the United States currency, and rumor, for a time, connected Oliver Cowdery with

them: but whether he was, or was not, guilty of such connection was not proven before the council, it was merely proven that "rumors" connected him with those criminals. It should also be said that Oliver Cowdery was not present at the council which acted on his case; though of course an opportunity was given him to be present. How many of the charges brought against him would have failed had he been there to oppose them, one may not conjecture. It was a general time of turbulence in the affairs of the Church. A wave of wild land speculation swept through the country, and the Saints and some leading elders became entangled in it. Charges and counter charges were made; brethren misunderstood one another and became estranged in their feelings, and pride and bitterness prevented reconciliations. It was under such circumstances that Oliver Cowdery for a time was lost in the mists.

[11.](#) *Deseret News* of April 13, 1859.

[12.](#) *Millennial Star*, vol. 40, p. 774, Pratt and Smith statement.

[13.](#) This was said in 1887.

[14.](#) *Address To All Believers in Christ*, p. 8.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—THE TESTIMONY OF THE THREE WITNESSES—SUBSEQUENT LIFE AND TESTIMONIES. Continued.

DAVID WHITMER.

David Whitmer continued to repeat his testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon up to and including the very day of his death. Living for many years at Richmond, Missouri—from 1838 to 1888, half a century—he was frequently visited by all sorts of people, and in the latter years of his life by newspaper representatives especially, who came to inquire concerning the testimony he had given to the world to the truth of the Book of Mormon. For all these parties he had but one answer: "My testimony written in the Book of Mormon is true." It was sometimes elaborated by the addition of a description of the circumstances under which the great revelation was given, but there was never any deviation from the main facts published in his testimony which accompanies the Book of Mormon. He was not always fairly treated by those whose questions he answered; his statements were sometimes misrepresented, much to his annoyance; and having been taught the necessity for it by sad experience, in the later years of his life, he always took the precaution to have one or more of his personal friends present at interviews he granted to strangers.

Referring to these acts of misrepresentation concerning his testimony, in his pamphlet, "Address to all Believers in Christ", he makes the following refutation of the charges of denial:

It is recorded in the American Cyclopaedia and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, that I, David Whitmer, have denied my testimony as one of the Three Witnesses to the divinity of the Book of Mormon; and that the other two Witnesses, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, denied their testimony to that book. I will say once more to all mankind, that I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof. I also testify to the world, that neither Oliver Cowdery nor Martin Harris ever at any time denied their testimony. They both died reaffirming the truth of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. I was present at the death bed of Oliver Cowdery, and his last words were, "Brother David, be true to your testimony to the Book of Mormon." He died here in Richmond, Missouri, on March 3, 1850. Many witnesses yet live in Richmond, who will testify to the truth of these facts, as well as to the good character of Oliver Cowdery. The very powers of darkness have combined against the Book of Mormon, to prove that it is not the word of God, and this should go to prove to men of spiritual understanding, that the Book is true. To show the reader what I have had to contend with, I give you below a copy of a leaflet which I had printed and distributed in March, 1881:

A PROCLAMATION

Unto all nations, kindred, tongues, and people, unto whom these presents shall come:

It having been represented by one John Murphy, of Polo, Caldwell county, Missouri, that I, in a conversation with him last Summer, denied my testimony as one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

To the end, therefore, that he may understand me now, if he did not then; and that the world may know the truth, I wish now, standing as it were, in the very sunset of life,

and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public statement:

That I never have at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof which has so long since been published with that book, as one of the Three Witnesses. Those who know me best well know that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all my statements, as then made and published.

"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" it was no delusion. What is written is written, and he that readeth let him understand. * * * I do not indorse any of the teachings of the so-called "Mormons," or Latter-day Saints, which are in conflict with the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as taught in the Bible and Book of Mormon; for the same gospel is plainly taught in both these books as I understand the word of God.

And if any man doubt, should he not carefully and honestly read and understand the same, before presuming to sit in judgment and condemn the light, which shineth in darkness, and showeth the way of eternal life as pointed out by the unerring hand of God?

In the Spirit of Christ who hath said: "Follow thou me, for I am the life, the light and the way," I submit this statement to the world. God in whom I trust, being my judge as to the sincerity of my motives and the faith and hope that is in me of eternal life.

My sincere desire is that the world may be benefited by this plain and simple statement of the truth.

And all the honor be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

(Signed) DAVID WHITMER.

Richmond, Missouri, March 19, 1881.

We the undersigned citizens of Richmond, Ray county, Missouri, where David Whitmer has resided since the year A. D. 1838, certify that we have been long and intimately acquainted with him and know him to be a man of the highest integrity, and of undoubted truth and veracity.

Given at Richmond, Missouri, this March 19, A. D. 1881:

Gen. Alexander W. Doniphan.

Hon. George W. Dunn, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit.

Thomas D. Woodson, President of Ray Co. Savings Bank.

J. T. Child, editor of "Conservator".

H. C. Garner, Cashier of Ray Co. Savings Bank.

W. A. Holman, County Treasurer.

J. S. Hughes, Banker, Richmond.

James Hughes, Banker, Richmond.

D. P. Whitmer, Attorney-at-Law.

Hon. Jas. W. Black, Attorney-at-Law.

L. C. Cantwell, Postmaster, Richmond.

George I. Wasson, Mayor.

Jas. A. Davis, County Collector.

C. J. Hughes, Probate Judge and Presiding Justice of Ray County Court.

Geo. W. Trigg, County Clerk.

W. W. Mosby, M. D.

Thos. McGinnis, ex-Sheriff Ray County.

J. P. Quesenberry, Merchant.

W. R. Holman, Furniture Merchant.

Lewis Slaughter, Recorder of Deeds.

Geo. W. Buchanan, M. D.

A. K. Reyburn.

At the same time the "Richmond Conservator" of March 24, 1881, said, editorially:

AN EXPLANATION

Elsewhere we publish a letter from David Whitmer, an old and well known citizen of Ray, [county] as well as an indorsement of his standing as a man, signed by a number of the leading citizens of this community, in reply to some unwarranted aspersions made upon him. There is no doubt that Mr. Whitmer, who was one of the Three Witnesses of the authenticity of the gold plates, from which he asserts that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon (a fac simile of the characters he now has in his possession with the original records), is firmly convinced of its divine origin, and while he makes no effort to obtrude his views or beliefs, he simply wants the world to know that so far as he is concerned there is no "variableness or shadow of turning." Having resided here for near a half a century, it is with no little pride that he points to his past record with the consciousness that he has done nothing derogatory to his character as a citizen and a believer in the Son of Mary, to warrant such an attack on him, come from what source it may, and now with the lillies of seventy-five winters crowning him like an aureole, and his pilgrimage on earth well nigh ended, he reiterates his former statements, and will leave futurity to solve the problem that he was but a passing witness to its fulfilment.

David Whitmer died at his home in Richmond, on the 25th of January, 1888, in the eighty-fourth year of his life. His final testimony was given under the following circumstances:

On the evening of Sunday, January 22, at half past five o'clock, Mr. Whitmer called his family and a number of his friends to his bedside, and to them delivered his dying testimony. Addressing his attendant physician he said: "Dr. Buchanan, I want you to say whether or not I am in my right mind before I give my last testimony." The doctor answered: "Yes, you are in your right mind, for I have just had a conversation with you." He then directed his words to all who surrounded him, saying:

Now, you must all be faithful in Christ. I want to say to you all that the Bible and the record of the Nephites (Book of Mormon), are true, so you can say that you have heard me bear my testimony on my death bed. All be faithful in Christ and your reward will be according to your works. God bless you all. My trust is in Christ for ever, worlds without end. Amen.

* * * *

On Monday last (Jan. 23rd), at 10 o'clock a. m., after awaking from a short slumber he said he had seen beyond the veil and had seen Christ on the other side. His friends who were constantly at his bedside claim that he had many manifestations of the truths of the great beyond, which confirmed their faith beyond all shadow of doubt. He bore his long illness with great patience and fortitude, his faith, never for a moment wavering, and when the summons came, he sank peacefully to rest with a smile on his countenance, just as if he was being lulled to sleep by secret music. Just before his breath left his body, he opened his eyes, which glistened with the brightness of early manhood. He then turned them toward heaven, and a wonderful light came over his countenance, which remained several moments, when the eyes gradually closed and David Whitmer had gone to his rest.^[1]

In the same issue of the paper from which this account of his death is taken, occurs the following description of Whitmer's connection with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and his being a Witness of its truth. Some inaccuracies as to details must be allowed for here, such as the omission of Martin Harris' name as one of the Three Witnesses, and the time of day that Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith called upon him in the field to go with them to become a witness to the Book of Mormon. Other accounts state that they came to him in the morning instead of the afternoon.^[2] And it should be remembered that what follows is not given in the language of David Whitmer:

When he was twenty-four years of age and worked on his father's farm near Palmyra, New York, all that section of the country was more or less excited over the reported discovery by Joseph Smith of the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. Oliver Cowdery, the village school teacher, mentioned the matter to him and announced his determination to visit Smith and investigate the matter for himself, promising Mr. Whitmer, at the latter's request, to advise him of the result. A few days later he [Whitmer] received a letter from Cowdery, urging him to join him, which he did, being received by the "Prophet" with open arms. After remaining long enough to satisfy himself of the divine inspiration of Smith, the three returned to Whitmer's home, where it was agreed that the work of translation should be prosecuted.

Shortly after his return, and while he was plowing in the field one afternoon, he was visited by Smith and Cowdery, who requested that he should accompany them into the woods on the hill across the road for the purpose of witnessing a manifestation that should qualify him and Cowdery to bear witness to the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. Smith explaining that such procedure was in accordance with explicit instructions he had received from an angel of the Lord.

Repairing to the woods they engaged in prayer for a short time, when suddenly a great light shone around about them, far brighter and more dazzling than the brilliancy of the noon day sun, seemingly enveloping the wood for a considerable distance. A spirit of elevation seized him as of joy indescribable and a strange influence stole over him, which so entranced him that he felt that he was chained to the spot. A moment later and a divine personage, clothed in white raiment, appeared unto them, and immediately in front of the personage stood a table on which lay a number of gold plates, some brass plates, the "Urim and Thummim" and the "sword of Laban." All of these they were directed to examine carefully, and after their examination they were told that the Lord would demand that they bear witness thereof to all the world. * * * * *

While describing this vision to us, all traces of a severe cold from which he was suffering disappeared for the time being, his form straightened, his countenance assumed almost a beautiful expression, and his tones became strangely eloquent. Although evidently no studied effort, the description was a magnificent piece of word painting, and he carried his hearers with him to that lonely hill by the old farm, and they stood there with him awed in the divine presence. Skeptics may laugh and scoff if they will, but no man could listen to Mr. Whitmer as he talks of his interview with the angel of the Lord, without being most forcibly convinced that he has heard an honest man tell what he honestly believes to be true.^[3]

David Whitmer, like Oliver Cowdery, was excommunicated from the Church, and at about the same time.^[4] But unlike Oliver Cowdery, he never returned, but remained estranged from the Church to the last day of his life. Still he always manifested a friendly disposition towards all believers in the Book of Mormon, however mistaken he may have considered them to be in the matter of Church affiliation. But while out of the Church as when in it, and certainly having no worldly purpose to serve by continuing in such a course, he steadfastly, as we have seen, adhered to his testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon.

Footnotes

[1.](#) This account of David Whitmer's death is from the *Richmond Democrat*, of the 26th of January, 1888, a paper published in the town where his death occurred. It is copied into the *Deseret News* of the 8th of February, 1888; and in the *Millennial Star*, vol. 50, p. 139.

[2.](#) See statement of David Whitmer to William H. Kelley, G. A. Blakeslee, Sept. 15, 1882. *Braden and Kelley Debate*, p. 187.

[3.](#) *Richmond Democrat*, issue of Jan. 26, 1888.

[4.](#) For the same reasons that were given in the foot note explaining the case of Oliver Cowdery, I here give the charges brought against David Whitmer and sustained before the High Council: 1st. Not observing the Word of Wisdom, (See Doc. and Cov., sec. 89). 2nd. Unchristianlike conduct in neglecting to attend meetings, and uniting with and possessing the same spirit as the dissenters. 3rd. Writing letters to the dissenters in Kirtland, unfavorable to the cause and character of Joseph Smith, Jr. 4th. Neglecting the duties of his calling, and separating himself from the Church. 5th. Signing himself president of the Church of Christ in an insulting letter to the High Council, after he had been cut off from the presidency. The presidency of the Church alluded to was a local presidency over the Church in Missouri, in which position the Saints, some time before his arraignment before the High Council, refused to sustain him. (See Mill. Star, vol. 16, pp. 133, 134, also Missouri Persecutions, pp. 180-1.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

EXTERNAL, EVIDENCES—TESTIMONY OF THE THREE WITNESSES—SUBSEQUENT LIFE AND TESTIMONIES.

MARTIN HARRIS.

The experience of Martin Harris, with reference to his relations with the Church was somewhat different from that of Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer. He was never excommunicated from

the Church as they were, but when there was a general movement of the Church from Kirtland to Missouri, early in the summer of 1838—at which time the Saints may be said to have abandoned Kirtland—Martin Harris remained behind to live in Ohio, separated from the Church. It is evident, too, that his mind became somewhat darkened; for after the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph, in 1844, when various persons arose claiming the right of leadership in the Church, Martin Harris for a time supported the claims of James J. Strang, and under the auspices of the latter's pseudo-church organization, went to England on a mission, in 1846; but he did not become very active in his missionary efforts, and soon returned to Kirtland, where he resided for many years, up to 1870, in fact. During all these years that he was separated from the Church, years of much spiritual darkness for him respecting many things pertaining to the great work of God, he nevertheless steadfastly held to the truth of his testimony to the Book of Mormon. However vacillating in other matters, in this he was firm and immovable. He did see the angel; he did see the plates, and the attendant sacred things; he was overshadowed by a glorious light, from the midst of which he heard the voice of God saying that the record had been translated by the gift and power of God. This testimony he never denied, but reaffirmed it over and over again. Finally, like Oliver Cowdery, he joined the Church and died in the faith. The circumstances surrounding this last event of his life, briefly told, are as follows: Elder Edward Stevenson, for many years a prominent traveling Elder of the Church, and who a few years before his death was made a member of the First Council of the Seventy—the third general quorum of the Church—became especially interested in Martin Harris. Elder Stevenson, when a boy in Michigan, in 1833, heard Martin Harris, who was on a mission at that time, testify to the appearance of the angel and his having seen the plates of the Book of Mormon. The testimony had great effect on young Stevenson's mind; and when, in 1869—thirty-six years later—he found Martin Harris living at Kirtland, naturally his interest in the Witness revived. After Elder Stevenson returned to Utah, from his eastern mission, he kept up a correspondence with Martin Harris, and the latter finally expressed a wish to visit Utah and rejoin his former associates. Elder Stevenson raised the means by subscription, went east and brought back with him Mr. Harris, arriving in Salt Lake on the 30th of August, 1870.^[1] Mr. Harris addressed a large gathering of Saints in Salt Lake City on the Sunday following, September the 4th, reaffirming his testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, a thing he did repeatedly, both before public assemblies and in private conversation. He was received into the Church on renewing his covenants in baptism and reconfirmation. After spending some time in Salt Lake City, Mr. Harris moved to Smithfield, in Cache county, Utah; and subsequently he moved to Clarkston, where he continued to live at the home of his son, Martin Harris, Jr., until his death, which occurred on the 10th of July, 1875. In these later years of his life he continued to reaffirm his testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon. It was the one theme above all others which occupied his mind and of which he loved to speak. A few hours before his death the bishop of Clarkston, Simon Smith, called upon him, and as the bishop drew near his bed the now aged Witness (he was in his ninety-third year), stretched out his hand with the remark: "Bishop, I am going." The Bishop, in answer, said he had something of importance to tell him about the Book of Mormon, viz., that at the request of Indians in Central America the Book of Mormon was about to be published in the Spanish language. "Upon hearing this," says his son, Martin Harris, Jr., in his letter describing the incident to George A. Smith, the Church historian—"Upon hearing this, father brightened up, his pulsation improved, and, although very weak, he began to talk as he formerly had done previous to his sickness. He conversed for about two hours, and it seemed that the mere mention of the Book of Mormon put new life into him."

Speaking of his condition a little later—the day before his death, in fact—his son says:

He has continued to talk about and testify to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and was in his happiest mood when he could get somebody to listen to his testimony; if he felt dull and weary at times, and some one would come in and open up a conversation and give him an opportunity of talking, he would immediately revive and feel like a young man, for a little while. We begin to think he has borne his last testimony. The last audible words he has spoken were something about the Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, but we could not understand what it was.^[2]

The next day, July 10th, 1875, he died.

Footnotes

¹. See Stevenson's account of Harris' return to the Church, *Millennial Star*, vol. 44, pp. 78, 86, 87.

². *Deseret News* (weekly) for July 28, 1875.

CHAPTER XIX.

The direct evidence of the truth of the Book of Mormon found in the testimony of the Three Witnesses is now before the reader. The trying circumstances under which the Witnesses persisted in maintaining the truth of that testimony is also known. Neither separation from Joseph Smith as a companion and associate, nor excommunication from the body religious, brought into existence as a sequence, one may say, of the coming forth of the Nephite Record, affected them as Witnesses. In the Church and while out of it they steadfastly maintained what they first published to the world respecting the Book of Mormon. The plates existed, they saw them, and the engravings upon them. An angel of God appeared before them, and laid the records before their eyes. The record was translated by the gift and power of God; for his voice had declared it unto them, hence they knew it. No evidence exists that they ever denied that testimony. They never attempted to resolve the appearance of the angel, the exhibition of the plates, or hearing the voice of God into hallucination of the mind; nor did they ever attempt to refer this really great event to some jugglery on the part of Joseph Smith. They never allowed even the possibility of their being mistaken in the matter. They saw; they heard; the splendor of God shone about them; they felt his presence. Joseph Smith could never have produced such a scene as that which they beheld. They were not deluded. The several incidents making up this great revelation were too palpable to the strongest senses of the mind to admit of any doubt as to their reality. The great revelation was not given in a dream or vision of the night. There was no mysticism about it. Nothing unseemly or occult. It was a simple, straightforward fact that had taken place before their eyes. The visitation of the angel was in the broad light of day. Moreover it occurred after such religious exercises as were worthy to attend upon such an event, viz.: after morning devotional exercises common to all really Christian families of that period—the reading of a scripture lesson, singing a hymn, and prayer; and after arriving at the scene of the revelation, devout prayer again by the Prophet and each of the then-to-be Witnesses. The revelation then followed under the circumstances already detailed, which circumstances were of such a nature that the Witnesses could not be mistaken. There exists no possibility of resolving their testimony into delusion or mistake. Either they spoke the truth in their published Testimony to the world, or they were wilful, conscious liars, bent upon a wicked scheme of deception relative to a subject—religion—which, as it is the most sacred, so should it also be the furthest removed from the practice of deceptions.

Since, then, the possibility of mistake or delusion, is eliminated from the revelation to the Three Witnesses, let us consider the likelihood of conscious, intentional fraud; a deliberately planned deception, through the collusion of Joseph Smith and the Three Witnesses, by which the Book of Mormon was to be palmed off upon mankind as a volume of ancient scripture, and a new Church organization brought into existence.

First. It must occur to every unbiased reflector upon the subject that every circumstance is against the likelihood of collusion. The very youthfulness of the men, the Prophet and the Three Witnesses, is against such a hypothesis. Joseph Smith, at the time of the publication of the Book of Mormon, was about twenty-five years old; Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer were also of that age, all having been born in the year 1805-6. Martin Harris was older, it is true, having been born in the year 1783; but he, as an exception to the youthfulness of the group, will not affect the argument based on this score of youthfulness, as his influence with the rest held no proportion to the difference of age between himself with the other members of the group. Indeed, though the oldest, he was the least influential of the number; and withal so simple-minded in his honesty, that the world, if it knew him, would acquit him of guile, and regard him as a wholly impossible factor in practicing such a monumental delusion upon mankind as foisting the Book of Mormon upon the world as a revelation from God would have been had not the book been true.

I would not argue that young men are incapable of practicing deception, or formulating delusions. My argument is, merely, that they are less likely to be guilty of it than older men. Youth is essentially the period of honesty in men's lives. Youth is not hardened in sin; is not so capable of the grosser wickedness, especially such wickedness as would be involved in the deliberate deception of their fellows. Neither has unholy ambitions fired the soul in youth. The hopes, the aspirations, the ambitions of youth are generally pure and noble. Unholy ambitions as a rule come later. The practice of religious deception is one of the grossest forms of wickedness, and requires the deepest depravity of the human heart to make one capable of it: and since youth is the period of men's lives in which they are least desperately wicked, it follows that the very youthfulness of this group of men we are considering stands against the likelihood of their combining to deceive mankind in this matter of the revelations of God to them about the Book of Mormon.

Second. The persistence of these Witnesses in adhering to their testimony after their connection with Joseph Smith and the Church was severed is strong evidence against the presumption of collusion among these young men to deceive the world. Suppose, for a moment, however, that such a collusion did exist. In that event, if the Three Witnesses fell into transgression—as they evidently did—and violated Church discipline ever so flagrantly, would Joseph Smith dare to break friendship with them by excommunicating them? Would he not, on the contrary, say in his heart: It matters not what these men may do, I dare not raise my hand against them; for if I do they will divulge our secret compact, and I shall be execrated as a vile imposter by the whole world, I shall be repudiated by my own people, and driven out from all society a vagabond. At whatever cost I must cover up their iniquity, lest I myself by them be exposed to shame. Such,

doubtless, would have been his course of reasoning; and had he with them conspired to deceive mankind, such, doubtless, is what would have taken place; for I maintain that men who would be base enough to concoct such a deception would also be base enough to expose it and become traitors when they became disaffected towards each other. But nothing of the kind took place. When these men violated the law of God and would not repent and forsake the evil they did, neither Joseph Smith nor the Church would any longer fellowship them, but boldly excommunicated them.

By the act of excommunication, Joseph Smith virtually said to the Three Witnesses: Gentlemen, God has made you witnesses for himself in this age of spiritual darkness and unbelief, but you refuse to keep his laws, therefore we must withdraw the hand of fellowship from you. This may fill you with anger and malice; you may raise your hand against me and the work of God to destroy it; Satan may put it into your hearts to deny the testimony you have borne; but I know you received that witness from God, I was with you when you received it, I saw the glorious messenger from heaven show you the plates; I, myself heard the voice of God bear record to you that the translation was correct and the work true—now deny that testimony if you dare—this work is of God, and he can sustain it even if you should turn against it; therefore we will not fellowship you in your wickedness—you are cut off from our association—do your worst! That is what, in effect, that action said; but though Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer became the pronounced enemies of Joseph Smith, and sought his overthrow, yet they never denied the testimony they bore to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Through all the vicissitudes of life they remained true to that trust committed to them of God. In my opinion they dared not deny that which God had revealed; it drew with it consequences too weighty for them to meet.

Nor should it be matter for wonderment that the Three Witnesses, after receiving such a marvelous revelation from God, and beholding the demonstration of such almighty power, turned away from the Church, and lost their places. Their case does not stand alone. They are not the first servants and witnesses for God that wandered from the path direct, and fell into error and perhaps sin. Seeing a heavenly messenger or hearing the voice of God, by no means places men beyond the power to do evil, nor does it give them immunity from the temptations of the adversary. Noah received revelations from God, and yet after being preserved from the flood, and enjoying other special favors, he so far forgot himself as to get drunk. David, a man after God's own heart, after enjoying sweet communion with God, and receiving many revelations from him, was at last guilty of the heinous sin of defiling another man's wife, and deliberately planning the injured man's murder! Peter, after going into the mountain and witnessing the glorious ministrations of Moses and Elias to the Messiah, and hearing the voice of God declare that Jesus was his beloved Son, was so weak, under the influence of fear, that he denied having any knowledge of him, and emphasized his denial by cursing and swearing. I do not refer to these incidents in the lives of these characters to weaken the esteem any one may have for them, but to show that neither a revelation from God nor the visitation of angels takes from man the power of doing wrong. It was so in the case of Oliver Cowdery, and his fellow witnesses. They transgressed the laws of God, and the Church was in duty bound to withdraw fellowship from them, and did so, confident that God was able to preserve his work though these men should turn traitors, and deny the truth. I repeat that this circumstance—the fact that the Three Witnesses persisted in their testimony, though excommunicated from the Church, and their relations with Joseph Smith disrupted, is strong presumptive evidence that there was no collusion among these men to deceive the world by their solemn testimony to the Book of Mormon.

Third. The fact that two of the Witnesses, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, returned to the Church after long years of separation from it—the former eleven, the latter thirty-three years—is another evidence against the theory of collusion among the witnesses. Surely had they been parties to a wicked scheme of deception in their youth, after separating themselves from it for years, they would not return to it in old age. This suggestion is strengthened when it is remembered that the religious organization which may be said to have come into existence as a consequence of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—neither did nor could hold out to them any worldly advantage as a reward for their returning to the body religious. When Oliver Cowdery returned to the Church, in 1848, the great body of the Latter-day Saints were enroute for the west. They were a people scattered and peeled. They were but recently expatriated from their country. They were exiled for conscience sake from a country that boasts of its guarantees of religious freedom. They were wandering in the wilderness, in a solitary way—hungry and thirsty, their souls fainting in them, and they had as yet no certain abiding place. Surely a people thus situated was not a people to come to for worldly advantage. Yet such was the condition of the Church when Oliver Cowdery once more cast his fortune with theirs, humbly confessing all his errors that he might have fellowship with them.

When Martin Harris returned to the Church in 1870, the condition of the Saints had improved somewhat when compared with what the conditions were when Oliver Cowdery returned, but even then the Saints were under the ban of the world's displeasure; as of old, they were the people everywhere spoken against; while throughout the United States, of which the lands the Saints had redeemed from desert wastes was now an integral part, there was arising that storm of vexation which subsequently crystalized into congressional enactments which not only menaced but disturbed the peace of the Saints. To become once more connected with such a people surely promised no worldly advantage; and besides, when Martin Harris returned to the Church the sands of his life had so well nigh run their course—he was then eighty-seven years of

age—that worldly considerations could have but little or no effect upon his actions. Thus the return of these men to the Church, the circumstances considered under which they returned, is certainly strong evidence against the theory of collusion or deception among these Witnesses.

Fourth. There is a harmony in things bad as well as in things that are good. As men do not work righteousness that evil may come; so they do not plan evil that good may come. Now, these young men who bear witness to the truth of the Book of Mormon spent the greater part of their lives—especially when actively promulgating the Book of Mormon and the principles it teaches—in bringing to pass righteousness. They were exhorting men to keep the commandments of God; to cease doing evil and to learn to do well. It is admitted on all sides of the controversy that the Book of Mormon is not a bad book in the sense that it approves evil deeds, canonizes the vicious, lauds immorality, or in any way gives countenance or sanction to sin. No; its bitterest enemies are forced to admit that it stands for righteousness absolutely, that everywhere, and in all men it condemns sin. What motive, then, prompted these Witnesses to enter into a wicked collusion to deceive mankind in a matter so grave? Did they become villains that they might preach righteousness? Did they wickedly conspire to deceive mankind in order that they might spend their lives in toil, and suffering; and invite the opposition of the world as expressed in ridicule, scorn, vituperation, to say nothing of actual violence through malicious prosecutions before courts, illegal imprisonment, repeated acts of mob violence, ending in house-burning, in drivings, in cruel whippings, in other brutal assaults, and often in outright murder—if not of the Witnesses themselves, then of their dearest friends and neighbors; and, of course, with reference to the Prophet Joseph and his brother Hyrum (who must have been necessarily members of the conspiracy, if one existed), their persecutions ended in their martyrdom.^[1] I refer to the well-known history of these men and to the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for proof that the results just enumerated followed the testimony of the Three Witnesses; that they endured all these things in consequence of their testimony. I refer to the whole body of doctrine held by the Church, brought into existence, under God, by Joseph Smith and these Witnesses; to the Book of Mormon in particular; to the periodicals published by the Church, and to the letters and other writings of these men, in proof of the facts that their motives were pure, their purposes honest, their efforts praiseworthy, and having for their sole object the attainment of righteousness by themselves and by their fellowmen. Why, I ask again, should they become rogues and villains only to pursue a course that makes for righteousness, for a more exalted morality, for a higher spiritual life than at the time was known among men? It is incumbent upon those who insist that there was a collusion among these Witnesses to deceive mankind, to prove that the subsequent career of these men was in harmony with that theory; for men do not become rogues that they may establish virtue; nor do wicked men become candidates for martyrdom that righteousness might be established: the harmony existing in things evil, as in things good, forbids us believing such a theory.^[2]

It will be no valid answer to this contention to say that if the Three Witnesses cannot be proven to be conscious frauds and deceivers they may yet be relegated to that very large class known as the mistaken. We have already seen that such was the nature of the revelation vouchsafed to these Witnesses in attestation of the truth of the Book of Mormon that it cannot possibly be resolved into delusion or mistake, and it is not necessary to further discuss that proposition here. There is no middle ground on which one may place these Witnesses; inexcusable liars or true witnesses they must be; they never can be classed among the mistaken.

The possibility of their being mistaken set aside, every circumstance connected with their relationship to the Book of Mormon favors the theory of their being true witnesses, their testimony standing not only unimpeached but unimpeachable; it must follow that they are God's solemn Witnesses of a great truth—the verity of the Book of Mormon.

Footnotes

1. The argument in this paragraph is suggested by a similar one in *Paley's Evidences for Christianity*; and indeed it may be said to be for the most part, a paraphrase of it.

2. For a fuller treatise of the ideas and the force of the argument here presented the reader is referred to vol. I of *New Witnesses*, ch. 17.

CHAPTER XX.

DIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—TESTIMONY OF THE EIGHT WITNESSES.

The exact time when the Eight Witnesses obtained their view of the Nephite plates is not known, but it was evidently a few days after the Three Witnesses received their testimony. All the Prophet has seen proper to say upon the subject in his own history is—alluding to the testimony

that had been received by the Three Witnesses—"soon after these things had transpired, the following additional testimony was obtained."^[1] Then follows the testimony of the Eight Witnesses.

According to the *History of the Prophet Joseph* by Lucy Smith,^[2] the event happened a few days after the Three Witnesses obtained their testimony. The latter, be it remembered, received their view of the plates near the Whitmer residence, in Fayette township, New York; while the Eight Witnesses obtained their view of the plates near the Smith residence in Manchester. On the completion of the translation of the Book of Mormon, Joseph sent word to his parents of the joyful event, as we have already seen, and they, in company with Martin Harris, immediately set out for Fayette, and during their brief stay at the place the vision of the Three Witnesses was given. The day following Father and Mother Smith returned to Manchester, and now the latter's statement:

In a few days we were followed by Joseph, Oliver and the Whitmers, who came to make us a visit, and make some arrangements about getting the book printed. Soon after they came, all the male part of the company, with my husband, Samuel and Hyrum, retired to a place where the family were in the habit of offering up their secret devotions to God. They went to this place because it had been revealed to Joseph that the plates would be carried thither by one of the ancient Nephites.^[3] Here it was that those Eight Witnesses, whose names are recorded in the Book of Mormon, looked upon them and handled them. * * * After these Witnesses returned to the house, the angel again made his appearance to Joseph; at which time Joseph delivered up the plates into the angel's hands.^[4]

This narrative is confirmed by the statement of Joseph himself with respect to delivering up the record to the angel. At the time the plates were first given into the Prophet's keeping he was informed that the heavenly messenger would call for them. He then recounts the efforts made to wrest the plates from him by his enemies, and adds:

But by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hands. When, according to arrangements, the messenger (the angel Moroni) called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the 2nd day of May, 1838.^[5]

In the evening of the day that the Eight Witnesses saw and examined the Nephite plates, according to Lucy Smith, the Witnesses held meeting at the Smith residence, "in which all the Witnesses bore testimony to the facts as stated above;"^[6] that is, to the facts stated in their testimony as here given and which appeared in the first and in all subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon:

THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

BE IT KNOWN unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jr., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,

JACOB WHITMER,

PETER WHITMER, JR.,

JOHN WHITMER,

HIRAM PAGE,

JOSEPH SMITH, SR.

HYRUM SMITH,

SAMUEL H. SMITH.

The testimony of the Eight Witnesses differs from that of the Three Witnesses in that the view of the plates by the latter was attended by a remarkable display of the glory and power of God and the ministration of an angel. The glory of God shone about them; the angel turned the gold leaves of the ancient record; he spoke to them, or at least to David Whitmer, saying: "David, blessed is the Lord, and he that keeps his commandments;" and the very voice of God was heard out of the bright light shining about them, saying:

These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by

the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.^[7]

No such remarkable display of God's splendor and power was attendant upon the exhibition of the plates to the Eight Witnesses. On the contrary it was just a plain, matter-of-fact exhibition of the plates by the Prophet himself to his friends. They saw the plates; they handled them; they turned the leaves of the old Nephite record, and saw and marveled at its curious workmanship. No brilliant light illuminated the forest or dazzled their vision; no angel was there to awe them by the splendor of his presence; no piercing voice of God from a glory to make them tremble by its power. All these supernatural circumstances present at the view of the plates by the Three Witnesses were absent at the time when the Eight Witnesses saw them. Here all was natural, matter-of-fact, plain. Nothing to inspire awe, or fear, or dread; nothing uncanny or overwhelming, but just a plain, straightforward proceeding that leaves men in possession of all their faculties, and self-consciousness; all of which renders such a thing as deception, or imposition entirely out of the question. They could pass the plates from hand to hand, guess at their weight—doubtless considerable, that idea being conveyed, "we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety, that the said Smith has got the plates." They could look upon the engravings, and observe calmly how different they were from everything modern in the way of record-making known to them, and hence the conclusion that the workmanship was not only curious but ancient.

I now proceed to consider the course pursued by these Eight Witnesses with reference to their testimony. I shall take them in the order they seemed to have signed the testimony.^[8]

CHRISTIAN WHITMER.

This Witness was thirty-one years old when he beheld the plates, having been born on the 18th of January, 1798. The young man was among the first to embrace the gospel, being baptized on the 11th of April, 1830. He removed with the Church from New York to Ohio in 1831, thence to Jackson county, Missouri. He witnessed the storms of persecution rise against the Saints in the land of Zion; and shared the hardship and despoliation of the Saints incident to their expulsion from Jackson county. He died while in exile for conscience sake, in Clay county, Missouri, on the 27th of November, 1835. He held first the office of Teacher in the Church; and then successively rose to the office of Elder, High Priest, and member of the High Council of the Church in Missouri.

Few and troubled were the years of Christian Whitmer's life after he became a Witness for the existence of the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated; but few and troubled as the years were, they were glorious for the steadfastness of Christian's faith. He had seen his crops wasted by the wanton destructiveness of a mob, while he himself was seized and threatened with instant death if he did not make known the hiding place of brethren who were escaping from the mob. Christian Whitmer, however, did not betray his friends, notwithstanding the guns of the mob were leveled at him when their threats were made.

He remained true to his testimony and died a consistent member of the Church of Christ.

JACOB WHITMER.

Jacob Whitmer was thirty years of age when he saw the plates, having been born on the 27th of January, 1800. He, too, passed through the trying scenes incident to the expulsion of the Latter-day Saints from Jackson county. But after enduring well for a season he left the Church, in 1838, making his home near Richmond, in Ray county, Missouri. Here he lived a quiet, retired life, and reared his family in respectability; his eldest son, David P. Whitmer, rising to some local prominence as a lawyer, and serving one or two terms as mayor of Richmond. To the day of his death—which occurred April 21, 1856—Jacob Whitmer was true to his testimony of the truth of the Book of Mormon. Though he severed his relations with the Church, because he did not agree with the policy of the leading elders, he continued true to the special trust God had committed to him—an actual knowledge of the existence of the Nephite record—as long as he lived.

PETER WHITMER, JR.

This Witness for the existence of the Nephite Record was in his twentieth year at the time he examined the plates and held them in his hands. On meeting with the Prophet Joseph, on the occasion of the latter coming to reside at the home of his father, Peter Whitmer, Sen., in Fayette township, 1829, a firm friendship immediately sprang up between them. Peter Whitmer, Jr., seems to have been one of those gentle, loving natures that finds its greatest enjoyment and usefulness in giving its allegiance to some more rugged character on whose strength it can lean, in whose courage it can find strength. He entered with enthusiasm into the work of God coming forth under the inspired words and movements of his friend Joseph, the Prophet. He was among the first to join the Church, and when, in September, 1830, a mission was appointed to the Lamanites (American Indians), under the leadership of Oliver Cowdery, young Whitmer was especially appointed to accompany him, and commanded to be afflicted in all his (Oliver's) afflictions, "ever lifting up your heart unto me in prayer, and faith for his and your deliverance."^[9] The missionaries to the Lamanites traveled on foot from central New York to the western borders of Missouri, a distance of more than one thousand miles, and that chiefly in winter time, when

storms and mud and cold had to be encountered. Peter Whitmer, Jr., remained in western Missouri, and assisted the Saints in settling Jackson county (1831-1833), where, in common with the Saints who gathered from the east, he saw the rise of that persecution which culminated in the expulsion of the Saints from that country. With many of his exiled co-religionists he found a temporary home near Liberty, Clay county, Missouri, where he died on the 22nd of September, 1836; and was buried by the side of his brother Christian, who had died in the same neighborhood less than a year before. Consumption was the immediate cause of his death, which was doubtless hastened by exposure, in the course of his missionary labors and the hardships he was forced to endure by reason of his expulsion from Jackson county. This young man—he was but twenty-seven when he died—remained true to his testimony through the seven years of toil and suffering that he lived after God called him to be a Witness for the truth of the Book of Mormon; and his fidelity to his trust under all circumstances, adds weight to the solemn words of testimony to which he signed his name in June, 1829.

JOHN WHITMER.

The fourth of the Eight Witnesses, John Whitmer, was twenty-seven years of age when he beheld the plates of the Nephite record. He was a young man of considerable promise, and upon the coming of Joseph Smith to his father's house, became not only his enthusiastic friend, but rendered him considerable assistance in writing as the Prophet dictated the translation of the Book of Mormon. John Whitmer was Church Historian for a number of years; for a time editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*, the second periodical published by the Church (Kirtland, Ohio, 1834-1837). He was also prominent in the affairs of the Church in Missouri, being one of the assistant presidents of the Church, his brother David and William W. Phelps being the president and other assistant respectively. He endured the hardships incident to the persecutions of the Saints in that land. When settlements were being formed in the new county of Caldwell, John Whitmer was prominently connected with the land purchases made. Indeed it was largely owing to some irregularities connected with the business, and some misunderstanding with the Prophet and other leading brethren in the Church, that finally resulted in his excommunication, in March, 1838.

After the expulsion of the Church from Missouri, in the winter of 1838-9, John Whitmer purchased the greater part of the townsite of Far West, which soon reverted to farming lands; and here John Whitmer continued to live, making farming his principal occupation, until his death in July, 1878. Though his relations with the Church were severed John Whitmer, up to the very close of his life, continued to bear witness that his testimony published in connection with the Book of Mormon was true. From it he never deviated. It was his testimony when living; it remains his testimony now that he is dead, unimpaired in its force by any word of his, though he was much offended at the Prophet Joseph, and for forty years had no standing in the Church. One can but regret the events which resulted in his severance from the Church, but one is compelled to admire his fidelity to the trust imposed in him by the Prophet when he made him a Witness for the existence of the Nephite record, in the presence of temptation to take a different course in the hour of his great darkness.

HIRAM PAGE.

This is the only Witness of the Eight not either a Whitmer or a Smith. He was a son-in-law, however, to Peter Whitmer, Sen., having married Catherine Whitmer, in 1825. He was but a young man when he became a Witness to the existence of the Nephite plates, having been born in the year 1800, in the state of Vermont. He was living at Fayette, with the Whitmers when the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery arrived there in the spring of 1829. He entered into the work with enthusiasm, and for some years was a faithful member of the Church. He followed the westward movement of the Saints from New York to Ohio and thence to Missouri. He shared in the persecutions of the Church in Jackson county; in common with his co-religionists he fled to Clay county; and subsequently settled in Caldwell county. When the trouble arose in the Church at Far West, in 1838, Hiram Page followed the fortune of the Whitmers, severed his relations with the Church and finally made his home near Excelsior Springs, some fourteen miles north and a little west of Richmond, Missouri, where he died in August, 1852. Like his fellow Witnesses he remained true to his testimony. His oldest son, Philander Page, in 1888, said to Elder Andrew Jenson:

"I knew my father to be true and faithful to his testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon until the very last. Whenever he had an opportunity to bear his testimony to this effect, he would always do so, and seemed to rejoice exceedingly in having been privileged to see the plates and thus become one of the Eight Witnesses. I can also testify that Jacob, John and David Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery died in full faith in the divinity of the Book of Mormon. I was with all these Witnesses on their death-beds and heard each of them bear his testimony." John C. Whitmer, a nephew of Hiram Page by marriage, also testified in the presence of Elder Jenson: "I was closely connected with Hiram Page in business transactions and other matters, he being married to my aunt. I knew him at all times and under all circumstances to be true to his testimony concerning the divinity of the Book of Mormon."^[10]

JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.

The sixth of the Eight Witnesses is Joseph Smith, Sen., the Prophet's father. He was the first to whom the Prophet confided the fact of Moroni's visit, and the existence of the Nephite record; and this by direct commandment of the angel Moroni himself. The Prophet hesitated to make known the vision he had received and the existence of the record, even to his father; but doubtless the integrity of the heart of Joseph Smith, Sen., was known in the heavens, and the Prophet was taken sharply to task for hesitating to trust him with the knowledge that God had imparted through Moroni. When asked why he had not confided the knowledge of his vision to his father, the Prophet expressed a fear that he would not be believed, whereupon Moroni said: "He will believe every word you say to him."^[11] Upon this the Prophet went to his father, who was working in a field near their home, and related the whole revelation to him. The father assured his son that the great revelation was of God, and told him to go "and do as commanded by the messenger."^[12] From that time on the youthful Prophet of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times had no truer, or more constant or faithful friend than his father.

Joseph Smith, Sen., was 59 years of age when he handled and examined the Nephite plates, and gave his testimony of their existence to the world. He became thoroughly identified with the work which the Lord brought forth through his gifted son. He was ordained a Priest of the Most High God, and became the first Presiding Patriarch in the Church, traveling in that capacity among the branches of the Church, especially in the Eastern States, administering comfort to the widow and fatherless, bestowing benedictions wherever he went.

In 1838, under the pressure of that severe persecution which arose against adherents of the Prophet in Ohio, the Patriarch moved to Caldwell county, Missouri, where he saw his sons Joseph and Hyrum taken by ruthless hands, dragged from their families and cast into prison for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, while he himself, with the remainder of the faithful Saints, was banished from the state of Missouri under the exterminating order of Governor Boggs. In midwinter of 1838-9, "Father Smith," as the Saints loved to call him, arrived in Quincy, Illinois, and thence removed to Nauvoo and assisted in founding that city. The toils and exposure of his life (he had been a pioneer all his days), and the hardships attendant upon his flight from Missouri proved too much even for his sturdy frame, and on the 14th of September, 1840, Joseph Smith, Sen., in the seventieth year of his life, died at Nauvoo.

His was one of those simple, guileless natures who know naught but truth and honor and fidelity. Amidst all circumstances of discouragement and trials he kept the faith, never wavering one moment in his adherence to the truth which God had made known to him. Having seen and handled and examined the plates from which the Book of Mormon was written, he remained true and steadfast to that testimony, and if an unbelieving generation shall undertake to condemn the testimony of some of these Witnesses because they turned from the Church, they must not forget that they will have to meet the force of this righteous man's testimony, and as in prayer so in testimony, the words of a righteous man availeth much.

HYRUM SMITH.

The seventh of the Eight Witnesses was Hyrum Smith, an elder brother to the Prophet Joseph, born February 9, 1800, and hence was thirty years of age at the time the plates were shown to him. From the beginning of the great work of the last days he was a consistent believer in it, and assisted his brother in the preservation of the plates from the hands of those who sought to wrest them from him. He early sought to know the will of the Lord concerning his relations to the great work then coming forth, and was given to understand (May, 1829) that he was to have part and lot in it; and that he was called of God to be a preacher of righteousness to this generation.^[13] From that time forth he labored continuously and faithfully by the side of his prophet-brother in the work of God. In 1837 he was made a counselor in the First Presidency of the Church, then assembling in Caldwell county, Missouri, a position he held until January, 1841, when he was called by revelation to take the office of Presiding Patriarch in the Church, an office left vacant by the death of his father, Joseph Smith, Sen.; and which office he held at the time he met a martyr's fate.

Hyrum Smith was a brother in very deed to the Prophet; for he shared in all the trials throughout the latter's troubled career; and indeed throughout his life he was never separated from Joseph longer than six months at a time. The Prophet held him in most tender regard. Speaking of him in his journal (December, 1835), he said:

I could pray in my heart that all men were like my brother Hyrum, who possesses the mildness of a lamb, and the integrity of a Job; and, in short, the meekness and humility of Christ; and I love him with that love that is stronger than death, for I never had occasion to rebuke him, nor he me.^[14]

Of Hyrum Smith the late President John Taylor also said, speaking of him as he saw him stretched a martyr upon the floor of Carthage prison:

There he lay as I had left him. He had not moved a limb; he lay placid and calm, a monument of greatness even in death; but his noble spirit had left his tenement and had gone to dwell in regions more congenial to its exalted nature. Poor Hyrum! He was a great and good man, and my soul was cemented to his. If ever there was an exemplary, honest and virtuous man, an embodiment of all that is noble in the human

form, Hyrum Smith was its representative.

Such was the character of this witness to the existence of the Nephite record. He not only never denied the testimony that he received through seeing and handling the plates of the Nephite record, but he consecrated his life to the great work of God which in a way may be said to have had its origin in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and finally sealed his testimony with his blood, and it is in force upon all succeeding generations of men. He loved the Book of Mormon, and from it more frequently than others took the texts which formed the central thought of the discourses he delivered to the Saints. In it also he doubtless saw foreshadowed, near the close of his career, his own impending martyrdom, and the justification also of his life. On the morning of his departure from Nauvoo to Carthage, where he met his martyrdom, he read the following passage in the presence of his family, and turned down the leaf upon it:

And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father.

And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.^[15]

SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH.

The last of the Eight Witnesses was a younger brother of the Prophet's. He was born in the year 1808, hence was twenty-two years of age when he beheld and handled the Nephite plates. He was of a serious, religious nature, even in his youth; and with three others of his father's family joined the Presbyterian church. While Joseph the Prophet was engaged with Oliver Cowdery in translating the Nephite record, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Samuel paid him a visit in the month of May, 1829, about the time that the Aaronic Priesthood was conferred upon the Prophet and Oliver by the ministration of John the Baptist. Samuel had come to inquire about the work and Joseph bore testimony of its truth and showed him some of the translation of the Book of Mormon. Samuel seems not to have been easily converted, but after much inquiry he retired to the woods and sought, by secret and fervent prayer, for wisdom to enable him to judge for himself concerning the things of which his brother had testified. The result was that he obtained a revelation for himself sufficient to convince him of the truth, and on the 25th day of May, 1829, he was baptized by Oliver Cowdery and returned to his father's house, in Manchester, New York, greatly glorifying and praising God. He was the third person baptized by divine authority in the new dispensation, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery being the first two. He was also one of the six members by whom the organization of the Church was effected on the 6th day of April, 1830.

As soon as the Book of Mormon was published Samuel was among the most zealous of the brethren in proclaiming it to the world, and seeking to dispose of it for the enlightenment of mankind. He shared in all the fortunes of the Church from the commencement of its existence to the time of his death, which occurred on the 30th of July, 1844, when he was but thirty-six years of age. He endured many hardships for the gospel's sake, in his extensive travels, meeting with insult and harsh treatment at the hands of scoffers and unbelievers. He witnessed also many demonstrations of the power of God and judgments which befell those who rejected his testimony.

Samuel passed through many trying ordeals of persecution. In the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri, in 1838-9, a special effort was made to capture him and some others for participating in what is known as "Crooked River Battle," for particulars of which see the Church History. He was ordained a High Priest in the Church, made a member of the High Council in Kirtland, Ohio, and was noted for the mingled qualities of justice and mercy he exercised in his office. He was among the founders of Nauvoo, and though rising to no great prominence, was known for his steadfastness in adhering to the truth. At the time of the martyrdom of his brothers, Joseph and Hyrum, he was living at Plymouth, in the eastern part of Hancock county, but frequently visited Nauvoo. Hearing of the arrest of his brothers and their imprisonment at Carthage, he immediately went to the latter place, but only to find that the martyr's fate had already overtaken them, and in sadness he accompanied their bodies to Nauvoo. He survived them but a few weeks, his death being produced by a severe billious fever, doubtless brought on by physical and mental strain produced by the sudden death of his brothers.

Samuel Smith, like his father, Joseph Smith, Sen., and his brother Hyrum, not only remained true to the testimony to which he subscribed in the first edition of the Book of Mormon, but consecrated his life to the work which its coming forth may be said to have commenced; and like them he lived and died a martyr to that holy cause; and his testimony, as theirs, is in force in all the world.

It will be observed from the foregoing account of the lives of the Eight Witnesses, with reference to their testimony to the existence of the Nephite plates, that five of them, viz.: Christian Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jun., Joseph Smith, Sen., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith, all

remained true throughout their lives, not only to their testimony, but faithful to the Church also, and were honorable, righteous men. While the three of the Eight Witnesses who left the Church, or were excommunicated from it, not one of them ever denied the truth of his testimony: a circumstance of some weight in helping one to determine the value of the testimony to which, with those who remained faithful to the Church, they subscribed their names when the Book of Mormon was first given to the world.

Footnotes

- [1.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, p. 57.
- [2.](#) Chapter 31.
- [3.](#) This was doubtless Moroni, as he was the custodian of the plates.
- [4.](#) *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 31.
- [5.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, pp. 18, 19.
- [6.](#) *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 31.
- [7.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, pp. 54, 55.
- [8.](#) In the first edition of the Book of Mormon where the Testimony appears at the close of the volume instead of at the beginning of the work, as in the current editions, the names stand thus; (second edition the same):—

Christian Whitmer,
Jacob Whitmer,
Peter Whitmer, Jr.,
John Whitmer,
Hiram Page,
Joseph Smith, Sr.,
Hyrum Smith,
Samuel H. Smith;

instead of in a double column as in our current editions. By the way, in passing, it may not be amiss to state that some importance is attached to the arrangement of the names in our current edition, for the reason that if read across the page instead of down the columns, then Page and the members of the Smith family alternate with the Witnesses, supposedly to divert attention from the fact that the witnesses, excepting Hiram Page, were of but two families! Such is the conclusion at least of one profound (!) critic of the Book of Mormon.

- [9.](#) Doc. and Cov., sec. 30.
- [10.](#) *Latter-day Saints Biographical Encyclopaedia*, p. 278.
- [11.](#) *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 19.
- [12.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, p. 15.
- [13.](#) See Doc. and Cov., sec. 11.
- [14.](#) *Rise and Fall of Nauvoo*, p. 146; also History of the Church, vol. II, p. 338.
- [15.](#) Book of Mormon, Ether 12:36-38. Also Doc. and Cov. 135:5.

CHAPTER XXI.

DIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCE—REFLECTIONS ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE ELEVEN WITNESSES.

Doubtless the Lord had his own purpose to subserve in giving different kinds of testimony—divine and human—to the same truth. The testimony of the Three Witnesses, attended as it was by such remarkable displays of supernatural power, he knew would be opposed from the very circumstance of its being supernatural. It cannot be but that God fore-knew of the rise of that so-called "Rational Criticism" of divine things which would resolve inspired dreams, visions, revelations and the administration of angels into hallucinations, brought about first by an inclination to believe in the miraculous, (and "ordinarily," argue the "Rational Critics," "expectation is the father of its object.")^[1] supplemented by the theory of self-deception, self-

hypnosis or hypnotic influence of others. This particular school of philosophers took its rise in the last century, and in the twentieth is much in vogue.

It will be remembered that the starting point with "Rational Criticism" (and in that term is included the so-called "Higher Criticism") is unbelief in what is commonly called the miraculous, and if the followers of that school do not deny the possibility of the miraculous, they at least say that it has never been proven; and further, they hold that "a supernatural relation"—such as the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, for instance—"cannot be accepted as such, that it always implies credulity or imposture."^[2] What chance, then, would the testimony of the Three Witnesses have with those who regard it as "an absolute rule of criticism to deny a place in history to narratives of miraculous circumstances?" This, they hold, "is simply the dictation of observation. Such facts have never been really proved. All the pretended miracles near enough to be examined are referable to illusion or imposture!"^[3] Nor is this the climax of their absurdity, but they hold that the very "honesty and sincerity" of those who testify to the miraculous make them all the more untrustworthy as witnesses! I know this seems incredible; but what will be thought when I set down my authority for the statement, and it is learned that I quote no mere blatant declaimer against religion, nor any one of the many careless, or ill-informed writers of the so-called "Rational School of Critics," but the sober-minded, and earnest man of science, the late Professor Huxley? The statement quoted is from his paper on "The Value of Witnesses to the Miraculous."^[4] In the course of treating upon some statements made by one Eginhard (eighth century A.D.), concerning miraculous events connected with SS. Marcellinus and Petrus, the professor takes occasion to bear testimony to the high character, acute intelligence, large instruction and sincerity of Eginhard; then speaking of him as a witness to the miraculous, makes this astonishing statement:

It is hard upon Eginhard to say, but it is exactly the honesty and sincerity of the man which are his undoing as a witness to the miraculous. He himself makes it quite obvious that when his profound piety comes on the stage, his goodness and even his perception of right and wrong make their exit.

In another paper to the same magazine, three months later, the professor, writing practically on the same subject, says:

Where the miraculous is concerned, neither undoubted honesty, nor knowledge of the world, nor proved faithfulness as civil historians, nor profound piety, on the part of eye witnesses and contemporaries affords any guarantee of the objective truth of their statements, when we know that a firm belief in the miraculous was ingrained in their minds, and was the presupposition of their observations and reasonings.^[5]

This school of critics—and its following is much larger than is generally admitted—in this arbitrary way gets rid of the miracles of both the Old and the New Testament. The resurrection of Jesus, to them, is but a figment of the over-wrought minds of his disciples; and has no better foundation than the dreams and light visions of women, foremost among whom is Mary of Magdala,^[6] the once possessed. The glorious departure of Jesus from the midst of his disciples, on Mount Olivet—after the resurrection—is merely a collective hallucination, an illusion—"the air on these mountain tops is full of strange mirages!"^[7] The display of God's power on the day of Pentecost as revealed in the Acts of the Apostles, is a thunderstorm.^[8] The speaking in tongues by the apostles on the same occasion and thereafter in the Church, is but the ecstatic utterance of incoherent sounds mistaken for a foreign language; while prophecy is but the fruit of mental excitement, a sort of ecstatic frenzy.^[9]

With views such as these quite prevalent in Christendom, relative to miraculous events, it is but to be expected that the testimony of the Three Witnesses would be accounted for on some similar hypothesis. The early anti-Mormon writers generally assumed a conspiracy between Joseph Smith and the Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and hence accorded no importance^[10] to the testimony of either group—the Three or the Eight. Later, however, the force of the testimony of the Witnesses persisting, and pressing for an explanation which the theory of conspiracy and collusion did not satisfy, there began to be advanced the theory that probably Joseph Smith had in some way deceived the Witnesses and thus brought them to give their testimony to the world. "Either these Witnesses were grossly deceived by a lying prophet," says Daniel P. Kidder, who wrote an unfriendly book against the Church in 1843, "or else they wickedly and wilfully perjured themselves, by swearing to what they knew to be false." "The former," he adds, "although not very creditable to their good sense, is yet the more charitable opinion, and is rendered probable by the fact, that hundreds have been deceived in the same way. It is confirmed, moreover, by the well-known mental phenomenon, that to individuals accustomed to disregard the laws of veracity, truth and falsehood are alike. They can as easily persuade themselves of the one as of the other."^[11]

Also the Rev. Henry Caswell, professor of divinity in Kemper College, Missouri, writing in 1843, said:

He [Joseph Smith] then persuaded [Martin] Harris to believe, that in some sense he actually beheld the wonderful plates. There was a worthless fellow named Oliver Cowdery, residing in the neighborhood, a school teacher by profession, and also a Baptist preacher, who, together with one David Whitmer, was similarly persuaded by

our ingenious Prophet.^[12]

Professor J. B. Turner, of Illinois College, Jacksonville, Illinois, in his "Mormonism in All Ages" (1842), takes practically the same position, but goes a step further and undertakes to explain how the Prophet "deceived" the Witnesses, or how he "persuaded" them to believe, "in some sense," that they had actually beheld "the wonderful plates." In doing this the professor quotes the revelation given through the Prophet, in June, 1829, to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, previous to their viewing the Nephite plates.^[13] Also the revelation to Martin Harris in which he is promised that he shall be a witness to the truth of the Book of Mormon.^[14] In the revelations cited the Lord promises these men that they shall view the Nephite record; and directs what they shall say after they have seen and heard the things promised. Because some of the phraseology of these revelations is found also in the testimony of the Three Witnesses, the professor rushes to the conclusion that the Witnesses never really saw the vision, nor heard the voice of God as promised, but were persuaded to accept these revelations through Joseph Smith as their witness to the truth of the Book of Mormon. In other words Professor Turner's theory is that the Witnesses had no other evidence than the word of Joseph Smith for the existence of the plates and other sacred things connected with them! And he triumphantly exclaims:

Here, then, is the mighty power of God, the angel, and voice of the Lord, which revealed such marvels in 1830, all concentrated in the person, and pouring from the mouth of the Lord's Prophet in 1829. * * * * The whole, then, of this mighty array of bombast, nonsense, and blasphemy, resolves itself into this: "Joe Smith is not only 'author and proprietor' of the Book of Mormon, as both he and his Witnesses declare, but he is also 'power of god,' 'angel,' 'voice,' 'faith,' 'eyes,' 'ears,' and 'hands' for the Witnesses themselves; that is, all the evidence the world has for the Book of Mormon, after all this bluster, is 'Joe Smith's say so.' He says that God instructs him, he instructs the Witnesses and the Witnesses instruct the world. *Quod erat demonstrandum!*" (p. 179.)

Undoubtedly the "Illinois College" of the great State of Illinois was to be congratulated upon having as its chief professor, in 1842, a man of such acuteness of intelligence and profoundness of wisdom! Nor was Governor Thomas Ford, when, some years later, he wrote the history of Illinois, to be out-done by a mere professor of "Illinois College;" and therefore advanced what he had heard concerning the manner in which the testimony of the Witnesses was obtained. The Governor's peculiar relation to "Mormonism," no less than his exalted political station in Illinois, as also the fact that he is one of the principal historians of that very great state of the American Union, justifies me in setting down what he has said upon the subject in hand:

It is related that the Prophet's early followers were anxious to see the plates; the Prophet had always given out that they could not be seen by the carnal eye, but must be spiritually discerned; that the power to see them depended upon faith, and was the gift of God to be obtained by fasting, prayer, mortification of the flesh, and exercise of the spirit; that so soon as he could see the evidence of a strong and lively faith in any of his followers, they should be gratified in their holy curiosity. He set them to continual prayer, and other spiritual exercises, to acquire this lively faith by means of which the hidden things of God could be spiritually discerned; and at last, when he could delay them no longer, he assembled them in a room, and produced a box, which he said contained the precious treasure. The lid was opened; the Witnesses peeped into it, but making no discovery, for the box was empty, they said, "Brother Joseph, we do not see the plates." The Prophet answered them, "O ye of little faith! How long will God bear with this wicked and perverse generation? Down on your knees, brethren, every one of you, and pray God for the forgiveness of your sins; and for a holy and living faith which cometh down from heaven." The disciples dropped to their knees, and began to pray in the fervency of their spirit, supplicating God for more than two hours with fanatical earnestness; at the end of which time, looking again into the box, they were now persuaded that they saw the plates.

The governor then very sagely remarks, with a modesty so worthy to keep company with the exalted intelligence that could stoop to detail such mere drivel as above:

I leave it to philosophers to determine whether the fumes of an enthusiastic and fanatical imagination are thus capable of binding the mind and deceiving the senses by so absurd a delusion.^[15]

Inadequate as these theories are to account for the testimony of the Three Witnesses, and contemptible as they are for their childishness, they do not fail of more modern advocates. In 1899 a work published by the Appletons, which, while it was a work of fiction, was nevertheless an earnest effort to account for Joseph Smith on some other basis than that of his being a conscious fraud, wickedly bent on deceiving mankind, adopted the theory that "Smith was genuinely deluded by the automatic freaks of a vigorous but undisciplined brain, and that yielding to these he became confirmed in the hysterical temperament, which always adds to delusion, self-deception, and to self-deception half-conscious fraud. In his day it was necessary to reject a marvel or admit its spiritual significance; granting an honest delusion as to his visions and his book, his only choice lay between counting himself the sport of devils or the agent of heaven; an optimistic temperament cast the die."^[16]

It remained, however, for the year of grace 1902 to witness the setting forth of these theories under the learned formulas of a scientific treatise, in which the testimony of the Witnesses received special consideration. Mr. I. Woodbridge Riley, the author of the work referred to, after quoting the account of the exhibition of the plates by the angel to the Three Witnesses, as related in the History of Joseph Smith,^[17] regards the duty before him to be to find to what degree the manifestations are explicable on the grounds "of subjective hallucination, induced by hypnotic suggestion."^[18]

Mr. Riley proceeds to show that the Prophet possessed "magnetic power," and that the Witnesses were "sensitive subjects," and then says:

Given, then, such an influence, and sensitive subjects, and mental suggestion could produce anything in the way of illusion. Thus the explanation is subjective, not objective; it was captivation but not fascination; there was leader and led, and the former succeeded in inducing in the latter all the phantasmagoria of religious ardor. * * * * Again, the vision of the plates may be related in a larger way with what has gone before. Of the three classes of hallucinations, two have already been explicated. Joseph's father had the ordinary hallucination of dream; his grandfather that which persists into the waking state. The vision of the Three Witnesses is that form of hallucination which may occur either in the normal state, or be induced in the state of light hypnosis. The former is exemplified in day dreams; it is largely self-induced and implies some capacity or visualizing. The latter may also occur with the eyes open, but it is induced by the positive suggestion of another. * * * * As the hypnotized soldier will hear the voice of his old commander, or the devout French peasant see his patron Saint, so was it in these manifestations. The ideas and interest which were uppermost in the mind were projected outwards. Harris had received the first "transcription of the gold plates;" Whitmer had been saturated with notions of ancient engravings; Cowdery, for weeks at a time, had listened to the sound of a voice translating the record of the Nephites. When the voice was again heard in the grove, when the four sought "by fervent and humble prayer to have a view of the plates," there is little wonder that there arose a psychic mirage, complete in every detail. Furthermore, the rotation in prayer, the failure of the first two attempts, the repeated workings of the Prophet over the doubting Harris, but served to bring out the additional incentives to the hypnotic hallucination.^[19]

Thus "Rational Criticism" would explain away the testimony given by the Three Witnesses. The vision of the plates, of the angel, the glory of God that shone about the Witnesses, the voice of God from the midst of the glory—all was illusion, hallucination produced by mental suggestion, on the part of the Prophet. All was chimerical, a mental mirage!

But what of the testimony of the Eight Witnesses—all so plain, matter-of-fact, straight-forward and real? How shall that be accounted for? Here all the miraculous is absent. It is a man to man transaction. Neither superstition, nor expectation of the supernatural can play any part in working up an illusion or mental mirage respecting what the Eight Witnesses saw and handled. Their testimony must be accounted for on some other hypothesis than that of hallucination. And indeed it is. Some regard it as a mere fabrication of interested parties to the general scheme of deception. This, however, is an arbitrary proceeding, not warranted by a just treatment of the facts involved. Others, impressed with the evident honesty of the Witnesses, or not being able to account for the matter in any other way, admit that Joseph Smith must have had plates which he exhibited to the Eight Witnesses, but deceived them as to the manner in which he came in possession of them. Of the latter class is Pomeroy Tucker, whose home during the coming forth of the Book of Mormon was at Palmyra, where the book was printed, and who claims a personal acquaintance with the Prophet and all his associates in the work at Palmyra. He refers to the fact of metallic plates covered with hieroglyphics having been discovered in various parts of the country, making special mention of some found in Mexico by Professor Rafinesque, and mentioned by the Professor in his *Asiatic Journal* for 1832; and some others found in Pike County, Illinois, a cleansing of which by sulphuric acid brought out the characters engraven upon them very distinctly. Mr. Tucker then says:

Smith may have obtained through Rigdon (the literary genius behind the screen) one of these glyphs, which resemble so nearly his description of the book he pretended to find on Mormon Hill [Cumorah]. For the credit of human character, it is better at any rate to presume this, and that the eleven ignorant Witnesses were deceived, by appearances, than to conclude that they wilfully committed such gross moral perjury before high heaven as their solemn averments imply.^[20]

Rev. William Harris, writing in 1841, while not admitting the honesty of the Witnesses himself, suggests, nevertheless, the possibility of Joseph Smith deceiving the Eight Witnesses by presenting to them plates of his own manufacture:

Now, even admitting, for the sake of argument, that these Witnesses are all honest and credible men, yet what would be easier than for Smith to deceive them? Could he not easily procure plates to be made, and inscribe thereon a set of characters, no matter what, and then exhibit them to his intended Witnesses as genuine? What would be easier than thus to impose on their credulity and weakness? And if it were necessary to

give them the appearance of antiquity, a chemical process could easily effect the matter.^[21]

So Daniel P. Kidder, writing in 1842, says, in commenting on the testimony of the Witnesses:

That these men may have seen plates is very possible. * * * * * That Smith showed them plates, which to ignorant men had the appearance of gold, is easy enough to be believed; and if he had manufactured the same, it would have been no great stretch of ingenuity.^[22]

Professor J.B. Turner, writing in 1842, adopts the same theory with reference to the testimony of the Eight Witnesses:

We are not only willing, but anxious to admit that Smith did show some plates of some sort; and that they [the Eight Witnesses] actually testify to the truth, so far as they are capable of knowing it.^[23]

So John Hyde,^[24] 1857:

Every careful reader must be compelled to admit that Smith did have some plates of some kind. Smith's antecedents and subsequents, show that he did not have genius sufficient to originate the whole conception, without some palpable suggestion. The having chanced to have found some plates in a mound, as Wiley found his, or as Chase discovered Smith's "Peepstone," would be just such an event as would suggest every peculiar statement Smith made about his plates, at the same time account for what is known; and, therefore, it is more than reasonable to conclude that Smith found his plates while digging gold. This entirely destroys all the shadow of argument so laboriously compiled by the "Mormon" apologists, which, even without this, although their strongest argument, only proves that he had some plates, but at the same time has no force of proof as to Smith's obtaining them from an angel.^[25]

Professor Riley, with some other anti-"Mormon" writers, suggests the possibility of collective hypnotization in the case of the Eight as well as in that of the Three Witnesses: and hypnotization produced both visual and sense illusion; but it is only a suggestion. While maintaining, with the utmost confidence the mental mirage theory, induced by hypnotic suggestion, as an adequate accounting for the testimony of the Three Witnesses, he can only suggest it as a possible solution of the testimony of the Eight Witnesses, and inclines rather to the theory of "pure fabrication." "It is a document," he remarks, "due to the affidavit habit."^[26]

As for the rest of the anti-"Mormon" critics on this point, they adopt the pure fabrication theory, or admit that the Prophet Joseph had in his possession some kind of plates which he either manufactured or accidentally discovered in his alleged searching after hidden treasures for some of his employers, and which he really exhibited to the Eight Witnesses. But why have the "pure fabrication" theory to account for the testimony of the Eight Witnesses, and the "mental hallucination" theory to account for the testimony of the Three? If the testimony of the Eight is pure fabrication is not the testimony of the Three pure fabrication also? Or, at least, is it not most likely to be so? For if conscious fraud, and pure fabrication lurks anywhere in Joseph Smith's and the Eleven Witnesses' account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, would it not exist throughout the whole proceeding? Professor Turner, already twice quoted, in admitting that the Prophet had in his possession some sort of plates, which he showed the Eight Witnesses, says that he is anxious to make the admission "in order to keep up the just and charitable equilibrium between the knaves and fools in 'Mormonism' and the world at large. Three to Eight is at once a happy and reasonable proportion. We will not disturb it. It is gratifying to human philanthropy to be able to account for all the facts in the case by this charitable solution." This sarcasm, however, is not a "solution;" nor is it refutation of the testimony of the Witnesses; nor is it argument; nor anything but the fuming of a small mind; yet it is the only "reason" I have ever heard advanced for adopting the hallucination theory in the case of the Three Witnesses, and either the pure fabrication or deception theory in the case of the Eight Witnesses.

The testimony of the Three and the Eight Witnesses, respectively, stands or falls together. If the pure fabrication theory is adopted to explain away the testimony of the Eight Witnesses, there is no reason why it should not be adopted to explain away the testimony of the Three. But every circumstance connected with the testimony of all these Witnesses, as we have seen, cries out against the theory of "pure fabrication." It is in recognition of the evident honesty of the Three Witnesses that the theory of mental hallucination is invented to account for their testimony; as it is also the evident honesty of the Eight Witnesses that leads to the admission by many anti-"Mormon" writers that Joseph Smith must have had some kind of plates which he exhibited to the Eight Witnesses, though he may not have obtained them through supernatural means.

The theory of pure fabrication of the testimony of the Witnesses is absolutely overwhelmed by the evidence of their honesty.

The hallucination theory breaks down under the force of the matter-of-fact testimony of the Eight Witnesses, from which all possible elements of hallucination are absent.

The manifestation of the divine power, through which the Three Witnesses received their

testimony, destroys the theory of deception alleged to have been practiced by the Prophet on the credulity of the Eight Witnesses by exhibiting plates either manufactured by himself or accidentally discovered.

Such, then, is the force of this direct testimony of the Eleven Witnesses to the truth of the Book of Mormon—the testimony of the Three and the Eight when considered together. It is so palpably true that it cannot be resolved into illusion or mistake. It is so evidently honest that it cannot be resolved into pure fabrication. It is of such a nature that it could not possibly have been the result of deception wrought by the cunning of Joseph Smith. There remains after these but one other theory: "The Witnesses were honest." They saw and heard and handled what they say they saw, and heard, and handled. Their testimony stands not only unimpeached, but unimpeachable.

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Renan, *The Apostles*, p. 67 and note 46.
- [2.](#) Renan, *Life of Jesus*, introduction, p. 14; also New Witnesses, vol. I, chapter 1.
- [3.](#) Renan, *The Apostles*, p. 37.
- [4.](#) *The Nineteenth Century*, March, 1889.
- [5.](#) *The Nineteenth Century*, June, 1889. Professor Huxley's papers quoted here will also be found in *Agnosticism and Christianity*, pp. 84, *et seq.* and 96 *et seq.*
- [6.](#) Renan closes his treatise upon this subject as follows: "The glory of the resurrection, then, belongs to Mary of Magdala. After Jesus it is Mary who had done most of the foundation of Christianity. The shadow created by the delicate sensibility of Magdalene wanders still on the earth. Queen and patroness of idealists, Magdalene knew better than any one how to assert her dream, and impose on every one the vision of her passionate soul. Her great womanly vision: 'He has risen,' has been the basis of the faith of humanity. Away, impotent reason! Apply no cold analysis to this *chef d'oeuvre* of idealism and of love. If wisdom refuses to console this poor human race, betrayed by fate, let folly attempt the enterprise. Where is the sage who has given to the world as much joy as the possessed Mary of Magdala?"—*The Apostles*, p. 61.
- [7.](#) Renan. He thus tells the story of the appearing of Jesus to the five hundred brethren at once: "More than five hundred persons were already devoted to the memory of Jesus. In the absence of the lost Master, they obeyed the chief of the disciples, and above all, Peter. One day when following their spiritual chiefs, the Galileans had climbed one of the mountains to which Jesus had often led them, they fancied they saw him again. The air on these mountain tops is full of strange mirages. The same illusion which had previously taken place in behalf of the more intimate of the apostles [he refers to the transfiguration, Matt. 17] was produced again. The whole assembly imagined that they saw the divine spectre displayed in the clouds; they fell upon their faces and worshiped." *The Apostles*, p. 76.
- [8.](#) Renan. This is his "rational" (!) conception of the event: "One day when they were assembled together a thunder storm arose. A violent wind burst the windows open—the sky seemed on fire. Thunder storms in those countries are accompanied by wonderful illuminations; the atmosphere is furrowed, as it were, on every side with garbs of flame. Whether the electric fluid had penetrated into the very chamber itself or whether a dazzling flash of lightning had suddenly illuminated all their faces, they were convinced that the spirit had entered, and that he was poured out upon the head of each one of them under the form of tongues of fire." *The Apostles*, p. 95.
- [9.](#) Renan, *The Apostles*, p. 98 *et seq.*
- [10.](#) Thus Alexander Campbell in *Millennial Harbinger*, vol. II, (1831) pp. 86-96. Also *Howe's Mormonism* (1834). He thinks the Witnesses incompetent, "Nor will any one disagree with us, when we shall have proven that the Book of Mormon was a joint speculation between the 'Author and Proprietor.' [Joseph Smith is alluded to] and the Witnesses," ch. 7.
- [11.](#) *Mormonism and the Mormons*, by Daniel P. Kidder, pp. 54, 55.
- [12.](#) *Prophet of the Nineteenth Century*, p. 46.
- [13.](#) Doc. and Cov. sec. 17.
- [14.](#) Doc. and Cov. 5:24-26.
- [15.](#) *Hist. Illinois*, (Ford) pp. 257-8.
- [16.](#) *The Mormon Prophet*, by Lily Dougall, preface, p. 7.
- [17.](#) History of the Church, vol. I, pp. 54, 55.
- [18.](#) "The Founder of Mormonism. A Psychological Study of Joseph Smith, Jr., by I. Woodbridge Riley, one time instructor in English, New York University," (Dodd, Mead & Company, New York,

1902). It cannot be denied that Mr. Riley's book is an ingenious work, and bears evidence of wide erudition, and an intimate knowledge of the subject. Mr. Riley's treatise, a book of 426 pages, was offered to the Philosophical Faculty of Yale University as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. His materials were also used in 1898 for a "Master of Art" thesis on the "Metaphysics of Mormonism." The book has an introductory, preface, by Professor George Trumbull Ladd, of Yale University, commending the work by laudatory praise of it. The author himself explains that his aim is "to examine Joseph Smith's character and achievements from the standpoint of recent psychology." He makes a careful pathological study of the ancestors of the Prophet, and reaches the conclusion that Joseph Smith's "abnormal experiences" (meaning his visions, revelations and visitations of angels) are the result of epilepsy. This is his working hypothesis in accounting for Joseph Smith, supplemented by what he considers is the Prophet's unconscious liability to self-hypnosis, and his hypnotic power over others sufficient to make them partakers in his own vivid hallucinations. The hypothesis is an adroitly conceived one, and worked out on lines of sophistry that by many will be mistaken for sound reasoning. The whole theory is overthrown, however, by the work the Prophet achieved, the institution he founded, the Church, the religion he established, the philosophy he planted; all of which to madness would be impossible; besides, as remarked by M. Renan, "Hitherto it has never been given to aberration of mind to produce a serious effect upon the progress of humanity." *Life of Jesus*, p. 105.

An extended review of Mr. Riley's book will be found in the author's work, *Defense of the Faith and the Saints*, pp. 39-61.

[19.](#) *The Founder of Mormonism*, by I. Woodbridge Riley, pp. 226, 227, 228.

[20.](#) *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism*, by Pomeroy Tucker, p. 75.

[21.](#) *Mormonism Portrayed*, by Rev. William Harris, pp. 410.

[22.](#) *Mormonism*, Kidder, pp. 52, 53.

[23.](#) *Mormonism in all Ages*, Turner, p. 178.

[24.](#) *Mormonism, Its Leaders and Designs*, by John Hyde, Jr., pp. 269, 270.

[25.](#) *Mormonism, Its Leaders and Designs*, by John Hyde, Jr., pp. 269, 270.

[26.](#) *The Founder of Mormonism*, pp. 228-231.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TESTIMONY OF INCIDENTAL WITNESSES.

In addition to the testimony of the Three Witnesses and the testimony of the Eight Witnesses to the fact that Joseph Smith was in possession of the Nephite plates, the Urim and Thummim and the breast plate, I present also the testimony of persons who may be said to have become acquainted with these facts in an incidental way.

When the strong sympathy and mutual confidence subsisting between the Prophet and his mother, Lucy Smith, is taken into account, it would be more than passing strange if she did not in some substantial way have personal knowledge of her son being in possession of the Nephite plates, and the things found with them. That she had this knowledge appears in the sequel. In 1845, while residing at Nauvoo "Mother Smith," as she was affectionately called by the Saints, dictated her memoirs to Mrs. Martha Jane Knowlton Coray, which are now published under the title *History of the Prophet Joseph, by his Mother, Lucy Smith*.^[1] In her account of her son's movements on the night of the 21st, and the morning of the 22nd of September, 1827—the day Joseph Smith obtained possession of the Nephite record—Lucy Smith states that in consequence of having visitors at their home—these visitors were Mr. Joseph Knight and Mr. Josiah Stool—she was detained until past midnight of the 21st, in her domestic duties; that while so engaged Joseph came to her and asked if she had a chest with a lock and key. She surmised instantly for what use he wanted it, for evidently the family knew the appointed time had come to secure the plates. A few minutes after this Emma Smith, the Prophet's wife, passed through the room, dressed for riding, and a few minutes later she and Joseph departed with the horse and wagon of one of their guests, Mr. Joseph Knight. The family was astir early in the morning and Mr. Knight was somewhat exercised on finding his horse gone, and Mother Smith did not feel at liberty to say who had taken him. Meantime the Prophet Joseph returned with the horse and wagon. And now the statement of the Prophet's mother:

I trembled so with fear, lest all might be lost in consequence of some failure in keeping the commandments of God, that I was under the necessity of leaving the room in order

to conceal my feelings. Joseph saw this, and said, "Do not be uneasy, mother, all is right—see here I have got a key." I knew not what he meant, but took the article of which he spoke into my hands, and examined it. He took it again and left me, but said nothing respecting the record. * * * * That of which I spoke, which Joseph termed a key, was indeed, nothing more nor less than the Urim and Thummim, and it was by this that the angel showed him many things which he saw in vision; by which also he could ascertain, at any time, the approach of danger, either to himself or the record, and on account of which he always kept the Urim and Thummim about his person.^[2]

After relating the particulars about the Prophet bringing home the plates and securing them, she makes the following statement:

Soon after this, he came in from work, one afternoon, and after remaining a short time, he put on his great coat, and left the house. I was engaged at the time, in an upper room, in preparing some oilcloths for painting.^[3] When he returned, he requested me to come down stairs. I told him that I could not leave my work just then; yet, upon his urgent request, I finally concluded to go down and see what he wanted, upon which he handed me the breast plate spoken of in his history. It was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief, so thin that I could feel its proportions without any difficulty. It was concave on one side and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, so far as the center of the stomach of a man of extraordinary size. It had four straps of the same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast, two of which ran back to go over the shoulders, and the other two were designed to fasten to the hips. They were just the width of two of my fingers, (for I measured them), and they had holes in the end of them, to be convenient in fastening. After I had examined it, Joseph placed it in the chest with the Urim and Thummim.^[4]

I next call attention to a statement made by Parley P. Pratt concerning an item of experience when performing a brief mission among some branches of the Church in western New York, in company with the Prophet Joseph. He says:

Arriving in Geneseo, we met with the other elders who had started from Kirtland on the same mission, and with others who were local, and held a general conference. Among those whose hospitality we shared in that vicinity (Geneseo) was old Father Beaman and his amiable, interesting family. He was a good singer, and so were his three daughters; we were much edified and comforted in their society, and were deeply interested in hearing the old gentleman and Brother Joseph converse on their early acquaintance and history. He [Beaman] had been intimate with Joseph before the first organization of the Church; and assisted him in preserving the plates of the Book of Mormon from the enemy, and had at one time had them concealed under his own hearth.^[5]

In consequence of the worldly circumstances of his father, the Prophet was under the necessity, at times, of finding employment away from home. In the month of October, 1825, he hired with an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Staal, who lived in Chenango county, in the state of New York, and was put to work, with other hands, by the old gentleman, to search for a silver mine which the traditions of the neighborhood said had been opened by the Spaniards near Harmony, Susquehanna county, state of Pennsylvania. It was here that the Prophet made the acquaintance of the Knights, who were well-to-do-farmers and millers in that neighborhood. It appears from all the circumstances that the Prophet took Josiah Staal and Joseph Knight into his confidence,^[6] as to the time when he was to receive the plates of the Book of Mormon, and hence their presence at the Smith residence on the morning of the 22nd of September, 1827. Messrs. Knight and Staal had business at Rochester, New York, and in leaving their home in Chenango county, so timed their journey that they arrived at the Smith residence on the 20th of September and remained there for a number of days;^[7] and were not only present when Joseph Smith obtained the records, but were there when he brought them to the house a day or two later. And now the testimony of Mr. Staal. Under date of December 19, 1843, a Mrs. Martha L. Campbell, writing to the Prophet Joseph Smith, at the request of Mr. Staal, and for him, says:

Brother Smith:—

By request of Brother Staal I now sit down to write you. He is quite unwell, and is sometimes fearful that he cannot stand it through the winter, and wishes me to say to you that he wants your prayers and the prayers of all the Saints for the recovery of his health to enable him to gather among the Saints; and he also wishes to know if you could receive him as a brother. He says he shall come out [to Nauvoo] next spring if he lives and has health to endure the journey. He says if he remains as well as [at] present he shall venture to start. He says he has never staggered at the foundation of the work, for he knew too much concerning it. If I understood him right he was the first person that took the plates out of your hands the morning you brought them in, and he observed, Blessed is he that sees and believeth, and more blessed is he that believeth without seeing, and he says he has seen and believeth. He seems anxious to get there [to Nauvoo] to renew his covenants with the Lord.^[8]

The whole letter is of interest, but this is the only part bearing upon the Book of Mormon, and is

referred to as testimony for this reason: It is a wholly undesigned incident in connection with the coming forth of the work, and is one which occurs under circumstances that render it of first rate importance as testimony. It is a fact directly stated in the history of Mother Lucy Smith that Josiah Stool and Joseph Knight were guests at the homestead of the Smiths from the 20th to the 24th, or 25th of September, 1827; and now a letter written on December 19, 1843, sixteen years later, without any design whatever of corroborating the fact of Lucy Smith's statement, also says that Josiah Stool was at the Smith residence, and that he received the plates from the hands of the Prophet, on the occasion of his bringing them home, remarking at the time, "Blessed is he that seeth and believeth, and more blessed is he that believeth without seeing." So there can be no question but what Josiah Stool had the most palpable evidence that Joseph Smith had the Nephite record; and sixteen years afterwards, though he had neglected his privileges as a member of the Church, and had not followed her fortunes, yet he reaffirms his faith in the work which the Book of Mormon may be said to have inaugurated, and declares that he has "never staggered at the foundation of the work, for he knew too much concerning it." That is, he had too strong evidence of the reality of those facts in which the work had its origin to doubt their truth.

I have laid much stress, but not without good reason, upon the direct testimony of the Three Witnesses and the Eight Witnesses to the truth of the Book of Mormon; and, of course, their testimony must forever stand as of first importance in the direct external evidences of the book, but I confess also that this incidental testimony appeals strongly to me, and when I think how in harmony it all is with the circumstances surrounding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, to my mind it wonderfully strengthens the direct statements of the other Witnesses.

Footnotes

1. See *Improvement Era*, vol. V. Mother Smith's Memoirs were first published by Orson Pratt in Liverpool, England, in 1853, under the title *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations*. As "Mother Smith" dictated chiefly from memory, there were some inaccuracies in her work, as first published by Elder Orson Pratt. Afterwards the work was corrected by a committee of which the late George A. Smith, Church Historian, was chairman. It is this revised copy from which the *Era* edition was published in 1902, and which is cited in these notes.

2. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 23.

3. Lucy Smith followed the business of hand painting oilcloth covers for tables, stands, etc., see her *History of the Prophet Joseph*, ch. 17.

4. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 24.

5. *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, p. 117.

6. The fact that the Prophet took these two men into his confidence is supported by the testimony of Mr. John Reid, Esq., in a speech before the state convention held in Nauvoo, at which Joseph Smith was nominated to be president of the United States. Mr. Reid had known the Prophet in an early day when he was working for Mr. Stool in Chenango county, and thus speaks of him: "After living in that neighborhood about three years, enjoying the good feelings of his acquaintances, as a worthy youth, he told his particular friends that he had had a revelation from God to go to the west about eighty miles, to his father's, in which neighborhood he would find hid in the earth an old history written on golden plates, which would give great light and knowledge concerning the destiny of all nations, kindreds, and tongues; he said that he distinctly heard the voice of him that spoke. Joseph Knight, one of the fathers of your church, a worthy man and my intimate friend, went with him. * * * In a few days his friends returned with the glad news that Joseph had found the plates and had gone down to his father-in-law's for the purpose of translating them." *History of the Church*, vol. I, p. 94.

7. *History of the Prophet Joseph*, by Lucy Smith, ch. 23.

8. The original of Mrs. Campbell's letter is on file at the Church Historian's Office, package 4.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE PROBABILITY OF JOSEPH SMITH'S STORY OF THE
ORIGIN, TRANSLATION AND FINAL DISPOSITION OF
THE PLATES OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

I.

The Ministration of Angels is Neither Unscriptural nor Unreasonable.

By the probability of Joseph Smith's story, I mean, of course, the probability of Moroni revealing the existence of the Book of Mormon to him; of Moroni's delivering to him the plates and the Urim and Thummim; of the Prophet's translating the record by the gift and power of God, by means of the Urim and Thummim; of his returning the plates to Moroni, who to this day, doubtless, has them under his guardianship.

I am aware of the fact that the miraculous is usually regarded with suspicion; that such a thing as the ministration of angels in what are called these "hard and scientific times" is generally scouted by most of those who make any pretensions to science; that a school of writers has arisen whose main slogan in the search of truth is that the miraculous is the impossible, and that all narratives which include the miraculous are to be rigidly rejected, as implying credulity or imposture,^[1] that even professed believers in the Bible, who accept as historically true the Bible account of the ministration of angels, insists that the age in which such things occurred has long since passed away, and that such ministrations are not to be expected now. But on this subject the word of God stands sure. According to that word there have been ministrations of angels in times past; and there will be such ministrations to the last day of recorded time. As to the ministration of angels in the past, according to holy scripture, the reader will remember the circumstance of angels, together with the Lord, visiting Abraham at his tent-home in the plains of Mamre, and partaking of his hospitality; of the appearance of angels to direct the flight of Lot from one of the doomed cities of the plain; of Jacob's physical contact with the angel with whom he wrestled until the breaking of the day; of the angel who went before the camp of Israel in their march from bondage; and scores of other instances recorded in the Old Testament where heavenly personages co-operated with men on earth to bring to pass the holy purposes of God.

Of instances in the New Testament, the reader will recall the ministration of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, announcing the future birth of John the Baptist; of the angel who appeared to Mary to make known the high honor bestowed upon her in becoming the mother of our Lord Jesus; of the appearance of Moses and Elias to the Savior and three of his disciples, to whom they ministered; of the angel who rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, and announced the resurrection of the Savior; of the men in white (angels), who were present at the ascension of Jesus from the midst of his disciples, and announced the fact that the time would come when that same Jesus should come again to the earth in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven; of the angel who delivered Peter from prison, and a dozen other instances where angels co-operated with men in bringing to pass the purposes of God in the dispensation of the meridian of time.

With reference to the angels who in ages future from that in which the apostles lived ministering to men and co-operating to bring to pass future purposes of God, the reader will recall the saying of the Savior concerning the gathering together of the elect in the hour of God's judgment: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."^[2] He will recall, also, the promise in Malachi concerning the same times: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."^[3] He will recollect the promised coming of the angel to restore the gospel in the hour of God's judgment, concerning whom John says: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water."^[4] Also the angel who will declare the fall of Babylon: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God."^[5] "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lighted with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit."^[6] The reader of the scriptures, I say, will readily recall all these ministrations of angels, future from the time in which the sacred writer recorded them, as also the promise of the ministration of many other angels, in bringing to pass the great things of God in the last days, even to the gathering together in one all things in Christ.^[7]

It cannot be held to be unscriptural, then, when Joseph Smith claimed that by the ministration of angels he received a revelation from God—a dispensation of the gospel.

But what shall we say to that very large number of people who do not believe the Bible? How shall we so appeal to them as to secure their attention in these matters? Addressing himself to those who questioned at least the likelihood of the resurrection, Paul asked: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" So say I respecting those who do not believe in the Bible, but pride themselves on accepting and believing all those things established by the researches of men—by science.—Why should it be thought a thing incredible by them that angels should visit our earth in order to communicate knowledge not otherwise, perhaps, obtainable? Our scientists live in the midst of ascertained facts respecting the universe, so that interplanetary communication ought to be looked upon as a thing so rational that to doubt

its probability would be esteemed as folly?

A word as to this proposition: Of the change of view respecting our own earth and its relations in the universe, I have already spoken^[8] in some detail. I have considered the transition from the conception of the earth as the center of the universe, with the sun, the moon and all the stars brought into existence for its convenience, or beauty, or glory, to the conception of the earth as one of the smaller planets of a group moving regularly about the sun as their center, and the probability of each fixed star being the center of such a group of planets. The ascertained existence of millions of other suns than ours, evidently the centers of planetary systems, being granted, the view that these planets are the habitation of sentient beings seems a concomitant fact so probable that one is astonished, if not a little provoked, at that conservatism which hesitates to accept a hypothesis so reasonable in itself, and so well sustained by the analogy of the existence of sentient beings on our own planet. The astronomers tell us some of these fixed stars—these suns that are probably the centers of planetary systems—have existed for hundreds of thousands of years, for so distant are they from us in space that it would require that period of time for their light to reach our earth, hence they must have existed all that time. It is evident, then, that some of them may be many times older than our sun; so, too, are the planets that encircle them. From this conclusion to the one that the sentient beings that doubtless dwell upon these planets are far in advance of the inhabitants of our earth, intellectually, morally, spiritually and in everything that makes for higher development, and more perfect civilization, is but a little step, and rests on strong probability. From these conclusions, again, to the conceived likelihood of the presiding Intelligences on some of these worlds to which our earth may sustain peculiar relations of order or affinity—having both the power and the inclination to communicate from time to time by personal messengers, or other means, to chosen men of our own race—is another step, not so large as the others, by which we have been led to this point, and one that rests also upon a basis of strong probability. And this is the phenomena of the visitation of angels and revelation testified of in the scriptures. Such phenomena are mistakenly considered supernatural. They are not so really. They are very matter of fact realities; perfectly natural, and in harmony with the intellectual order or economy of a universe where intelligence and goodness govern, and love unites the brotherhood of the universe in bonds of sympathetic interest and kinship.

In view of these reflections, why, I ask, should it be thought a thing incredible with scientific men that there should be such phenomena as the visitation of angels, or other means of interplanetary communication among the many planets and planetary systems which make up the universe? Surely it will not be argued that it is impossible for sentient beings to pass from world to world, because man in his present state is bound to earth by the force of gravitation, and that the same force would doubtless operate upon the inhabitants of other worlds, and bind them to their local habitation as we are bound to ours. The beings whom we call angels, though of the same race and nature with ourselves, may have passed through such physical changes as to render them quite independent of the clogging force called gravitation. We may not, therefore, place the same limitations upon their powers in this kind as upon man's in his present physical state.

As for other means of communication from intelligences of other worlds to our own, they will not be regarded as impossible in the presence of the achievements of men in such matters. By means of magnetic telegraph systems, man has established instant communication with all parts of the world. Not the highest mountain ranges, not deserts, not even ocean's wide expanse, have been sufficient to bar his way. He has made the earth a net-work of his cables and telegraph lines, until nearly every part of the earth is within the radius of instant communication. In 1896, the National Electric Light association celebrated the triumphs of electricity by holding a national electrical exposition in New York City. The occasion was the completion of the electric works at Niagara Falls. For ages, that great cataract had thundered out the evidence of its mighty power to heedless savages and frontiersmen; but modern man looked upon it, and by the expenditure of five million dollars, harnessed it, applied its forces to his contrivances, made it generate electric force which lights the cities, drives the street cars, and turns the wheels of industry for many miles around; and even transmitted its force to New York City, four hundred and sixty miles distant! It was on that occasion that Governor Levi P. Morton, upon the declaration being made that the exposition was open, turned a golden key by which four cannons were instantaneously fired in the four quarters of the republic, one in Augusta, Maine, one in San Francisco, one in front of the public building at St. Paul, another in the public Park in New Orleans. This discharge of cannon was accomplished by a current of electricity generated at Niagara, and transmitted over the lines of the Postal Telegraph Cable Company. Later, in the course of the exposition, a message was sent all over the world, and returned to New York within fifty minutes. The message read:

God created nature's treasures; science utilizes electric power for the grandeur of the nations and peace of the world.

The reply, also sent over the world, was:

Mighty Niagara, nature's wonder, serving men through the world's electric circuit, proclaims to all people science triumphant and the beneficent Creator.

The distance traversed by each of these messages was about twenty-seven thousand five hundred miles, touching nearly all the great centers of population in the world, and that within the almost incredible time of fifty minutes!

Again, in 1898, on the occasion of California's Golden Jubilee, that is, her semi-centennial celebration of the discovery of gold in the state, William McKinley, then president of the United States, seated in his office at the White House, in Washington, D. C., pressed an electric button which rang a bell in the Mechanic's Pavilion in San Francisco, and formally opened the mining exposition, though the president was distant about three thousand miles! The press dispatches, at the time of the advent, gave the following graphic description of the event just related:

By an electric sensation, as indescribable as the thrill of the discoverer's cry of "gold," the president of the nation sent from Washington the signal which announced the opening of the fair. As the bell clanged its clear note, and the Great West was for an instant connected with the distant East, a hush fell on the gathered thousands; then, moved by a common impulse, the vast throng burst into cheers. Close following on the touch which sounded the sweet-toned bell came the greeting of President McKinley, announcing "the marking of a mighty epoch in the history of California." About him, over three thousand miles away, stood the representatives of the state in Congress, their thoughts flying quicker even than telegraphic message to the people gathered in the great pavilion. And so, united by the material ties of the electric wire, and the subtle powers of thought, the East and the West were held for a few brief moments by a community of good wishes.

Wonderful as all this is, it is now eclipsed by wireless telegraphy—now passed beyond its experimental stages, and rapidly coming into the practical commerce of the nations. Man is no longer dependent upon a network of wires and cables for means of communication. The atmosphere enveloping the world affords sufficient means for conducting vibrations made intelligible by the instrument of man's invention; and today, even across the surface of the broad Atlantic, messages are transmitted by this means as easily as by means of the cable lines. So delicate and perfect are the receiving instruments, that from the roar of our great cities' traffic, the message is picked out of the confusion and faithfully registered.

The argument based on all these facts, is this: If man with his limited intelligence, and his limited experience, has contrived means by which he stands in instant communication with all parts of the world, why should it be thought a thing incredible that God, from the midst of his glory, from the heart of the universe, is within instant means of communication, with all parts of his creations? Especially since it is quite generally conceded, by scientists, that all the fixed stars and all the planetary systems encircling them, float in and are connected by the ether, a substance more subtle and sensitive to vibrations than the atmosphere which surrounds our planet, and suggests the media of communication. To all this, however, I fancy that I hear the reply of the men of science: "We do not deny the possibility or even the probability of communication from superior Intelligences of other planets, we simply say that up to the present time there is no convincing testimony that such communications have been received." This, however, is a miserable begging of the whole question; and an unwarranted repudiation of the testimony of those who have borne witness to the verity of such communications. The testimony of Moses and the prophets, of Jesus and the apostles, of Joseph Smith and his associates, may not thus be put out of the reckoning. The character of these witnesses, their service to mankind, what they suffered and sacrificed for their testimonies, make them worthy of belief; and, since in the nature of things there is nothing which makes their testimony improbable, but, on the contrary, much that makes it very probable, is it not beneath the dignity of scientists to refuse to accord to their statements a patient investigation and belief?

II.

To Believe in Media for Ascertaining Divine Knowledge is Neither Unscriptural nor Unreasonable.

Whatever the position of unbelievers in the Bible may be with reference to Joseph Smith translating the Book of Mormon by means of Urim and Thummim, or "Interpreters," as they were called by the Nephites, surely believers in the Bible cannot regard such a claim as impossible or improbable, since it is matter of common knowledge that the High Priest in ancient Israel possessed Urim and Thummim, and by means of them received divine communications. I am not unmindful of the fact that a diversity of opinion obtains respecting Urim and Thummim of the scriptures, of what they consisted, and the exact use of them, but this I think may be set down as ascertained fact; they were precious and doubtless transparent stones placed in the breast plate of the High Priest, and were a means through which God communicated to him divine knowledge—the divine will.^[9]

Josephus' description of Urim and Thummim is as follows:

I will now treat of what I before omitted, the garment of the high priest: for he [Moses] left no room for the evil practices of [false] prophets; but if some of that sort should attempt to abuse the divine authority, he left it to God to be present at his sacrifices when he pleased, and when he pleased to be absent. And he was willing this should be known, not to the Hebrews only, but to those foreigners also who were there. For as to these stones, which we told you before, the high priest bore on his shoulders, which were sardonyxes, (and I think it needless to describe their nature, they being known to everybody) the one of them shined out when God was present at their sacrifices; I mean

that which was in the nature of a button on his right shoulder, bright rays darting out thence, and being seen even by those that were most remote; which splendor yet was not before natural to the stone. This has appeared a wonderful thing to such as have not so far indulged themselves in philosophy, as to despise divine revelation. Yet will I mention what is still more wonderful than this: for God declared beforehand, by those twelve stones which the high priest bore on his breast, and which were inserted into his breastplate, when they should be victorious in battle; for so great a splendor shone forth from them before the army began to march, that all the people were sensible of God's being present for their assistance. Whence it came to pass that those Greeks who had a veneration for our laws, because they could not possibly contradict this, called that breast plate the Oracle. Now this breast plate, and this sardonyx, left off shining two hundred years before I composed this book, God having been displeased at the transgressions of his laws.^[10]

Since this kind of *media*, then, was used by prophets in ancient Israel, through which to obtain divine knowledge, it should not be matter of astonishment, much less of ridicule, or regarded as improbable that when a colony of Israelites were led away from the main body of the people, a similar *media* for obtaining the will of the Lord, and for translating records not otherwise translatable, should be found with them. So also respecting Joseph Smith's claim to having found what he called a "Seer Stone," by means of which he could translate. That cannot be regarded as an impossibility or even an improbability by those who believe the Bible; for, in addition to the Hebrew literature giving an account of Urim and Thummim in the breast plate of the high priest, it is well known that other means were used by inspired men of Israel for obtaining the word of the Lord. That most excellent of Bible characters, Joseph, the son of Jacob, blessed in his boyhood with prophetic dreams, and possessed of the divine gift of interpreting dreams, the savior of Israel in a time of famine, and a wise ruler for a time of Egypt's destinies, used such *media*. When Joseph's cup was found in the mouth of Benjamin's sack, Joseph's steward said to him: "Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby, indeed, he divineth?" Joseph himself said, when his perplexed brethren stood before him, "What deed is this that ye have done? Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine."^[11] The fact of ascertaining the word of the Lord by means of this "divining cup" cannot be explained away by suggesting that Joseph merely referred to an Egyptian custom of divining; or that the steward repeated the words which Joseph had spoken to him merely in jest.^[12] As remarked by a learned writer on this subject: "We need not think of Joseph, the pure, the heaven-taught, the blameless one, as adopting, still less as basely pretending to adopt, the dark arts of a system of imposture."^[13] I agree with the view. It is a reality sustained by Bible authority that there exists *media* through which divine revelation may be obtained, and hence to the Bible believers the claim of Joseph Smith concerning "Urim and Thummim," and the "Seer Stone," by means of which, through the inspiration of God, he translated the record of the Nephites, is not impossible nor even improbable.

As in the matter of the visitation of angels, so also in relation to Urim and Thummim and also the Seer Stone, I may say that our scientific skeptics in such things live in the midst of such achievements of man's ingenuity, and in the daily use of such marvelous instruments invented by men for the ascertainment of truth, that men of science ought not to stumble at accepting, at least as possible, and even as probable, the existence of such *media*. Take for instance the telescope. For ages, men believed that the whole of the universe consisted of sun, moon, earth, and the few fixed stars within the radius of man's unaided vision. Finally, however, a genius converted a handful of sand into a lens, adjusted it in a tube, and turned it to the heavens when, lo! the frontiers of the universe were pushed back to an infinite distance, and millions of suns heretofore never seen by human eyes were brought within the range of man's vision and consciousness. This first telescope has been improved upon from time to time, until now we have instruments of that kind so large and so perfect that our own planets are brought comparatively near for our inspection, while the number of fixed stars now within the range of our vision, by means of these instruments, is quite generally conceded to be from forty to fifty millions.

While viewing the starry heavens by the aid of the telescope, in search of new facts, astronomers beheld at enormous distances from us hazy patches of light, concerning the nature of which they could form no definite idea. An improved telescope, however, at last resolved some of these mists into groups of separate stars; then it was supposed that all such mists were star groups, and that it only required stronger telescopes to demonstrate the truth of that theory. Meantime, however, another wonderful instrument was invented, the spectroscope, an instrument which forms and analyzes the spectra of the rays emitted by bodies or substances. Meantime Fraunhofer made the discovery that the spectrum of an ignited gaseous body is non-continuous, and has interrupting lines. Later, Professor John William Draper discovered that the spectrum of an ignited solid is continuous with no interrupting lines. With these facts established, the spectroscope was turned upon the distant patches of nebulae and it was discovered that some of them were positively of a gaseous nature and not congeries of stars. Thus was another great truth concerning the universe discovered by means of an instrument invented by man.

Nor is the end yet. The eye of man, perhaps, is the most wonderful organ known; wonderful in its powers when unaided by instruments of man's invention, but rendered infinitely more powerful and wonderful when aided by telescope and microscope. Indeed, by these instruments new and unthought of worlds are brought to the consciousness of man, and his knowledge infinitely extended. Yet wonderful as is this organ of man, and great as are its achievements when aided by the instruments of man's invention, man's ingenuity has produced a more powerful eye than

man's! One that can look longer and see farther than the human eye, even when aided by the most powerful telescope; and registers upon its retina truths otherwise unattainable by man. This instrument Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer and writer, calls "The Wonderful New Eye of Science." It is merely a lens connected with a photographic apparatus, and of it the writer just named says:

This giant eye is endowed with four considerable advantages over ours; it sees more quickly, farther, longer; and, wonderful faculty, it receives and retains the impress of what it sees. It sees more quickly: in the half-thousandth of a second, it photographs the sun, its spots, its vortexes, its fires, its flaming mountains, and on an imperishable document. It sees farther: Directed towards any point of the heavens on the darkest night, it discerns stars in the depths of infinite space—worlds, universes, creations, that our eye could never see by the aid of any telescope. It sees longer: That which we cannot succeed in seeing in a few seconds of observation we shall never see. The photographic eyes has but to look long enough in order to see; at the end of half an hour it distinguishes what was before invisible to it; at the end of an hour it will see better still, and the longer it remains directed towards the unknown object, the better and more distinctly it will see it—and this without fatigue. And it retains on the retinal plate all that it has seen.^[14]

This photographic eye, used in what is called the kinetograph, photographs the spokes of the sulky driven at full speed—which cannot be discerned at all by the human eye—as if standing still. The bullet discharged from the most powerful gun of modern invention, which the human eye cannot follow in its flight, this instrument seems to arrest in mid-air. The ripple waves on the surface of mercury, which no human eye has ever seen—even when assisted by the most powerful microscopes—it faithfully registers, and by its testimony alone we know of the existence of mercury waves. This instrument registers on sensitized tin foil, birds in their flight, express trains at full speed, moving throngs on crowded streets, athletes at their sports, the restless waves of ocean, the tempest's progress, the lightning's flash—all of which, by means of another instrument called the kinoscope are reproduced to the life, though the actors in the scenes represented may be dead, and rotting in their graves. As these named instruments photograph and reproduce actions, so the phonograph registers the intonations, inflections, and all the peculiarities of voice entrusted to it, and as faithfully reproduces them, once, twice, or a thousand times, so that friends may recognize the intonations and all the peculiarities of inflection and voice, though he who thus speaks has long since been dead or removed to other lands. What more shall I say? Is not enough here presented concerning the instruments of man's invention to justify a reasonable belief in the probability of the existence of *media* that can accomplish all that is ascribed to Urim and Thummim and Seer Stone by Joseph Smith; especially when it is remembered how far the knowledge, skill and wisdom of God surpass the skill and ingenuity of man?

III.

Of Returning the Plates of the Book of Mormon to Moroni

The question is often asked—and it bears upon the probability of Joseph Smith's statements respecting the Book of Mormon, because the answer that has to be made gives rise to doubts, and sometimes to sneers on the part of those receiving it—the question is often asked, I repeat, "What became of the gold plates from which Joseph Smith claims to have translated the Book of Mormon—can they be seen now? Is the Church in possession of them?" The answer is, "No; the Prophet returned them to the angel Moroni, and he, doubtless, now has possession of them, and is their guardian."^[15] This answer is declared to be unsatisfactory, and often ridiculed; for worldly wisdom fancies that the Prophet had a most direct means of establishing the truth as to the existence and character of the plates, if only he had retained them in his possession, or deposited them in some state or national institution of learning or archaeology. Joseph Smith acted under the direction of Moroni in the matter of the plates of the Book of Mormon; why he was not permitted to keep the book of plates is not, perhaps, positively known. Part of the record was sealed, as the Prophet himself informs us;^[16] and as the time had not come for that part of it to be translated, it may be that that was one reason why it should be still kept in the custody of the angel. Moreover, in this life we are required by divine wisdom to walk by faith, not by sight. It is part of our education that we learn to act with reference to sacred things on probabilities. A veil of oblivion is stretched over our past spirit-existence. The future is hidden largely from our view, and we are required to perform this life's journey from the cradle to the grave in the midst of uncertainties, except as we increase our faith and establish assurance by the development of spiritual strength from within. Why this should be so may not always seem clear to us; but of the fact of it there can be no doubt. Nor can there be any doubt as to the wisdom of it, and the benefit of it to mankind, since our Father-God has so ordered it. Nor is it in "Mormonism" alone that certain direct material evidences are denied to men concerning divine things. Infidels refer to the opportunities which they think the impudent challenges of the persecutors of the Son of God afforded him to demonstrate his divine power, and prove the truth of his mission, when they said, "If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." * * * "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him."^[17] What an opportunity was afforded him here to respond to their challenges and cover them with confusion and fear! But the Son of God heeded them not, and infidels everywhere entertain the opinion that he here missed

the opportunity of his career if, indeed, he was the Son of God—the Lord of Life—the Master of Death.

Moses gave out the statement that the Law of Israel, the Ten Commandments, were written by the finger of God on tables of stone.^[18] These, in his anger, Moses broke to pieces in their presence, when he found that during his brief absence in the Mount, obtaining the law, Israel had turned to the folly of idolatry. But a second set of tables was prepared, and again on these God carved with his own hands the Ten Commandments. Moses placed them in the ark of shittim wood, which, by divine appointment, he provided, and this constituted the "Ark of the Covenant."^[19]

Again, when the children of Israel were disposed to rebel against the priesthood of God's appointing, under divine direction, Moses called upon each of the twelve princes of the house of Israel to present before the Lord a rod with the name of his tribe upon it. Among these was Aaron's rod, representing the tribe of Levi. All were placed in the "Tabernacle of Witness" before the Lord. On the morrow, when Moses went into the "Tabernacle of Witness" behold the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had brought forth buds, and yielded almonds, all in a single night! Thus the Lord gave a palpable evidence to Israel of his choosing the house of Aaron and the tribe of Levi to stand before him in the priest's office; and the Lord said unto Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels."^[20]

The unbelieving world to whom Israel's message was afterwards sent, might demand that the tables of stone and Aaron's rod that budded and bore fruit should be displayed for their inspection, that faith might take hold of the unbelieving; but there is no record that these sacred things were ever exhibited for such a purpose.^[21]

The infidels of our own day frequently remark that the prayer of Dives to Abraham ought to have been graciously granted, and Lazarus sent to bear witness to the relatives of the tortured nobleman that they might escape his sad fate; but Abraham's answer was, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them!" "Nay, Father Abraham," answered Dives, "but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But Abraham said: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."^[22]

Referring again to the Savior: unbelievers marvel that Jesus confined his visitations after his resurrection to a few of his faithful followers only—to those who already believed on him. Why did he not appear in all the majesty of his immortal life, after his resurrection, before the high priests and the Sanhedrim of the Jews? Before the court of Pilate? Before the rabble who had impiously clamored in the streets for his blood to be upon them and upon their children—Why? The only answer to this question exists in the fact apparent from the whole course of God's dealings with the world in relation to sacred things: viz., God has chosen certain witnesses for himself in relation to sacred matters, and demands that his children shall walk by faith on the words which his chosen servants declare unto them. Thus Peter, on the matter of Christ showing himself to the world, says:

Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead.^[23]

Judas (one of the twelve, not Iscariot, but the brother of James) on one occasion asked the same question that infidels have been asking for many generations, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things. * * * * When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning."^[24] Such the statement of Peter; such the doctrine of Jesus; and when coupled together one sees that in addition to the special witnesses, the prophets, God has ordained that the Holy Spirit shall be his universal witness for things divine. God, in his wisdom, and for the accomplishment of his own wise purposes with reference to us, has ordained that his children in this world's probation shall walk by faith, not by sight. To produce the faith, he sends forth special chosen servants, prophets, apostles, his own Son, and through them announces the divine will. Then when drawn to God by faith, when love-inspired towards God, the Lord gives the witness of the Holy Spirit, by and through which man may know the truth, for he becomes possessed by the very Spirit of divine intelligence and of truth, by which power he is made to know the truth.

These principles obtain in this last dispensation of the gospel. Joseph Smith comes as did Noah, Enoch, Moses, the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles—he comes with a message from God—with a new volume of scripture, whose express purpose is to enlarge the foundations of faith. He and his associates bear witness of its truth, and those who will give heed to that testimony, and will seek to God for further knowledge, are expressly promised in the Book of Mormon itself, that they shall receive a manifestation of its truth by the power of the Holy Ghost; "And by the power of the

Holy Ghost," says this Nephite record, "ye may know the truth of all things."^[25] Throughout, it will be seen that in this matter of the Book of Mormon, the divine power is acting in harmony with those great principles which have been operating in the spiritual economy of this world from the beginning; which fact, in reality, is at least an incidental testimony of the truth of the work.

In the light of all these reflections, then, together with the fact that part of the Book of Mormon was sealed, the time not then having arrived for its translation, there is nothing remarkable in the circumstance of the Nephite plates being returned to the care of the angel-guardian of them. Certainly there is nothing unreasonable in such a procedure, and surely nothing in the circumstance that warrants the ridicule with which that statement has sometimes been received. Moreover, human guardianship of such things is by no means as secure as some may conceive it to be. Take, for example, the fate which befell the Egyptian papyrus from which the Prophet translated the Book of Abraham. It is an item of Church history that in 1835 the Saints in Kirtland purchased, of one Michael H. Chandler, some Egyptian mummies; in the sarcophagus they occupied certain rolls of papyrus were found, beautifully engraved with Egyptian characters. Upon examination, Joseph Smith found the papyrus to be the writings of Abraham and of Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt. Portions of these records the Prophet translated into the English language, and the translation was published in the *Times and Seasons*, vol. III, and subsequently made part of the *Pearl of Great Price*. After the death of the Prophet the mummies, together with the records on papyrus, were left in charge of his mother, Lucy Smith. She afterwards parted with them, under what circumstances is not positively known. Finally, the records and mummies found their way into Wood's Museum, in Chicago, where, according to the statement of the editors of the Plano edition of *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith and his Progenitors*, by Lucy Smith, they were destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871.^[26] Thus the writings of Abraham, after being preserved for many generations in the linen wrappings of Egyptian mummies, were consumed by fire in a modern city, a circumstance which illustrates the uncertainty of human means to preserve important documents, and justifies the angel-guardianship of a record as sacred as are the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.

IV.

On the Loss of one Hundred and Sixteen Pages of Manuscript, Being the Translation of the First Part of Mormon's Abridgment of the Nephite Records.

Another incident connected with the probability of Joseph Smith's story concerning the Book of Mormon, and which, like the circumstance of the Prophet's returning the plates to the angel, meets with ridicule—is the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript, through the unfaithfulness of Martin Harris, a subject detailed at length in chapter v.

This incident lost to Joseph Smith, for a time, the gift of translation, and also possession of the plates and Urim and Thummim; but through sincere repentance, he was received again into the favor of the Lord, and resumed his work.

On being permitted to resume the translation, however, the Prophet was informed through divine communication that those who had stolen the manuscript from Harris designed to hold it until he should translate again that part which had fallen into their hands. If the Prophet's second translation should be like the first, then it was the intention of the conspirators to change the manuscript in their possession, and claim that the translation was not obtained by divine aid, else the second would be like the first; but since it would by this trick be proved to be different, the claim of divine inspiration in the translation of the book must fall to the ground, and Joseph Smith's pretension to being a Seer and Prophet of God would fall with it; and thus the work God designed to accomplish through him would be destroyed. The Lord revealed this plot to Joseph Smith, and warned him not to translate again Moroni's abridgment of the Book of Lehi—which comprised so much of the manuscript as had been entrusted to Harris.^[27] On the contrary, he was commanded to translate what are called in the Book of Mormon the "Smaller Plates of Nephi," and let that stand in the place of the translation of the Book of Lehi which Harris had lost.

A word of explanation here: Two sets of plates were kept for a time by the first Nephi and his successors. One set might be called the secular, the other the sacred record of the Nephite people. They, however, called them the "Smaller" and "Larger" Plates of Nephi. On the former was recorded the ministry of the prophets, the word of the Lord to them, and much of their teaching and preaching; on the latter, the reigns of the kings, their wars and contentions, and the secular affairs of the people generally. Still, even on the "Smaller Plates of Nephi" there was a reasonably succinct account of the principal events of Nephite history, from the time Lehi left Jerusalem until four hundred years had passed away.

When Mormon found among the records delivered into his keeping the "Smaller Plates of Nephi," he was so well pleased with their contents that he placed the whole of them with the abridgment he had made from the larger Nephite records. "And I do this," he informs us, "for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will."^[28] By the addition of the Smaller Plates of Nephi to

Mormon's abridgment of the Larger Plates, it will be observed that there was a double line of history for a period of about 400 years. Therefore, when, through carelessness and breaking his agreement with the Prophet, Martin Harris lost the translation of the first part of Mormon's abridgment, and those into whose hands the manuscript had fallen designed to change it and destroy the claims of the Prophet to inspiration in translating it—under divine direction he translated the Smaller Plates of Nephi, and let that translation take the place of the one which had been stolen, and thus the plan of the conspirators against the work was thwarted. This statement of the Prophet, however, comes in for its share of ridicule, and is generally spoken of as a very clever escape for the Prophet out of what is called a rather perplexing dilemma. The Prophet's statement of the incident was published at the time the first edition of the Book of Mormon issued from the press, and, in fact, stands as the preface to the book, which I reproduce here:

PREFACE.

To the Reader—

As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work; but behold, the Lord saith unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and behold ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. Wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario country, New York.

THE AUTHOR.

Thus from the beginning the Prophet boldly declared that which the Lord had revealed to him concerning this effort on the part of the conspirators to destroy the work; and there was not one who rose to contradict his statement, at the time, although some anti-"Mormon" writers of later years assert—but without any warrant of proof—that, enraged at the part her husband was taking in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, Mrs. Martin Harris burned the manuscript. This, however, she always denied. The first publication referring to this subject, aside from what the Prophet published in the above preface, is Howe's *History of Mormonism*, published at Painsville, Ohio, 1834. This is an anti-"Mormon" book, and of the manuscript incident it says: "The facts respecting the lost manuscripts we have not been able to ascertain. They sometimes charged the wife of Harris with having burnt it, but this is denied by her."^[29]

Meantime, attention is called to the fact that there is nothing improbable in the statement of Joseph Smith; but on the contrary all the conditions obtaining in the neighborhood where he resided while bringing forth the work favor the probability of such a conspiracy as he charges: the unwarranted but repeated efforts made by his enemies to wrest the plates from his possession; the home of his parents repeatedly beset by mobs; the issue of warrants by justices of the peace for searching his wagon for the plates; and subsequently the actions of Mr. Grandin, his printer, who, after entering into contract to print the book was certainly in honor bound to render him all the assistance in his power in getting out the work in the best order possible, and protecting him in his copyrights—the actions, I say, of Mr. Grandin, in permitting Squire Cole^[30] the use of his press on nights and Sundays in order to secretly publish his *Dogberry Papers*, in which was to appear a garbled edition of the Book of Mormon in weekly installments; the mass meetings held in Palmyra and vicinity in which resolutions were passed not to purchase the book should it ever issue from the press (which action caused Mr. Grandin to suspend the work of printing until the Prophet could be brought from Harmony, in Pennsylvania, to give renewed assurance of his ability to meet the price of printing); the confession of J. N. Tucker, one of the employees of Grandin's printing establishment, that after setting up a sheet in type, it was secreted and the story given out that it was lost, and that manuscript for another sheet would have to be produced, which when done is alleged to have been unlike the first^[31]—these well-attested circumstances establish the fact of a wide-spread and bitter opposition to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and, failing in that, then a determination to prevent its acceptance as revelation from God. All these things make it very easy to believe that such a conspiracy as the Prophet describes existed against the work.

Footnotes

1. See *Life of Jesus*, Renan. (E.T.) Introduction; also *New Witnesses*, vol. I, ch. 1.
2. Matt. 24:31.
3. Malachi 4:5, 6.
4. Revelation 14:6, 7.
5. Rev. 14:8, 9, 10.
6. Rev. 18:1-3.
7. Ephesians 1:9, 10.
8. *New Witnesses*, Vol. I., chs. xxviii, xxix, xxx.
9. The reader will find the data for the foregoing view concerning Urim and Thummim in the following passages: Exodus 28: 29, 30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; I Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65. He will also find an excellent article on the subject in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, (Hackett edition), vol. IV, pp. 3,356-3,363; also in Kitto's *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*, vol. II, pp. 900-903.
10. *Antiquities of the Jews*, bk. III, ch. 8.
11. Genesis 44:5-15.
12. Such is the Roman Catholic explanation of the matter; see note on passage, Gen. 44:5-15 in Douay Bible.
13. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Art. Urim and Thummim.
14. The Cosmopolitan Magazine for September, 1896.
15. I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible. But by the wisdom of God they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight. (Church History, vol. I, pp. 18, 19.)
16. These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters on the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, and much skill in the art of engraving. Wentworth Letter, History of the Church, vol. IV, p. 537.
17. Matt. 27:40, 42.
18. Deut. 9:8-11.
19. Deut. 10:1-5.
20. Numbers 17.
21. The late Robert G. Ingersoll, for instance, asks where now the sword is with which the angel guarded "the tree of life" in Paradise; and then sarcastically answers his own question as follows: "Some angel has it in heaven!" Works, vol. 5, 372.
22. Luke 16:13, 31.
23. Acts 10:40-42.
24. John 15:26, 27.
25. Behold I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. 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 10:3-5.)

[26.](#) See Plano edition of the above named work, 1880, note on page 91.

[27.](#) See preface to first edition of the Book of Mormon.

[28.](#) Words of Mormon, p. 158.

[29.](#) I quote from the first (1834) edition of Howe's work, page 22.

[30.](#) See pp. 77, 78 of part I, Y. M. M. I. A. Manual for 1903-4. It is unthinkable that this effort to publish a garbled edition of the Book of Mormon was unknown to Grandin and those employed in his establishment.

[31.](#) See chapter VIII, where this incident is treated and the fact pointed out that the Prophet's precautions had protected the work from the effects of such tricks as this described by Tucker.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INDIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

In dealing with the indirect external evidences to the truth of the Book of Mormon supplied by American antiquities, embracing in that term archaeology, mythology, traditions, ethnology, languages, etc., it should be observed that the Book of Mormon is not a specific work upon any of these subjects. Nor is it a work on physical geography; nor even a history, in the modern sense of that term. Furthermore, while the purpose of the book is mainly religious, it is not a formal treatise even upon religion. But while the Book of Mormon has limitations in all the directions noted, it is a fact that American antiquities, mythologies, traditions, etc., may be of great importance in sustaining its truth. I therefore begin the consideration of this branch of evidence by inquiring what conditions respecting the location and nature of American monuments of civilization the Book of Mormon demands.

I.

What the Book of Mormon Requires as to the Location and Character of the Jaredite Civilization.

It has been shown in a preceding chapter^[1] that the first people who inhabited North America after the flood were a colony that came from the Euphrates Valley, about the time of the confusion of languages at Babel, under the leadership of a prophet of the name of Moriancumr, and his brother Jared; that this colony made their first settlement somewhere in the region of country known in modern times as Central America; that they called their first city Moron, which from the time of its establishment, with brief, intermittent periods, remained the seat of government and the chief center of the civilization of the great Jaredite nation, up to the time of the latter's destruction, in the early part of the sixth century B. C.—a period of sixteen hundred years.

From the City of Moron the Jaredites extended their colonization schemes southward along the isthmus to South America, and northward to the great lakes. Their greatest activities, however, and the centers of their civilization were in Central America; and it is there we must look for the most extensive and enduring monuments of civilization in the western world; and expect the monuments to have some of the characteristics of the monuments of the ancient civilization of the Euphrates Valley.^[2]

II.

What the Book of Mormon Requires as to the Location, Extent and Nature of the Nephite Civilization.

In considering this subject I shall take no account of the colony of Mulek beyond noting the fact that previous to the union of their descendants, with the Nephites under Mosiah I, about two hundred years B. C., they did not affect to any considerable extent the civilization of the country, and hence I shall consider them under the same head as the Nephites.

Concerning the Nephites and their civilization, the Book of Mormon requires the proof that a colony of Israelites left Jerusalem about six hundred years B. C., carrying with them the Hebrew

Scriptures; that they made a voyage from thence to the west coast of America; that there were four brothers in the colony, among whom there was a contention about leadership; that the younger brother had the greater weight of influence with the colony, and became practically its leader; that they were directed in their journey by miraculous means—an instrument consisting of a ball of brass with spindles in it which indicated the direction of their travels, receiving upon its burnished surface from time to time instructions for their guidance—called by them Liahona; that because of jealousies among the four brothers the colony was divided,^[3] the younger brother leading away northward the more righteous part of the colony from which separation arose two people, one civilized, the other, in comparison with the first, barbarous; that the civilized people, those following the younger brother, removed gradually northward because of the repeated depredations of their relentless enemies, the Lamanites; that during the period of some four hundred years they removed from the place of their first landing to a region of country northward; that in this land about two hundred B. C. the more righteous part of the people again separated from the rest and made their way still further northward to the great valley of what they called the Sidon river, and there united with the descendants of Mulek's colony and formed the Nephite-Zarahemla nation, but they were called Nephites; that this people extended their cities and provinces throughout the northern part of the north continent, colonizing even a portion of the narrow neck of land connecting the two continents; that they were in frequent conflict, and waged great wars with the barbarous people who still pressed upon them from the south; that in the year 55 B. C. they began migrating northward from Central America; that ship building was inaugurated by one Hagoth on the west side of Central America; that the people moved northward in great numbers by means of these vessels as well as by land; that two of these vessels going far northward, drifted out into the great ocean and were lost—at least to the Nephites; that there were frequent wars between the civilized people and the barbarians; that the birth of Messiah was evidenced by the appearance of a new star in the heavens, and by a night which continued brilliant as day from the setting of the sun to the rising thereof; that at the crucifixion of Messiah, during the three hours that he hung upon the cross at Jerusalem, the western world was visited by an unparalleled series of cataclysms which convulsed the whole land, destroying many cities, some being buried by mountains that were thrown up by convulsions of the earth, and others being sunk in the depths of the sea; that these dreadful convulsions of the earth were followed by three days of total darkness; that some time after these awful cataclysms the risen Messiah appeared in person to a multitude in the region of country in South America east and south of the Isthmus of Panama and including part of that Isthmus,^[4] that he proclaimed his relationship to God, held himself forth as the Son of God, taught the doctrine of the Atonement, instituted the Christian sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, chose twelve disciples and authorized the organization of a church to teach the doctrine of Christ and perfect, by its watchful care, those who accepted it; that this introduction of the gospel of Christ was followed by a period of universal peace and prosperity—a veritable golden age—through nearly three centuries; that after this the people declined in moral and spiritual excellence until they were in complete apostasy; that a series of civil wars and the rise of robber bands undermined government, and that about the close of the fourth century, A. D., the government was destroyed, the people divided into small bands or tribes and anarchy prevailed.

Only two other remarks are necessary to complete the consideration of what the Book of Mormon Nephite period requires of American antiquities in order to derive from them evidence in support of its truth. The first of these is the fact that Nephite occupancy of the western world is confined for the most part, at least, to the north continent; that while it is true that their settlements in the north became somewhat extensive, the progress of them was checked by frequent wars between Nephites and Lamanites, and also by the depredations of robber bands which infested the land up to the time of the crucifixion of Messiah; that at the crucifixion of Messiah occurred these tremendous cataclysms which convulsed the whole land resulted in the destruction of so many of the people that during this period of some eighty-eight years—from 55 B. C. to 33 A. D.—the period of time the Nephites spread out over the north continent, previous to the advent of Messiah, they could not have erected many monuments of civilization that would survive the ravages of ages. After the destruction which swept over both western continents during the crucifixion of Messiah, the people were so reduced in numbers that it would be some time before they could begin to occupy the land to any great extent, still, during the more than two hundred years of righteousness and peace which followed Messiah's advent among them, the Nephites doubtless became very numerous and the arts of peace would very greatly develop. At the close of this period, however, civil wars again checked their progress, and they entered upon that period of rapid decline in all that makes for the stability of government and permanency of civilization, until at the close of the fourth century A. D., anarchy prevailed only to be followed by Lamanite barbarism, which exerted its every effort to destroy government, overthrow civilization, and destroy every monument and vestige of that religion against which chiefly the Lamanites had waged war.^[5]

In the second remark referred to a moment since, I would call attention to the fact that there exists evidence which leads one to believe that the Nephites constructed their buildings of perishable material; chiefly, I think, of wood, a circumstance which will go far towards accounting for the fact that there is but little evidence of the existence of a great civilized nation possessing temples, synagogues, palaces, etc., in the northern part of North America. The Nephite civilization rose to its highest development previous to the coming of the Messiah in the south part of the north continent. The reasons for this conclusion are to be found in several passages of the Book of Mormon, where the specific statement is made that the people were taught to work in all manner of wood, iron, copper, etc.; but no mention is made of their being

skilled in the working of stone. For example, the first Nephi says: "And I did teach my people to build buildings; and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance."^[6] Again, in the book of Jarom, it is written: "And we multiplied exceedingly, and spread upon the face of the land, and became exceeding rich in gold, and in silver, and in precious things, and in fine workmanship of wood, in buildings, and in machinery, and also in iron and copper, and brass and steel, making all manner of tools of every kind to till the ground, and weapons of war."^[7] After migrations into the north continent began, one of the things which seemed to be a cause of regret on the part of the Nephites was the lack of timber in that land. Referring to this, Mormon, in his abridgment of Helaman's reference to it, says: "And now no part of the land was desolate, save it were for timber. * * * And there being but little timber upon the face of the land [northward], nevertheless the people who went forth became exceedingly expert in the working of cement; therefore they *did build houses of cement in the which they did dwell*;" but this period brings them into the south part of the north continent. "And the people who were in the land northward did dwell in tents, and in houses of cement, and they did suffer whatsoever tree should spring up upon the face of the land that it should grow up, that in time they might have timber to build their houses, yea, their cities, and their temples, and their synagogues, and their sanctuaries, and all manner of their buildings. And it came to pass as timber was exceeding scarce in the land northward, they did send forth much by the way of shipping; and thus they did enable the people in the land northward that they might build many cities, both of wood and of cement."^[8] These statements, I believe, justify the conclusion that the Nephites, in the main, used timber—perishable material—for building purposes, and hence the monuments of their civilization so far as architectural remains are concerned in the most northern parts occupied by them have very largely perished, as well in the north as in the south, except perhaps to the extent that they may have rebuilt and reoccupied some of the old Jaredite cities in the north continent.

An Israelitish origin, then, is what is required for the second race inhabiting America; a landing in South America; a gradual movement northward until they took possession of the north as well as the south continent; their civilization of a lighter order so far as expressed in solidity of buildings or the number of cities, and spread over a more extensive area than that of the Jaredites; an intermixture of the monuments of the one, with the ruins of the other; knowledge of the Mosaic institutions and history of the ancient world, through the Hebrew scriptures; special signs at Messiah's birth, and appalling cataclysms throughout the land at his crucifixion; the appearing of Messiah to them and the establishment of a Christian church; the overthrow of the Nephite government and civilization about the opening of the fifth century A. D. These are the main facts for which we seek proofs in American antiquities, so far as the Nephite period of the Book of Mormon is concerned.

Of course it may be possible that in the present state of knowledge of American antiquities evidences for all these facts may not now be obtainable; but if evidences tending to prove them can be pointed out at all, it will be so much in favor of the Book of Mormon. Meantime the reader should be cautioned not to expect too much from the character of the evidence now to be considered, nor should he be discouraged if in quantity and clearness it falls below his expectations. It must be remembered that examination of our American antiquities, especially in Central America, has not yet been made as thoroughly as it will be; there are many buried cities and other monuments yet to be heard from,^[9] as also, a better understanding of those monuments of ancient American civilization already brought to light. Moreover, it should be remembered that for many ages the Bible stood practically without the advantages of monumental testimony in its support. Not until modern times have learned men penetrated the eastern countries to return laden with exact knowledge of monumental testimony to the truth of the Bible. Not until the discovery and translation of the Rosetta Stone, early in the last century, was an impetus given to explorations in Egypt, the Sinaitic Peninsula, Palestine and the Euphrates valley—Bible lands—resulting in that collection of collateral evidence for the truth of the Bible noted in a former chapter. One should not be impatient, then, if the Book of Mormon has to wait some time yet for the development of that fulness of monumental testimony to its truth which I am sure lies hidden in the, as yet, imperfectly known, and still less perfectly understood, antiquities of the western hemisphere.

Footnotes

[1.](#) See chapter X.

[2.](#) See chapter X.

[3.](#) II Nephi 5:1-13.

[4.](#) The Nephite land of Bountiful.

[5.](#) Mormon 8:1-10.

[6.](#) II Nephi 5:15.

[7.](#) Jarom 1:8.

[8.](#) Helaman 3:6-11.

9. On this point Mr. Baldwin says: "To understand the situation of most of the old ruins in Central America, one must know something of the wild condition of the country. Mr. Squier says: 'By far the greater proportion of the country is in its primeval state, and covered with dense, tangled, and almost impenetrable tropical forests, rendering fruitless all attempts at systematic investigation. There are vast tracts untrodden by human feet, or traversed only by Indians who have a superstitious reverence for the moss-covered, and crumbling monuments hidden in the depths of the wilderness. * * * For these and other reasons, it will be long before the treasures of the past, in Central America, can become fully known.' A great forest of this character covers the southern half of Yucatan, and extends far into Guatemala, which is half covered by it. It extends also into Chiapa and Tabasco, and reaches into Honduras. The ruins known as Copan and Palenque are in this forest, not far from its southern edge. Its vast depths have never been much explored. There are ruins in it which none but wandering natives have ever seen, and some, perhaps, which no human foot has approached for ages. It is believed that ruins exist in nearly every part of this vast wilderness." *Ancient America*, pp. 94, 95.

CHAPTER XXV.

INDIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN
ANTIQUITIES. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.—
Continued.

III.

Of the Probability of Intercourse Between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres During Jaredite and Nephite Times.

Another remark should be made in these preliminary observations, viz.: It cannot possibly be in conflict with the Book of Mormon to concede that the northeastern coast of America may have been visited by Norsemen in the tenth century; or that Celtic adventurers came to America even at an earlier date, but subsequent to the close of the Nephite period. It might even be possible that migrations came by way of the Pacific Islands to the western shores of America. I think it indisputable that there have been migrations from northeastern Asia into the extreme north parts of North America, by way of Behring straits, where the continents of Asia and North America are separated by a distance of but thirty-six miles of ocean. The reasons for this belief are first, a positive identity of race between the Esquimaux of North America and the Esquimaux of northern Asia; and, second, a very clear distinction of race between the Esquimaux and the American Indians of all other parts of North America.^[1]

None of these migrations are impossible or even improbable, though it must be stated in passing that the proofs for at least some of them rest on no historical evidence. Whether the theory that in ancient times the Phoenicians and their colonists, the Carthaginians, had intercourse with the shores of America is true or not I cannot determine. The historical evidence is insufficient to justify a positive opinion; neither does my treatise on the subject in hand require an extended consideration of this question. It will be enough to say that if there were such intercourse, both Nephite and Jaredite records in the Book of Mormon are silent with reference to it. Yet it must be conceded that the records now in hand, especially that of the Jaredites, are but very limited histories of these people. All we can say is that no mention of such intercourse is made in these records, and yet it is possible that Phoenician vessels might have visited some parts of the extended coasts of the western world, and such events receive no mention in the Jaredite or Nephite records known to us.^[2]

Equally unnecessary is it for me to inquire whether or not the ancient inhabitants of America "discovered Europe," as some contend they did.^[3] It is not impossible that between the close of the Nephite period and the discovery of the western world by Columbus, American craft made their way to European shores. And even should further investigation prove that in Nephite or even in Jaredite times such voyages were made, it would not affect the Book of Mormon and the inquiry we are making concerning it. As stated in respect of Phoenicians and other people making their way to America's extended coasts, so it may be said, with reference to this other theory that Americans "discovered Europe," no mention is made of such an event in the Book of Mormon. But it should be remembered that for the history of the Jaredites we have but Moroni's abridgment of Ether's twenty-four plates. Had we Ether's history of the Jaredites in full, it could be but a very limited history of so great a people, and for so long a period—sixteen centuries—barely an outline, and wholly inadequate to give one any clear conception of their national greatness, the extent of their migrations, or the grandeur of their civilization. And yet, even of this brief history we have but an abridgment, of which Moroni informs us he has not written a "hundredth part."^[4] Hence our very limited knowledge of the Jaredites and their movements. While our knowledge of the Nephites is more extensive than our knowledge of the Jaredites, we

have to confess its narrow limits also. The Book of Mormon is, in the main, but an abridgment of the larger Nephite records; and at the point where Nephite civilization reached its fullest development, Mormon informs us that "a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping, and their building of ships, and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries, and their righteousness, and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robbings, and their plunderings, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms, cannot be contained in this work."^[5] I repeat, then, even in Jaredite and Nephite times voyages could have been made from America to the shores of Europe, and yet no mention of it be made in Nephite and Jaredite records now known.

I know of but one utterance in the Book of Mormon that would in any respect be against the probability of intercourse between the old world and the new, in Nephite times; and that is found in the following passage:

And behold, it is wisdom that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance. Wherefore, I, Lehi, have obtained a promise, that inasmuch as those whom the Lord God shall bring out of the land of Jerusalem shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves. And if it so be that they shall keep his commandments they shall be blessed upon the face of this land, and there shall be none to molest them, nor to take away the land of their inheritance; and they shall dwell safely forever.^[6]

This was uttered in the first half of the sixth century B. C. It will be observed, however, that the covenant with Lehi was based upon the condition that those whom the Lord led to the land of America must keep his commandments; a condition which was complied with only in part, even during Nephite supremacy; and at the last it was wholly violated on the part of both Nephites and Lamanites, and therefore may be eliminated as a substantial objection to the idea of intercourse between the old and the new world even during Nephite times. Still, in a general way, this land was preserved unto the descendants of Lehi until the coming of the Spaniards in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

IV.

The Western World Since the Close of the Nephite Period—The Lamanite Civilization.

Other considerations that may affect the evidences of American antiquities to the Book of Mormon arise out of the conditions which have obtained in the western world since the close of the Nephite period. What I have called the Nephite period closes with the commencement of the fifth century A. D., and as it was towards the close of the fifteenth century before America was discovered by the Spaniards and made known to Europeans, there is a thousand years during which time many things may have happened to affect conditions in America by the time it was discovered by Columbus; and which, at the time of that discovery, and now, influence, not to say confuse, our knowledge of American antiquities, by indiscriminately mingling the modern with the ancient, confounding local movements with more ancient and general migrations, and mixing merely tribal events with the national affairs of more ancient times, until things are rendered in some respects well nigh unintelligible.

When the Nephites were overthrown in those last great battles about Cumorah, it appears that the victorious Lamanites were possessed with the most frenzied determination to destroy the last vestige of civilization, government, and religion; but when they had destroyed their enemies, the Nephites, they continued the fighting among themselves, until the whole face of the land was one continual scene of intestine wars.^[7] How long such conditions continued no one knows, since the Book of Mormon closes with its sad story of the overthrow of the Nephites, and there is nothing beyond this point—the early part of the fifth century A. D.—by which we can be guided. It is probable, however, that even anarchy at last spent its force; something like tribal relations may have been brought into existence to take the place of the more elaborate and complex forms of government which had been overthrown, and from these may have arisen confederacies of tribes as interest or fortune, good or ill, may have dictated, until at last something like semi-civilization begun to arise out of the chaos which followed the destruction of the Nephites.

The maddened Lamanites might succeed in destroying every vestige of government, religion and that order of society which had prevailed in former times, but the memory of those things, and the advantages of them, could not be obliterated; and the memory of them would be an incentive to strong minds to re-establish a settled order of things.

It should be remembered in this connection—as lending probability to what is said here—that when the ancient distinctions of Nephite and Lamanite were revived in 231 A. D. they no longer stood the former for the descendants of Nephi and his following and the latter for the descendants of Laman and his following, as in earlier times; nor did the former name now stand for a civilized people, and the latter for a barbarous one, as they had done in some parts of

former ages. In civilization the two parties stood equal, and remained so through the one hundred and seventy troubled years which followed. For more than two centuries following the appearance of the Messiah in the western world, there had been but one people on the land, and these followers of the Messiah—Christians. This was the American golden age—the age of peace, of prosperity, of expansion, until the lands, both in the north and in the south were inhabited by a numerous and happy people. Then came pride which follows wealth; and corruption which follows ease. Sects arose within the church, schism followed schism. Then the wicked, schismatical sects persecuted the true followers of Christ. The old distinctions of Lamanite and Nephite were revived; and under these names an internecine war was begun. The true followers of Christ, who had taken the name of Nephites, unhappily fell away from righteousness—were no longer Christians, in fact, but fought on under the name the Christians had assumed until the series of wars between the two parties ended in anarchy. This much to remind the reader that there was no distinction in the matter of civilization during this period between Lamanites and Nephites. After the fall of the Nephite party—more proper than to say Nephite people—followed the Lamanite wars and anarchy; from which, however, I have ventured the conjecture that there was a revolt, and an effort made to return to settled orders of government, and to some sort of civilization.

The last battles of the great and long continued war which ended in the destruction of the Nephite party, took place south of the great lake region, about Cumorah; and to this part of the land had been drawn if not the bulk, then certainly a very large proportion of the inhabitants of the land.^[8] These moved southward in time, tribe pressing upon tribe, as ocean wave presses on ocean wave towards the shore; and doubtless this movement of population southward after the disaster at Cumorah, accounts for those universal traditions found among the natives of Mexico and Central America of successive migrations from the north of powerful tribes or races who so much affected the political history of those countries.^[9] As these tribes from the north reached the old centers of population and civilization they revived settled orders of government, fastened themselves upon the weaker inhabitants as their rulers, compelled industry among the lower orders, gave encouragement to the arts that ministered to their ease and vanity, encouraged learning at least among the sacerdotal orders, and received the credit of founding a new order of civilization, when in reality it was but a partial reviving of a former civilization, upon which they fastened the dark and loathsome Lamanite superstitious idolatry, with its horrors of human sacrifice and cannibalism. I believe these conjectures to be warranted by the fact that in several parts of the American continents, viz.: in Mexico, Central America, and Peru, a civilization of no mean degree of advancement was found to exist at the time of the arrival of the Spaniards; and, indeed, there are not wanting authorities who assert that the civilization found in America by the Spaniards, both in Mexico and Peru, was equal to their own. Such is the assertion of Dr. John W. Draper who says, in speaking of the crimes of Spain:

From Mexico and Peru a civilization that might have instructed Europe was crushed out. * * * It has been her [Spain's] evil destiny to ruin two civilizations, Oriental and Occidental. * * * In America she destroyed races more civilized than herself.^[10]

Nadaillac remarks:

To sum up, every thing goes to prove that the ancient races of Central America possessed an advanced culture, exact ideas on certain arts and sciences, and remarkable technical knowledge. As pointed out in 1869, by Morgan, in the North American Review, the Spanish succeeded in destroying in a few years a civilization undoubtedly superior in many respects to that which they endeavored to substitute for it.^[11]

Prescott places scarcely less value upon it. He says:

Enough has been said, however, to show that the Aztec and Tezcucan races were advanced in civilization very far beyond the wandering tribes of North America. The degree of civilization which they reached, as inferred by their political institutions, may be considered, perhaps, not much short of that enjoyed by our Saxon ancestors, under Alfred [849-901 A. D.]. In respect to the nature of it, they may be better compared with the Egyptians; and the examination of their social relations and culture may suggest still stronger points of resemblance to that ancient people.^[12]

H. H. Bancroft says:

This, however, I may safely claim; if the preceding pages inform us aright, then were the Nahuas, the Mayas, and the subordinate and lesser civilization surrounding these, but little lower than the contemporaneous civilization of Europe and Asia, and not nearly so low as we have hitherto been led to suppose.^[13]

John D. Baldwin, writing in 1871, says:

We are told repeatedly that the Spaniards employed "Mexican masons" and found them "very expert" in the arts of building and plastering. There is no good reason to doubt that the civilized condition of the country when the Spaniards found it was superior to what it has been at any time since the conquest.^[14]

Tezcuco and Mexico are both known to be comparatively modern cities, Mexico itself being founded no earlier than 1325 A. D., and Prescott, in speaking of an era of prosperity which followed the triple alliance of the states of Mexico, Tezcuco, and Tlacopan says:

The Aztec capital, [Mexico] gave evidence of public prosperity. Its frail tenements were supplanted by solid structures of stone and lime. * * * * The dimensions of which, covering the same ground, were much larger than those of the modern capital of Mexico.^[15]

His description of the valley of Mexico, and its cities, fields and orchards, when first beheld by the invading Spaniards under Cortez, is as follows:

Stretching far away at their feet, were seen noble forests of oak, sycamore, and cedar, and beyond, yellow fields of maize and the towering maguey, intermingled with orchards and blooming gardens; for flowers, in such demand for their religious festivals, were even more abundant in this populous valley than in other parts of Anahuac. In the center of the great basin were beheld the lakes, occupying then a much larger portion of its surface than at present; their borders thickly studded with towns and hamlets, and, in the midst—like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls—the fair City of Mexico, with her white towers and pyramidal temples, reposing, as it were, on the bosom of the waters—the far-famed "Venice of the Aztecs." High over all rose the royal hill of Chapoltepec, the residence of the Mexican monarchs, crowned with the same grove of gigantic cypresses, which at this day fling their broad shadows over the land. In the distance beyond the blue waters of the lake, and nearly screened by intervening foliage, was seen a shining speck, the rival capital of Tezcuco, and, still further on, the dark belt of porphyry, girdling the valley around, like a rich setting which nature had devised for the fairest of her jewels.^[16]

From the statements of Bernal Diaz we are also justified in believing that a somewhat similar state of civilization obtained in Yucatan and other parts of Central America. While the well-known works of Squier,^[17] Baldwin, Rivero and Tschudi,^[18] and the very excellent and popular volumes of Prescott on Peru, justify us in the belief that while differing somewhat in its character, the civilization of Peru was equal and even superior in some respects—to that of Mexico at the time of the conquest; and the empire of the Incas was even more extensive than that of the Montezumas.

The civilization in America upon the advent of the Spaniards—since there is no substantial historical evidence of foreign migrations in which it could have had its origin—must have arisen, as already suggested, from among the Lamanites after the fall of the Nephites at Cumorah—it was Lamanite civilization. I would not have the reader form too exalted an opinion of that civilization, however. It found its chief expression, where it attained its highest development, in the existence of numerous cities, palaces, and temples; in the existence of regular pursuits of industry, of agriculture, and manufactures; in a settled order of society, a regular order of government, and a fixed establishment of religion. So far as these conditions make for civilization, Mexico, some parts of Central America, and Peru, can be said to be civilized. But after this is said it must be claimed that much was lacking in the conditions existing in those parts of America in order to make them conform to the generally accepted idea of civilization. The governments were cruel despotisms; the industrial system reduced the masses to conditions scarcely removed from abject slavery; the religion of Mexico and Central America, at least, was the darkest, the most sanguinary, and repulsive described in the annals of human history; while the revolting practice of refined cannibalism was more widespread and horrible than among any other people whatsoever. These and many other considerations, too numerous to mention in detail, must forbid our entertaining exalted notions of this Lamanite civilization. We shall see as we proceed with the unfoldment of our evidences, that these horrible conditions were but the natural outgrowth of Lamanite tendencies through all the course of their history.

V.

Of the Writers on American Antiquities.

Still another remark is necessary in these preliminary observations. The authorities upon which we have to depend for our knowledge of American antiquities are widely conflicting. There is not one that may be followed unreservedly, and it is impossible to say with any degree of exactness what is even the consensus of opinion of authorities upon very many subjects, so widely divergent and conflicting are their views. This conflict of opinion extends to such important subjects as the following: Who were the first inhabitants of America? Were they indigenous races, or is their presence in America due to migration? If due to migration, from what lands did they come? Was there one or several migrations? What was the course of their migration? Are they of one or a number of distinct races? Are the monuments of civilization found in America ancient or comparatively modern? Do they represent the civilization of vanished races, or are they the work of the not very remote ancestors of the Indians? Is the civilization represented by these monuments really of a very high order, or was it but a step or two removed from savagery? In support of any one of these conflicting opinions about America's ancient inhabitants and their civilization one need not be at a loss to find respectable authorities. One may support with honored names in this field of research the Lost Tribes of Israel theory of the origin of the

American Indians; the Malay theory of origin; the Phoenician theory; the Egyptian, the Atlantic, and a number of other minor theories.^[19] One can array a formidable list of authors in favor of the indigenous theory of origin for ancient American civilization; and perhaps a still longer and equally learned list of authorities in favor of an exotic origin. All of which makes it evident that writers upon the subject are to be weighed as well as counted; and also warns us that in the presence of such a diversity of opinions many things pertaining to American antiquities must remain open questions. It must be remembered that as yet, so far as man's researches are concerned, but little is really known about ancient America. "That," as a Frenchman remarks, "has yet to be discovered." True, many of her ancient monuments have been located, but they seem to tell a different story to each explorer who looks upon them. There are not wanting stone tablets of hieroglyphics, and ancient documents written on skins and paper;^[20] but up to the present time they are sealed books even to the learned. Meantime no Rosetta Stone is discovered^[21] to furnish the key to their decipherment, and no learned American Champollion as yet^[22] comes forward to reveal their mystery.

In considering authorities upon American antiquities, one thing should be especially observed: one should be upon his guard against the credulity and bias of the early writers; and equally upon his guard against the skepticism and bias of the more modern ones. The former, living in an age of superstition and credulity, and having special interests to serve, would have us believe too much; the latter, living in an age super-critical and doubting, would have us believe too little. There is no doubt but what the Spanish writers connected with the conquest of America colored their narratives to give importance in the eyes of their countrymen in Europe to the events with which they were associated; and they likely exaggerated whatever had such a tendency. Hence greater empires, more formidable armies, and more imposing civilizations than really existed in America at the time of the conquest, were described. So with the missionaries who accompanied the first European expeditions and those who immediately followed them. They sometimes very likely saw analogies between the Christian faith and some of the traditions and superstitions of the natives where none existed. So closely did some of the native traditions and ceremonies resemble Catholic Christian dogma and rites that the over-zealous priests came to the conclusion that the "devil" had in America counterfeited some parts of the Christian religion and intermixed it with the native paganism, the better to encompass the damnation of the natives and hinder the progress of the Christian religion. This led to the destruction of many Aztec manuscripts which were regarded by some of the priests as works on magic, and in other ways were supposed to uphold the idolatry of the natives. This idea strongly impressed the first archbishop of Mexico, Don Juan de Zumarraga,^[23] who from a number of cities caused large quantities of the native manuscripts to be collected and destroyed. The collection from Tezcuco was especially large, since—as Prescott describes it—Tezcuco was "the great depository of the national archives." The archbishop caused these collected manuscripts "to be piled up in a 'mountainlike heap,'—as it is called by the Spanish writers themselves—in the market place at Tlateloco and reduced them all to ashes. * * * The unlettered soldiery were not slow in imitating the example of their prelate. Every chart and volume which fell into their hands was wantonly destroyed: so that when the scholars of a later and more enlightened age anxiously sought to recover some of these memorials of civilization, nearly all had perished, and the few surviving were jealously hidden by the natives."^[24] And thus was destroyed materials which might have gone far towards solving the mystery that enshrouds the people and civilization of ancient America.

These native records were more numerous than they are generally thought to be. Baldwin, in speaking of the people of Central America and Mexico, says: "The ruins show that they had the art of writing, and that at the south this art was more developed, more like a phonetic system of writing, than we find in use among the Aztecs. The inscriptions of Palenque, and the characters used in some of the manuscript books that have been preserved, are not the same as the Mexican picture writing. It is known that books of manuscript writings were abundant among them in the ages previous to the Aztec period. * * * Las Casas wrote on this point as follows: 'It should be known that in all the commonwealths of these countries, in the kingdoms of New Spain and elsewhere, among other professions duly filled by suitable persons, was that of chronicler and historian. These chroniclers had knowledge of the origin of the kingdoms, and of whatever relates to religion and the gods, as well as to the founders of towns and cities. They recorded the history of kings, and of the modes of their election and succession; of their labors, actions, wars, and memorable deeds, good and bad; of the virtuous men or heroes of former days, their great deeds, the wars they had waged, and how they had distinguished themselves; who had been the earliest settlers, what had been their ancient customs, their triumphs and defeats. They knew, in fact whatever pertained to history, and were able to give an account of all past events. * * * Our priests have seen those books, and I myself have seen them likewise, though many were burned at the instigation of the monks, who were afraid they might impede the work of conversion.' Books such as those here described by Las Casas must have contained important historical information. The older books, belonging to the ages of Copan and Palenque, went to decay doubtless long previous to his time, in the wars and revolutions of the Toltec period, or by the wear of time. The later books, not otherwise lost, were destroyed by Aztec and Spanish vandalism."^[25]

Respecting native writers following the conquest, they were men who acquired the Spanish language and wrote on the history of their people either in Spanish, or, if in their own language they employed the Spanish alphabet—of them it is said, and one may readily admit the reasonableness of the statement—"most of them were thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their converters, and their writings as a class are subject to the same criticism."^[26]

Naturally these native writers would emphasize that which would glorify their own country and exalt the character of its civilization; belonging to a conquered race—the soreness of the conflict past—they would be but too prone to please, in order to stand in favor with, their conquerors; while their religious zeal would prompt them to find as many analogies as possible between their old faith and the one to which they were converted. All of which would tend to exaggeration in the same general direction as that followed by the early Spanish writers. But because of these tendencies to exaggeration it does not follow that all the works of early Spanish or native writers on America are to be described as of no value or even as of little value.

As justly remarked by H. H. Bancroft, "Do we reject all the events of Greek and Roman history, because the historians believed that the sun revolved about the earth, and attributed the ordinary phenomena of nature to the actions of the imaginary gods? * * * And finally, can we reject the statements of able and conscientious men—many of whom devoted their lives to the study of aboriginal character and history, from an honest desire to do the natives good—because they deem themselves bound by their priestly vows and the fear of the inquisition to draw scriptural conclusions from each native tradition? The same remarks apply to the writings of converted and educated natives, influenced, to a great degree, by their teachers; more prone, perhaps, to exaggeration through national pride, but at the same time better acquainted with the native hieroglyphics. To pronounce all these works deliberately executed forgeries, as a few modern writers have done, is too absurd to require refutation."^[27] And to this I would add a protest against that spirit of skepticism which in these same modern writers, when they do not pronounce the works referred to by Bancroft as forgeries, insist upon so far discrediting them by their sophistries of criticism that they might as well pronounce them outright forgeries. Undoubtedly the trend of modern writers is in support of the theory both of an indigenous people and civilization for America, and the latter of no very high order. In support of this theory they do not hesitate to discredit most of the native traditions recorded by the earlier writers, which tell of migrations of their ancestors from distant countries; of golden ages of prosperity and peace, and of an ancient, splendid civilization. It is difficult to determine always which is most to be discounted, the writers through whom the traditions of the glorious past are transmitted to us, or those who would dismantle that part of its glory and present us with an ancient America undeveloped beyond the point of middle savagery. Perhaps in this, as in so many other things where man's prejudices are involved, the truth will be found at about an equal distance between the two extremes; and even under this adjustment of the conflicting claims of authorities, I am sure we shall find much that will in an incidental way support the claims of the Book of Mormon.

Footnotes

1. Vivier de Saint Martin, in the new *Dictionary of Universal Geography*, article "American Ethnology," states that the tribes all along the Arctic Ocean known as the Esquimaux are a race absolutely distinct from all other American natives, (De Roo, *History of America Before Columbus*, vol. I, pp. 305, 309.)

2. All these theories are considered at length in H. H. Bancroft's *Native Races*, vol. V, ch. 1, and also in the *History of America Before Columbus*, by P. De Roo, vol. I, chs. 6 and 8.

3. The question is considered at length by De Roo in his *History of America Before Columbus*, vol. I, ch. 7, in support of which theory he quotes many authorities.

4. Ether 15:33.

5. Helaman 3:14.

6. II Nephi 1:8-9.

7. See Mormon. ch. 8: 1-11.

8. See Mormon 6.

9. Very naturally there is much confusion on the subject of migratory movements among the ancient native inhabitants of America, and this owing to the confounding of migrations from the old world with later intercontinental movements. Also there is a great division of opinion among authorities upon the subject, some alleging, for instance, that the tribes who established the civilization, found in Mexico by the Spaniards, came from the north—some from the northeast, others from the northwest while others insist that the movement was from Central America northward. The controversy waged on this subject is too extensive to be introduced into this note or even into this work. But I may here say that the disagreement among so many writers worthy of our respect grows out of the fact that there were movements both north and south which leads to their confusion. We know from the Book of Mormon that the general migratory movement of the Nephites at an early date—55 B. C.—was from the south northward; while during the period of peace which followed Messiah's advent, there was unrestricted movements of population north and south. Then came the period of gathering in the north, south of the great lakes, ending in the disaster about Cumorah; then the movement of the people from the north southward to the old centers of population, and the reviving of partially civilized conditions. One class of writers seized upon the fragmentary tradition concerning this northward movement for their conclusions, while another class seizes upon the tradition of the southward movement for their authority, and hence the conflict. Of the traditions of the northern origin of the Aztecs, Prescott remarks: "Traditions

of the western, or northwestern, origin were found among the more barbarous tribes, and by the Mexicans were preserved both orally and in their hieroglyphical maps, where the different stages of their migrations are carefully noted. But who, at this day, shall read them? They are admitted to agree, however, in representing the populous north as the prolific hive of the American races. In this quarter were placed their Aztlan, and their Huehuetapallan, the bright abode of their ancestors, whose warlike exploits rivalled those which the Teutonic nations have recorded of Odin and the mythic heroes of Scandanavia. From this quarter the Toltecs, the Chichimecs, and the kindred races of the Nahuatlacs, came successively up the great plateau of the Andes, spreading over its hills and valleys, down to the Gulf of Mexico." (*Conquest of Mexico*, vol. II, pp. 397, 398, Burt & Co., N. Y.) Also Nadaillac speaking of the invaders of the valley of Mexico says: "All these men, whether Toltecs, Chichimecs, or Aztecs, believed that their people came from the north, and migrated southward, seeking more fertile lands, more genial climates, or perhaps driven before a more warlike race; one wave of emigration succeeding another. We must, according to this tradition, seek in more northern regions the cradle of the Nahuatl race." (*Pre-Historic America*, p. 13.) Baldwin, quoting Brasseur de Bourbourg and Sahagun allows a northeast migration for the Toltecs (*Ancient America*, pp. 200, 202), but insists that the Aztecs who succeeded these races in the occupation of the valley of Mexico came from the south (pp. 217, 218). This view of the southern origin for the Aztecs is also maintained at some length and by an extensive citation of authorities by Bancroft. (*Native Races*, vol. V, ch. 3.)

[10.](#) *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. II. pp. 166-167.

[11.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 386.

[12.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. I, pp. 57, 58.

[13.](#) *Native Races*, vol. II, pp. 804, 805.

[14.](#) *Ancient America*, (Baldwin) p. 215.

[15.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, (Prescott) vol. I, p. 39.

[16.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, (Prescott) vol. I, p. 354.

[17.](#) Peru, *Incidents of Travel and Exploration of the Land of the Incas*, E. George Squier, M. A. F. S. A.

[18.](#) *Peruvian Antiquities*, by Rivero and Tschudi; the former director of the National Museum at Lima, the latter a doctor of philosophy and medicine.

[19.](#) "Under the broad range allowed by a descent from the sons of Noah," says Mr. John L. Stephens, to whom we are indebted for most excellent works on American antiquities, "the Jews, the Canaanites, the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Greeks, the Scythians in ancient times; the Chinese, the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Welsh, and the Spaniards in modern times, have had ascribed to them the honor of peopling America." *Central America*, vol. I, pp. 96, 97.

[20.](#) There are eight or ten such collections. Their contents for the most part, are published in Lord Kingsborough's monumental work. A list of them and a description will also be found in Bancroft's *Native Races*, vol. II, ch. 17.

[21.](#) See chapter 1, p. 33.

[22.](#) It was the French linguist and archaeologist, Jean Francois Champollion, who discovered from the Rosetta Stone the key to the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

[23.](#) Born 1486, died 1549.

[24.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. I, pp. 89, 90.

[25.](#) *Ancient America*, pp. 187, 188, J. D. Baldwin.

[26.](#) *Native Races*, Bancroft, vol. V, p. 147.

[27.](#) *Native Races*, vol. V, pp. 145, 146. The whole chapter from which the above passage is quoted deals with the subject of the early writers on ancient America, and could with profit be considered by the reader. W. H. Prescott also has a very choice set of notes on the subject of the same class of writers in his first book on the conquest of Mexico, especially those notes following each chapter on some special authority on whom he mainly relies for the statements in his text.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Book of Mormon, as already stated, requires the evidence of the existence of a very ancient civilization in the north continent of America, with its central and most enduring monuments in our Central American states. Also the evidences of a later civilization somewhat overlaying and intermixed with the former; the monuments of these two civilizations, however, may be somewhat confused by the rise of another, though inferior civilization, during the thousand years immediately preceding the advent of the Spaniards in America, which had begun to raise itself out of that chaos of confusion into which things were thrown by the destruction of the Nephites and their government. Under these circumstances it may be extremely difficult to separate these antiquities and assign each group to its proper division. But this much we feel confident can be done; evidence can be adduced that such ancient civilizations did exist; that the monuments of one has overlaid and intermixed with the others; that the central location of the first was in our Central States of America, and so far as such evidence is adduced, to that extent the claims of the Book of Mormon will be sustained. In the presentation of such evidence I can only take the humble part of compiler of it from the writings of others, since I lay no claim to original investigation of the matter; and even in the work of presenting the utterances of conceded authorities upon the subject, one stands momentarily confused, not because of the lack of matter to present to the reader, but in the matter of selecting from the great mass those passages suitable for our limited space, and which shall be most direct and convincing. With so much by way of introduction, then, I present first of all:—

I.

The Evidence of the Existence of Ancient Civilizations in America.

Considering the vast extent of these remains, [i. e. of ancient cities, pyramids and temples] spreading over more than half the continent, and that in Mexico, and South America, after the lapse of an unknown series of ages, they still retain much of ancient grandeur which "Time's effacing fingers" have failed to obliterate. It is certainly no wild flight of the imagination to conjecture that in ancient times, even coeval with the spread of science in the east, empires may have flourished here that would vie in power and extent with the Babylonian, the Median, or the Persian; and cities that might have rivaled Nineveh, and Tyre, and Sidon; for of these empires and these cities, the plains of Asia now exhibit fewer, and even less imposing relics, than are found of the former inhabitants of this country.^[1]

We venture to say that the aboriginal inhabitants of our hemisphere have not till this day received their meed for ancient bravery, nautical skill, and wonderful attainments in geography and in every branch of material advancement and of civilization generally. Ancient prehistoric America was, indeed, a civilized world. * * * * * Proceeding from north to south, we find from distance to distance unmistakable traces of mighty, skilful, and learned nations that had either wholly disappeared from the face of the earth, or had become degenerated and degraded to such an extent as to be irrecognizable at the time of not only the Spanish, but even of the Northman [tenth century] discoveries. * * * * * The Mayas [Central America] were intellectual giants, indeed. The ruins of their vast public works, of their costly edifices, of their sculptures and paintings, and of their finely carved symbolic writings attest the height of a civilization of which we might well be proud today. And yet all these evidences of a glorious past lay buried for long centuries before Columbus' discovery in the virgin forests of Yucatan. Palenque, Uxmal, Copan, and several other ruined cities of Central America are as grand and beautiful monuments on the cemeteries of the New World as are Troy, Babylon, and Thebes on those of the Old; and their antiquity does not seem to be less venerable. They certainly pertain to America's remotest period. They were ruins more than they are now, in the sixteenth century; the native of the neighboring region knew nothing of their origin, and no notice whatever of the existence of such cities appears in the annals of the surrounding civilized nations during the eight or nine centuries preceding the Spanish conquest. Bancroft is even of the opinion that the Maya grandeur was already at its height several centuries before Christ.^[2]

After speaking of various evidences of civilization in America, Nadaillac remarks:

But we need not give any further account of these great discoveries. We must return to the companions of Cortez to tell of the new wonders which awaited them. Even in the most remote districts in the primeval forests covering Chiapas, Guatemala, Honduras, and Yucatan, where, through the dense undergrowth a passage had often to be forced, axe in hand, statues, columns, hieroglyphics, unoccupied villages, abandoned palaces, and stately ruins, rose on every side, mute witnesses of past ages and of vanished races. Everywhere the conquerors were met by tokens, not only of a civilization even more ancient and probably more advanced than that of the races they subjugated, but also of struggles and wars, those scourges of humanity in every race and every clime.^[3]

Continuing further on in his admirable work, the same writer says:

Undoubtedly America bears witness to a venerable past; and without admitting the claims of some recent authors who are of opinion that when Europe was inhabited by wandering savages, whose only weapons were roughly hewn of stone, America was already peopled by men who built cities, raised monuments, and had attained to a high degree of culture, we must admit that their civilization and social organization can only have become what it was by degrees. * * * To erect the monuments of Mexico and Peru, the yet more ancient ones of Central America—the singular resemblance of which, in some particulars, to the temples and palaces of Egypt, strike the archaeologist—must have required skilled labor, a numerous population, and an established priesthood, such as could have developed only during the lapse of centuries. * * * To sum up: multitudes of races and nations have arisen upon the American continent and have disappeared, leaving no trace, but ruins, mounds, a few wrought stones, or fragments of pottery.^[4]

In the New World, mysterious mounds and gigantic earth-works arrest our attention. Here we find deserted mines, and there we can trace the sites of ancient camps and fortifications. The Indians of the prairies seem to be intruders on a fairer civilization. We find here evidences of a teeming population. In the presence of their imposing ruins, we can not think that nomadic savages built them. They give evidences rather of a people having fixed habitations, and seem to imply the possession of a higher civilization than that of the Indians. These questions demand solution; but how shall we solve the problem? Save here and there a deserted camp, or a burial mound, containing perhaps articles of use or adornment, all traces have vanished. Their earth-works and mounds are being rapidly leveled by the plow of modern times, and the scholar of the future can only learn from books of their mysterious builders. In Mexico, and further south, we find the ruins of great cities. To the student of antiquity, these far surpass in interest the ruined cities of the Nile or Euphrates valley. Babylon of old, with its walls, towers, and pleasure resorts, was indeed wonderful. In our own land cities, if not as ancient, yet fallen in more picturesque ruin, reward the labors of the explorer. Uxmal, Copan, and Palenque, invite our attention. Here are hieroglyphics in abundance, but no Rosetta Stone supplies the key by whose aid a Champollion can unravel the mystery.^[5]

Closely enveloped in the dense forests of Chiapas, Guatemala, Yucatan, and Honduras, the ruins of several ancient cities have been discovered, which are far superior in extent and magnificence to any seen in Aztec territory. * * * Most of these cities were abandoned and more or less unknown at the time of the conquest. They bear hieroglyphic inscriptions apparently identical in character; in other respects they resemble each other more than they resemble the Aztec ruins—or even other and apparently later works in Guatemala, and Honduras. All these remains bear evident marks of great antiquity. Their existence and similarity, the occupation of the whole country at some remote period by nations far advanced in civilization, and closely allied in manners and customs, if not in blood and language. Furthermore, the traditions of several of the most advanced nations point to a widespread civilization introduced among a numerous and powerful people by Votan and Zamna, who, or their successors, built the cities referred to, and founded great allied empires in Chiapas, Yucatan, and Guatemala; and moreover, the tradition is confirmed by the universality of one family of languages or dialects spoken among the civilized nations, and among their descendants to this day.^[6]

That the population of Central America (and in this term I include Mexico) was at one time very dense, and had attained to a high degree of civilization, higher even than that of Europe in the time of Columbus, there can be no question; and it is also probable, as I have shown, that they originally belonged to the white race.^[7]

Finally, from all we can gather from this momentous subject, we are compelled from the overwhelming amount of evidence to admit that mighty nations, with almost unbounded empire, with various degrees of improvement, have occupied the continent, and that, as in the old world, empire has succeed empire, rising one out of the other, from the jarring interests of the unwieldy and the ferocious mass—so also in this.^[8]

The foregoing is perhaps sufficient for the purpose of establishing the mere fact of the existence of extensive and highly developed civilization in America, especially as many of the quotations on some of the other divisions of the subject will also bear upon this point. I now take up the matter of the chief centers of those old civilizations.

II.

Chief Centers of Ancient American Civilization.

The following is from Baldwin's "Ancient America":

It has been said, not without reason, that the civilization found in Mexico by Spanish conquerors consisted, to a large extent, of "fragments from the wreck that befell the American civilization of antiquity." To find the chief seats and most abundant remains of the most remarkable civilization of this old American race, we must go still farther

south into Central America and some of the more southern states of Mexico. Here ruins of many ancient cities have been discovered, cities which must have been deserted and left to decay in ages previous to the beginning of the Aztec supremacy. Most of these ruins were found buried in dense forests, where, at the time of the Spanish conquest, they had been long hidden from observation.^[9]

Marcus Wilson, in speaking of the central location of the ancient American civilization and its probable "radiating points," says:

It is believed that the western shores of this continent, and perhaps both Mexico and Peru—equally distant from the equator, and in regions the most favorable for the increase and the support of human life, were the radiating points of early American civilization; from which, as from the hearts of empire, pulsation after pulsation sent forth their streams of life throughout the whole continent. But the spread of civilization appears to have been restricted, as we might reasonably expect to find it, to those portions of the continent where the rewards of agriculture would support a numerous population. Hence, following the course of the civilization, by the remains it has left us, we find it limited by the barren regions of upper Mexico, and the snows of Canada on the north, and the frosts of Patagonia on the south; and while in Mexico and Peru are found its grandest and most numerous monuments, on the outskirts they dwindle away in numbers and in importance.^[10]

In the Central American region of the western continent are found ruins of what are pronounced by all scholars to be the highest civilization, and the most ancient in time, of any in the New World. There it arose, flourished, and tottered to its fall. Its Glory had departed, its cities were a desolation, before the coming of the Spaniards. * * * * The most important ruins are in the modern states of Honduras, Guatemala, Chiapas, and especially Yucatan, the northern portion of this peninsula being literally studded with them. The river Usumacinta, and its numerous tributaries flowing in a northern direction through Chiapas, is regarded as the original home of the civilization whose ruins we are now to describe. From whence the tribes came that first settled in this valley is as yet an unsettled point. We notice that we have here another instance of the influence that fertile river valleys exert upon tribes settling therein. The stories told us of the civilization that flourished in primitive times in the valley of the Euphrates and the Nile are not more wonderful—the ruins perhaps not more impressive—than are the traditions still extant, or the material remains fallen in picturesque ruins, of the civilization that once on a time held sway in the Usumacinta valley.^[11]

Wherever there was a center of civilization, that is, wherever the surroundings favored the development of culture, tribes of different stocks enjoyed it to nearly an equal degree, as in central Mexico and Peru. By them it was distributed, and thus shaded off in all directions.^[12]

A brief description of some of these ruins of Central America cannot fail at this point to be both instructive and interesting. I begin with the description of Copan which, by mutual consent of authorities, we may regard as one of the most famous, as also the most ancient, of American ruins.^[13]

COPAN.

The ruins are situated in the west part of the modern state of Honduras, on the left bank of the Copan river, which empties into the Montague. The name Copan is applied to the ruins because of their vicinity to an adjoining hamlet of that name, so that Copan is not to be regarded as the true name of the ancient city. And now I quote the description from the works of John L. Stephens to whom the world is chiefly indebted for its knowledge of Central American ruins. I omit, however, the references to plans and engravings which occur in his excellent work:

The extent along the river, as ascertained by monuments still found, is more than two miles. There is one monument on the opposite side of the river, at the distance of a mile, on the top of a mountain two thousand feet high. Whether the city ever crossed the river, and extended to that monument, it is impossible to say. I believe not. At the rear is an unexplored forest, in which there may be ruins. There are no remains of palaces or private buildings, and the principal part is that which stands on the bank of the river, and may, perhaps, with propriety be called the Temple.

The temple is an oblong enclosure. The front or river wall extends on a right line north and south six hundred and twenty-four feet, and it is from sixty to ninety feet in height. It is made of cut stones, from three to six feet in length, and a foot and a half in breadth. In many places the stones have been thrown down by bushes growing out of the crevices, and in one place there is a small opening, from which the ruins are sometimes called by the Indians, Las Ventanas, or the windows. The other three sides consist of ranges of steps and pyramidal structures, rising from thirty to one hundred and forty feet in height on the slope. The whole line survey is two thousand eight hundred and sixty-six feet, which, though gigantic and extraordinary for a ruined structure of the aborigines, that the reader's imagination may not mislead him, I

consider it necessary to say, is not so large as the base of the great pyramid of Ghizeh.
* *

Near the southwest corner of the river wall and the south wall is a recess, which was probably once occupied by a colossal monument fronting the water, no part of which is now visible; probably it has fallen and been broken, and the fragments have been buried or washed away by the floods in the rainy season. Beyond are the ruins of two small pyramidal structures, to the largest of which is attached a wall running along the west bank of the river; this appears to have been one of the principal walls of the city; and between the two pyramids there seems to have been a gateway or principal entrance from the water.

The south wall runs at right angles to the river, beginning with a range of steps about thirty feet high, and each step about eighteen inches square. At the southeast corner is a massive pyramidal structure one hundred and twenty feet high on the slope. On the right are other remains of terraces and pyramidal buildings; and here also was probably a gateway, by a passage about twenty feet wide, into a quadrangular area two hundred and fifty feet square, two sides of which are massive pyramids one hundred and twenty feet high on the slope.

At the foot of these structures, and in different parts of the quadrangular area, are numerous remains of sculpture. At one point is a colossal monument richly sculptured, fallen, and ruined. Behind it fragments of sculpture, thrown from their place by trees, are strewn and lying loose on the side of the pyramid, from the base to the top; and among them our attention was forcibly arrested by rows of death's heads of gigantic proportions, still standing in their places about half way up the side of the pyramid; the effect was extraordinary.

Here follows the description of the gigantic stone monuments or carved images which were doubtless the idols of the ancient inhabitants of Copan. Resuming his general description, Mr. Stephens says:

The whole quadrangle is overgrown with trees, and interspersed with fragments of fine sculpture; particularly on the east side, and at the northwest corner is a narrow passage, which was probably a third gateway. On the right is a confused range of terraces running off into the forest, ornamented with death's heads, some of which are still in position, and others lying about as they have fallen or been thrown down. Turning northward, the range on the left hand continues a high, massive pyramidal structure, with trees growing out of it to the very top. At a short distance is a detached pyramid, tolerably perfect, about fifty feet square and thirty feet high. The range continues for a distance of about four hundred feet, decreasing somewhat in height, and along this there are but few remains of sculpture. The range of structures turn at right angles to the left, and runs to the river, joining the other extremity of the wall, at which we began our survey. The bank was elevated about thirty feet above the river, and had been protected by a wall of stone, most of which had fallen down.

The plan was complicated, and the whole ground, being overgrown with trees, difficult to make out. There was no entire pyramid, but at most, two or three pyramidal sides, and these joined on the terraces or other structures of the same kind. Beyond the wall or enclosure were walls, terraces, and pyramidal elevations running off into the forest, which sometimes confused us. Probably the whole was not erected at the same time, but additions were made and statues erected by different kings, or, perhaps in commemoration of important events in the history of the city. Along the whole line were ranges of steps with pyramidal elevations, probably crowned on the top with buildings or altars now ruined. All these steps of the pyramidal sides were painted and the reader may imagine the effect when the whole country was clear of forest and priest and people were ascending from the outside to the terraces, and thence to the holy places within to pay their adoration in the temple.

Then follows a description of pyramids and stone monuments and altars, together with stone tablets of hieroglyphics which, without the accompanying engravings of Mr. Stephens' work, would be unintelligible. Mr. Stephens visited the stone quarries which supplied the material for this magnificent city, ruins of whose public buildings doubtless alone remain, and if these extensive ruins but mark the site and grandeur of the public buildings, as is most probable, then how extensive indeed must have been the old city whose ruins we call Copan! While at the quarry, some two miles distant from the ruins, Mr. Stephens indulged in the following reflections:

The range lies about two miles north from the river, and runs east and west. At the foot of it we crossed a wild stream. The side of the mountain was overgrown with bushes and trees. The top was bare, and commanded a magnificent view of a dense forest broken only by the winding of the Copan river, and the clearings for the haciendas of Don Gregorio and Don Miguel.^[14] The city was buried in forest and entirely hidden from sight. Imagination peopled the quarry with workmen, and laid bare the city to their view. Here, as the sculptor worked, he turned to the theatre of his glory, as the Greek did to the Acropolis of Athens, and dreamed of immortal fame. Little did he imagine that the time would come when his works would perish, his race be extinct, his city a

desolation and abode for reptiles, for strangers to gaze at and wonder by what race it had once been inhabited.

Relative to the antiquity and probable cause of the desertion of Copan, Mr. Stephens writes:

In regard to the age of the desolate city I will not at present offer any conjecture. Some idea might perhaps be formed from the accumulations of earth, and the gigantic trees growing on the top of the ruined structures, but it would be uncertain and unsatisfactory. Nor shall I at this moment offer any conjecture in regard to the people who built it, or to the time when or the means by which it was depopulated, and became a desolation and ruin; whether it fell by the sword, or famine, or pestilence. The trees which shroud it may have sprung from the blood of its slaughtered inhabitants; they may have perished howling with hunger; or pestilence, like the cholera, may have piled its streets with dead, and driven forever the feeble remnants from their homes; of which dire calamities to other cities we have authentic accounts, in eras both prior and subsequent to the discovery of the country by the Spaniards. One thing I believe, that its history is graven on its monuments. No Champollion has yet brought to them the energies of his inquiring mind. Who shall read them?

"Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say 'here was or is,' where all is doubly night?"^[15]

PALENQUE

I next call attention to the ruins of Palenque, situated about two hundred and sixty miles northwest from Copan in the modern state of Chiapas in the valley of the Usumacinta river. Our space will not admit of the elaborate and detailed description given of this ancient city by the writers who have visited it, and whose descriptions are usually attended with references to numerous cuts of pyramids, temples, ruined walls, statuary, tablets, etc. I have therefore decided to abridge the description of this city and its chief monuments from the admirable work of Nadaillac:

The monuments of Palenque are justly reckoned amongst the most remarkable in Chiapas.^[16] The town stands in the region watered by the Usumacinta, where settled the first immigrants of whom it has been possible to distinguish traces. The position of Palenque, at the foot of the first buttresses of the mountain chain, on the banks of the little river Otolum, one of the tributaries of the Tulija, was admirably chosen. The streets extended for a length of from six to eight leagues, (from eighteen to twenty-four miles) irregularly following the course of the streams which descend from the mountains and furnish the inhabitants with an abundant supply of water necessary to them. At the present day the ruins rise in solitude, which adds to the effect produced by them. They were long altogether unknown; Cortez, in one of his expeditions, passed within a few miles of Palenque without suspecting its existence; and it was not till 1746, that chance led to its discovery by a cure of the neighborhood. * * * * *

Among the best preserved ruins may be mentioned the palace, the temple of the three tablets, the temple of the bas-reliefs, the temple of the cross, and the temple of the sun. We keep the names given by various explorers in the absence of better ones. There are others, but of less importance. Dupaix speaks of eleven buildings still standing, and a few years before A. Del Rio mentioned twenty; Waldeck says eighteen, and Maler, who visited the ruins of Palenque in 1877, fixes the number of the temples or palaces at twelve. These contradictions are more apparent than real, and are explained by the different impressions of each traveler, and the divisions he thought it necessary to adopt.

The palace, the most important building of Palenque, rests on a truncated pyramid about forty feet high, the base of which measures from three hundred and ten feet by two hundred and sixty. The inside of this pyramid is of earth; the external faces are covered with large slabs; steps lead up to the principal building, which forms a quadrilateral of two hundred and twenty-eight feet by one hundred and eighty; the walls, which are two or three feet thick, are of rubble, crowned by a frieze framed between two double cornices. Inside as well as outside they are covered with a very fine and durable stucco, painted red or blue, black or white. The principal front faces the east; it includes fourteen entrances about nine feet wide, separated by pilasters ornamented with figures. These figures measure more than six feet high, and are full of movement; while above the head of each are hieroglyphics inlaid in the stucco. * * * * *

The inside of the palace corresponds with the magnificence of the outside; there are galleries forming a peristyle all around the court; and the rooms are decorated with granite bas-reliefs, grotesque figures, some thirteen feet high. * * * The expression of the figures speaks well for the skill of the artist; but the execution is weak, suggesting an art in decadence rather than the ruggedness of one in its infancy. These rooms were united by corridors. * * * The architects of Palenque were ignorant of the arch, and

their vaults were formed of oversailing courses, one above the other, as in the cyclopean monuments of Greece and Italy. The building is finished off with a tower of three stories, measuring thirty feet square at the base. Here, too, we find symbolical decorations, which are very rich and in a very good state of preservation.

Our author, after excusing himself from mentioning many of the monuments of Palenque, for want of space, says:

We must, however, mention one of them, situated on the other bank of the Otolum, and known under the name of the Temple of the Cross. It rises from a truncated pyramid and forms a quadrilateral with three openings in each face, separated by massive pilasters, some ornamented with hieroglyphics and some ornamented with human figures. The frieze is also covered with human figures, and amongst those still visible Stephens mentions a head and two torsos, which, in their perfection of form, recall Greek art. The openings, all at right angles, lead into an inside gallery communicating with three little rooms. The central one of these rooms contains an altar, which fairly represents an open chest, ornamented with a little frieze with a margin. From the two upper extremities of this frieze springs two wings, recalling the mode of ornamentation so often employed in the pediments of Egyptian monuments.

Above the altar was originally placed the tablet of the cross, which was afterward torn from its position by the hand of a fanatic, who chose to see in it the sacred sign of the Christian faith, miraculously preserved by the ancient inhabitants of the palace. The tablet was taken down and then abandoned, we know not why, in the midst of the forest covering part of the ruins. Here it was that the Americans discovered part of it, took possession of it, and carried it to Washington, where it forms part of the collection of the National Museum. The center represents a cross, resting upon a hideous figure, and surmounted by a grotesque bird. On the right, a figure on foot is offering presents; on the left, another figure, in a stiff attitude seems to be praying to the divinity. The costume of these two persons is unlike any that is now in use; and above their heads we can make out several hieroglyphical characters. A slab on the right is also covered with them. In the present state of knowledge it is impossible to make out whether these inscriptions are prayers to the gods, the history of the country or that of the temple, the name or the dedication of the founders.

At the end of the sanctuary recently discovered near Palenque by Maler, are three slabs of sculptured stone in low relief. On the right and left are hieroglyphics; in the center a cross, surmounted by a head of strange appearance, wearing around the neck a collar with a medallion; above this head is a bird, and on either side are figures exactly like those of the temple of the cross. Evidently this was a hieratic type, from which the artist was not allowed to depart. * * *

We cannot leave the ruins of Palenque without mentioning a statue, remarkable for more than one reason. The calm and smiling expression of the face resembles that of some of the Egyptian statues; the head-dress is a little like that of the Assyrians; there is a necklace around the neck; the figure presses upon its bosom an instrument and rests its left hand upon an ornament, the meaning of both of which it is difficult to imagine. The plinth of the statue has a cartouch with a hieroglyphical inscription, probably giving the name of the god or hero to whom it was dedicated. There is a very distinct resemblance in some of these hieroglyphics to those of Egypt.^[17]

In concluding an extended description of the ruins of Palenque, Bancroft says:

I close my account of Maya antiquities with the following brief quotations respecting Palenque, and the degree of art exhibited in her ruined monuments: "These sculptured figures are not caricatures, but display an ability on the part of the artists to represent the human form in every posture, and with anatomical fidelity. Nor are the people in human life here delineated. The figures are royal or priestly; some are engaged in offering up sacrifices, or are in an attitude of devotion; many hold a sceptre, or token baton of authority, their apparel is gorgeous; their head-dresses are elaborately arrayed, and decorated with long feathers."^[18] "Many of the reliefs exhibit the finest and most beautiful outlines, and the neatest combinations which remind one of the best Indian works of art." "The ruins of Palenque have been perhaps overrated; these remains are fine, doubtless, in their antique rudeness; they breathe out in the midst of their solitude a certain imposing grandeur; but it must be affirmed, without disputing their architectural importance, that they do not justify in their details the enthusiasm of archaeologists. The lines which make up the ornamentation are faulty in rectitude; the designs in symmetry; the sculpture in finish; I except, however, the symbolic tablets, the sculpture of which seemed to me very correct." "I admire the bas-reliefs of Palenque on the facades of her old palaces; they interest me, move me, and fill my imagination; but let them be taken to the Louvre, and I see nothing but rude sketches which leave me cold and indifferent." "The most remarkable remains of an advanced ancient civilization hitherto discovered on our continent." "Their general characteristics are simplicity, gravity, and solidity."^[19] "While superior in the execution of the details, the Palenque artist was far inferior to the Egyptian in the number and variety of the

objects displayed by him."^[20]

Mr. John L. Stephens, whose comments upon the cities he visited in Central America, are always interesting, remarks of the ruins of Palenque:

What we had before our eyes was grand, curious, and remarkable enough. Here were the remains of a cultivated, polished, and peculiar people, who had passed through all the stages incident to the rise and fall of nations; reached their golden age, and perished, entirely unknown. The links which connected them with the human family were severed and lost, and these were the only memorials of their footsteps upon earth. We lived in the ruined palaces of their kings; we went up to their desolate temples and fallen altars; and wherever we moved we saw the evidences of their taste, their skill in arts, their wealth and power. In the midst of desolation and ruin we looked back to the past, cleared away the gloomy forest, and fancied every building perfect, with its terraces and pyramids, its sculptured, and painted ornaments, grand, lofty, and imposing, and overlooking an immense inhabited plain; we called back into life the strange people who gazed at us in sadness from the walls; pictured them, in fanciful costumes and adorned with plumes of feathers, ascending the terraces of the palace and the steps leading to the temples; and often we imagined a scene of unique and gorgeous beauty and magnificence, realizing the creations of Oriental poets, the very spot which fancy would have selected for the "Happy Valley" of Rasselas. In the romance of the world's history nothing ever impressed me more forcibly than the spectacle of this once great and lovely city, overturned, desolate, and lost; discovered by accident, overgrown with trees for miles around, and without even a name to distinguish it. Apart from everything else, it was a mourning witness to the world's mutations:—

* * * * *

"Nations melt
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go."^[21]

Footnotes

1. *History of United States*, Marcus Wilson, Book I, *American Antiquities*, p. 94.
2. *History of America Before Columbus*, P. De Roo, vol I, pp. 173, 176, 177, 178.
3. *Pre-Historic America*, pp. 10, 11.
4. *Pre-Historic America*, pp. 13, 14
5. *The Pre-Historic World, or Vanished Races*, E. A. Allen, introduction, pp. 23, 24.
6. *Native Races*, vol. II, pp. 116, 117, Bancroft.
7. *Atlantis*, (Donnelly) p. 349.
8. *American Antiquities*, Priest, p. 186.
9. *Ancient America*, (Baldwin) pp. 92, 93.
10. *History of the United States*, Book I, *American Antiquities*, pp. 93, 94.
11. *The Pre-Historic World, or Vanished Races*, by E. A. Allen (1885), pp. 564, 566. I quote this passage upon the location, extent and grandeur of the ancient ruins of Central America with the greater pleasure because Mr. Allen is one of the authors who, as far as possible, discount the extent, greatness and very remote antiquity of the civilization represented by American ruins; though for all this his work is one of the most conscientious and valuable upon the subject.
12. *The American Races*, Daniel G. Brinton, p. 44.
13. Bancroft, *Native Races*, p. 81, also pp. 82, 104.
14. Modern plantations near the ruins.
15. *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, Stephens (1841), vol. I, ch. 7. Those who would become further acquainted with the ruins of Copan will find elaborate descriptions in Bancroft's *Native Races*, vol. IV, ch. 3. His foot notes citing various authorities on the subject are especially valuable.
16. And for matter of that in Central America.
17. *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, ch. 7.
18. Foster's *Pre-Historic Races*, pp. 338, 339. Klemm, *Cultur-Geschichte*, tom. 5, pp. 161-3.

[19.](#) Morelet, *Voyage*, tom. 1, pp. 273, 274. Mayer's *Mex. Aztec*, etc., vol. II, p. 172; Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Hist. Nat. Civ.* tom. 1, p. 85.

[20.](#) *Native Races*, vol. IV, pp. 364, 365, and notes.

[21.](#) *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, John L. Stephens, vol. II, pp. 356, 357.

CHAPTER XXVII.

INDIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN
ANTIQUITIES. Continued.

I.

Antiquity of American Ruins

We have now before us a subject on which the authorities on American Antiquities are most divided, and I shall not attempt in this writing to reconcile them or dispute the position of either class; but after a few quotations from these authorities shall leave the question of the antiquity of American ruins found in Central America and elsewhere as I find it, an open question. "There is nothing in the buildings to indicate the date of their erection—that they were or were not standing at the commencement of the Christian era," says H. H. Bancroft, in speaking of the cities and other monuments of Yucatan—and it is a remark which could with equal propriety be made of nearly all the ruined cities of America. "We may see now, abandoned and uncared for," he continues, "they may have resisted the ravages of the elements for three or four centuries. How many centuries they may have stood guarded and kept in repair by the builders and their descendants, we can only conjecture."^[1] Later, in the same work, our author discusses the question of the age of Palenque and other ruins in the following manner:

I confess my inability to judge from the degree of art displayed respectively in the peninsular ruins and those of Palenque, which are the older; I will go further, and while in a confessional mood, confess to a shade of skepticism the ability of other writers to form a well-founded judgment in the matter. Authors are, however, unanimous in the opinion that Palenque was founded before any of the cities of Yucatan, an opinion which is supported to a certain extent by traditional history, which represents Votan's empire in Chiapas and Tabasco as preceding chronologically the allied Maya empire in the peninsula. If the Yucatan cities flourished, as I have conjectured, between the third and tenth centuries, Palenque may be conjecturally referred to a period between the first and eighth centuries. I regard the theory that Palenque was built by the Toltecs after their expulsion from Anahuac in the tenth century as wholly without foundation; and I believe that it would be equally impossible to prove or disprove that the palace was standing at the birth of Christ.^[2]

Following this passage, Mr. Bancroft gives a valuable collection of opinions in his notes where he represents M. Violett-le-Duc as expressing the belief that Palenque was built probably some centuries before Christ by a people in which "yellow blood predominated, although with some Aryan intermixture; but that the Yucatan cities owe their foundation to the same people at a later epoch and under a much stronger influence of the white races." Dupaix he represents as believing that the buildings were reared by a flatheaded race that has become extinct, and who, after writing his narrative, made up his mind that Palenque was antediluvian or at least that a floor had covered it. Lenoir he represents as saying that, according to all voyagers and students, the ruins of Palenque are not less than three thousand years old; while Catlin, a French writer, in a French periodical for March, 1867, he represents as asserting that the ruined cities of Palenque and Uxmal have within themselves the evidence that the ocean has been their bed for thousands of years, but the material is soft limestone and presents no water lines. Foster, the author of *Pre-Historic Races* (pp. 398-9), is represented as regarding the ruins of Palenque as the work of an extinct race, and then he proceeds with a number of citations for a more modern origin. The valuable notes will be found in Bancroft's *Native Races*, vol. IV, pp. 262-3.

Prescott, in his treatise on the origin of Mexican civilization, offers the following reflections on the antiquity of American ruins:

It is impossible to contemplate these mysterious monuments of a lost civilization, without a strong feeling of curiosity as to who were their architects, and what is their probable age. The data on which to rest our conjectures of their age, are not very substantial; although some find in them a warrant for an antiquity of thousands of years, coeval with the architecture of Egypt and Hindostan. But the interpretation of

hieroglyphics, and the apparent duration of trees, are vague and unsatisfactory. And how far can we derive an argument from the discoloration and dilapidated condition of the ruins, when we find so many structures of the Middle Ages dark and mouldering with decay, while the marbles of the Acropolis, and the gray stone of Paestum, still shine in their primitive splendor? There are, however, undoubted proofs of considerable age to be found there. Trees have shot up in the midst of the buildings, which measure, it is said, more than nine feet in diameter. A still more striking fact is the accumulation of vegetable mould in one of the courts, to the depth of nine feet above the pavement. This in our latitude would be decisive of a very great antiquity. But, in the rich soil of Yucatan, and under the ardent sun of the tropics, vegetation bursts forth with irrepressible exuberance, and generations of plants succeed each other without intermission, leaving an accumulation of deposits, that would have perished under the northern winter. Another evidence of their age is afforded by the circumstance, that, in one of the courts of Uxmal, the granite pavement, on which the figures of tortoises were raised in relief, is worn nearly smooth by the feet of the crowds who have passed over it; a curious fact, suggesting inferences both in regard to the age and population of the place. Lastly, we have authority for carrying back the date of many of these ruins to a certain period, since they were found in a deserted, and probably dilapidated state by the first Spaniards who entered the country. Their notices, indeed, are brief and casual, for the old conquerors had little respect for works of art; and it is fortunate for these structures, that they had ceased to be the living temples of the gods, since no merit of architecture, probably, would have availed to save them from the general doom of the monuments of Mexico.^[3]

It is proper, to say, however, that Mr. Prescott declares that some of the remarks in the above paragraph would have been omitted had he enjoyed the benefit of Mr. Stephens' researches when it was originally written. Mr. Stephens, it should be remembered, is among those who grant no great antiquity to the ruins. On this subject, however, I find the fairest treatment in the profound reflections of Mr. Baldwin:

The Mexican and Central American ruins make it certain that in ancient times an important civilization existed in that part of the continent, which must have begun at a remote period in the past. If they have any significance, this must be accepted as an ascertained fact. A large portion of them had been forgotten in the forests, or became mythical and mysterious, long before the arrival of the Spaniards.

In 1520, three hundred and fifty years ago, the forest which so largely covers Yucatan, Guatemala, and Chiapa was growing as it grows now. * * * * How many additional centuries it had existed no one can tell. If its age could be told, it would still be necessary to consider that the ruins hidden in it are much older than the forest, and that the period of civilization they represent closed long before it was established.

In the ages previous to the beginning of this immense forest, the region it covers was the seat of civilization which grew up to a high degree of development, flourished a long time, and finally declined, until its cities were deserted, and its cultivated fields left to the wild influences of nature, it may be safely assumed that both the forest-covered ruins and the forest itself are far older than the Aztec period; but who can tell how much older? Copan, first discovered and described three hundred years ago, was then as strange to the natives dwelling near it as the old Chaldean ruins are to the Arabs who wander over the wasted plains of Lower Mesopotamia. Native tradition had forgotten its history and become silent in regard to it. How long had ruined Copan been in this condition? No one can tell. Manifestly it was forgotten, left buried in the forest without recollection of its history, long before Montezuma's people, the Aztecs, rose to power; and it is easily understood that this old city had an important history previous to that unknown time in the past when war, revolution or some other agency of destruction, put an end to its career and left it to become what it is now.

Moreover, these old ruins, in all cases, show us only the cities last occupied in the period to which they belong. Doubtless others still older preceded them; and, besides, it can be seen that some of the ruined cities which can now be traced were several times renewed by reconstructions. We must consider, also, that building magnificent cities is not the first work of an original civilization. The development was necessarily gradual. Its first period was more or less rude. The art of building and ornamenting such edifices arose slowly. Many ages must have been required to develop such admirable skill in masonry and ornamentation. Therefore the period between the beginning of this mysterious development of civilized life and the first builders who used cut stone laid in mortar and cement, and covered their work with beautifully sculptured ornaments and inscriptions, must have been very long.

We have no measure of the time, no clew to the old dates, nothing whatever, beyond such considerations as I have stated, to warrant even a vague hypothesis. It can be seen clearly that the beginning of this old civilization was much older than the earliest great cities, and, also, that these were much more ancient than the time when any of the later built or reconstructed cities whose relics still exist, were left to decay. If we suppose Palenque to have been deserted some six hundred years previous to the

Spanish conquest, this date will carry us back only to the last days of its history as an inhabited city. Beyond it, in the distant past, is a vast period in which the civilization represented by Palenque was developed, made capable of building such cities, and then carried on through the many ages during which cities became numerous, flourished, grew old, and gave place to others, until the long history of Palenque itself began. * * *
* * * * *

No well considered theory of these ruins can avoid the conclusion that most of them are very ancient, and that, to find the origin of the civilization they represent, we must go far back into the "deep of antiquity." * * * *

Nevertheless, some of them must be very old. The forest established since the ruin began, the entire disappearance of every thing more perishable than stone, the utter oblivion which veiled their history in the time of Montezuma, and probably long previous to his time, all these facts bear witness to their great antiquity. In many of them, as at Quirigua and Kabah, the stone structures have become masses of debris; and even at Copan, Palenque, and Mitla, only a few of them are sufficiently well preserved to show us what they were in the great days of their history. Meanwhile, keep in mind that the ruined cities did not begin their present condition until the civilization that created them had declined; and, also, that if we could determine exactly the date when they were deserted and left to decay, we should only reach that point in the past where their history as inhabited cities was brought to a close.

Take Copan, for instance. This city may have become a ruin during the time of the Toltecs, which began long before the Christian era and ended some five or six centuries probably before the country was invaded by Cortez. It was built before their time, for the style of writing, and many features of the architecture and ornamentation, show the workmanship of their predecessors, judging by the historical intimation found in the old books and traditions. We may suppose it to have been an old city at the time of the Toltec invasion, although not one of the first cities built by that more ancient and more cultivated people by whom this old American civilization was originated.^[4]

From the foregoing it will be apparent how unsatisfactory are the conclusions respecting the age of America's ruined cities and monuments of antiquity; and since, as Mr. H. H. Bancroft remarks, there is nothing in the ruins themselves by which their age may be determined, it is clear that all the authorities are merely dealing in conjecture concerning them. The value of that conjecture will, of course, depend upon the general breadth of knowledge and judgment of the individual expressing it. This much may be safely claimed, so far as the Book of Mormon is concerned, in the question: there is nothing as to the age of American ruins that contradicts its statements, nor can I conceive of the rising of any circumstance in connection with the age of American ruined cities that would conflict with its claims. If it should turn out eventually that all the monuments of American ruins are of comparatively modern origin, that is, suppose they have arisen within that thousand years preceding the advent of the Spaniards, who came early in the sixteenth century, it could then be claimed that they were the monuments of Lamanite civilization merely; and that the monuments of the Jaredite and Nephite civilization had passed away, or that the monuments of Lamanite civilization were built in the midst of the monuments of the earlier civilizations, and so intermingled as to confuse everything and render classification impossible. If investigation, however, should finally establish the fact that the ruined cities of America are the monuments of very ancient and perhaps of successive civilizations, it would tend in a positive way to establish the truth of the Book of Mormon more clearly, and I now proceed to the consideration of that branch of the subject.

II.

Successive Civilizations.

Scattered over the southern plateaus are heaps of architectural remains and monumental piles. Furthermore, native traditions, both orally transmitted and hieroglyphically recorded by means of legible picture-writings, afford us a tolerably clear view of the civilized nations during a period of several centuries preceding the Spanish conquest, together with passing glances, through momentary clearings in mythologic clouds, at historical epochs much more remote. Here we have as aids to this analysis—aids almost wholly wanting among the so-called savage tribes—antiquities, traditions, history, carrying the student far back into the mysterious New World past; and hence it is that from its simultaneous revelation and eclipse, American civilization would otherwise offer a more limited field for investigation than American savagism, yet by the introduction of this new element the field is widely extended.

Nor have we even yet reached the limits of our resources for the investigation of this New World civilization. In these relics of architecture and literature, of mythology and tradition, there are clear indications of an older and higher type of culture than that brought immediately to the knowledge of the invaders; of a type that had temporarily deteriorated, perhaps through the influence of long-continued and bloody conflicts, civil and foreign, by which the more warlike rather than the more highly cultured nations had been brought into prominence and power. But this anterior and superior

civilization, resting largely as it does on vague tradition, and preserved to our knowledge in general allusions rather than in detail, may, like the native condition since the conquest, be utilized to the best advantage here as illustrative of the later and better-known, if somewhat inferior civilization of the sixteenth century, described by the conqueror, the missionary, and the Spanish historian.^[5]

In addition to the "passing glances" through "momentary clearings" in the mythological clouds "at historical epochs much more remote" than those "several centuries preceding the Spanish conquest," there is also the evidence afforded by the different ages in which the cities of America now in ruins were built; the difference being so marked in some instances as to suggest not only different ages for their construction, but their construction by different races. "That a long time must have passed between the erection of Copan and Utatlan,^[6] the civilization of the builders meantime undergoing great modification, involving probably the introduction of new elements from foreign sources, is a theory supported by a careful study of the two classes of ruins.^[7] * * * Then we have the strong differences noticeable between Uxmal^[8] and Palenque, which lead us to conclude that these cities must have been built either at widely different epochs, or by branches of the Maya race which have long been separated; or by branches, which, under the influence of foreign tribes, lived under greatly modified institutions."^[9]

Speaking of the ruins at Quiche, Mr. Stephens says:

The point to which we directed our attention was to discover some resemblance to the ruins of Copan and Quirigua; but we did not find statues, or carved figures, or hieroglyphics, nor could we learn that any had ever been found there. If there had been such evidences we should have considered these ruins the works of the same race of people, but in the absence of such evidences we believed that Copan and Quirigua were cities of another race and of a much older date.^[10]

On this point of distinct eras in American civilization, Baldwin says:

It is a point of no little interest that these old constructions belong to different periods in the past, and represent somewhat different phases of civilization. Uxmal, which is supposed to have been partly inhabited when the Spaniards arrived in the country, is plainly much more modern than Copan or Palenque. This is easily traced in the ruins. Its edifices were finished in a different style, and show fewer inscriptions. Round pillars, somewhat in the Doric style, are found at Uxmal, but none like the square, richly carved pillars, bearing inscriptions, discovered in some of the other ruins. Copan and Palenque, and even Kabah, in Yucatan, may have been very old cities, if not already old ruins, when Uxmal was built. Accepting the reports of explorers as correct, there is evidence in the ruins that Quirigua is older than Copan, and that Copan is older than Palenque. The old monuments in Yucatan represent several distinct epochs in the ancient history of that peninsula. Some of them are kindred to those hidden in the great forest, and reminded us more of Palenque than of Uxmal. Among those described, the most modern, or most of these, are in Yucatan; they belong to the time when the kingdom of the Mayas flourished. Many of the others belong to ages previous to the rise of this kingdom; and in ages still earlier, ages older than the great forest, there were other cities, doubtless, whose remains have perished utterly, or were long ago removed from us in the later constructions.

The evidence of repeated reconstructions in some of the cities before they were deserted has been pointed out by explorers. I have quoted what Charnay says of it in his description of Mitla. At Palenque, as at Mitla, the oldest work is the most artistic and admirable. Over this feature of the monuments, and the manifest signs of their difference in age, the attention of investigators lingered in speculation. They find in them a significance which is stated as follows by Brasseur de Bourbourg: "Among the edifices forgotten by time in the forests of Mexico and Central America, we find architectural characteristics so different from each other, that it is impossible to attribute them all to the same people as to believe they were all built at the same epoch." In his view, "the substruction at Mayapan, some of those at Tulha, and a great part of those at Palenque, are among the older remains. These are not the oldest cities whose remains are still visible, but they may have been built, in part, upon the foundation of cities much more ancient. No well considered theory of these ruins can avoid the conclusion that most of them are very ancient, and that, to find the origin of the civilization they represent, we must go far back into the 'deeps of antiquity.'"^[11]

Further on, in speaking of the Aztecs and their civilization, Mr. Baldwin says:

They were less advanced in many things than their predecessors. Their skill in architecture and architectural ornamentation did not enable them to build such cities as Mitla and Palenque, and their "picture writing" was a much ruder form of the graphic art than the phonetic system of the Mayas and Quiches. It does not appear that they ever went so far in literary improvements as to adopt this simpler and more complete system for any purpose whatever. If the country had never, in the previous ages, felt the influence of a higher culture than that of the Aztecs, it would not have now, and never could have had, ruined cities like Mitla, Copan and Palenque. Not only

was the system of writing shown by the countless inscriptions quite beyond the attainments of Aztec art, but also the abundant sculptures and the whole system of decoration found in the old ruins.^[12]

"Two distinct classes of ruins appear to have been observed in Central America," says Nadaillac.^[13] And then later, "All the Central American tribes do not seem to have lived in an equally degraded condition before the period of the Mayas. Ruins of considerable extent are met with in Guatemala. These consist of undressed stones similar to those used in the cyclopean buildings of Greece and Syria; but no tradition refers to their origin. They are, however, attributed with some reason to a race driven back by conquest, and superior in culture to the people overcome by the Maya invasion of Central America."^[14]

Nor is it alone in the differences that exist between some of these ancient ruins, proclaiming for them at least erection in different ages, and perhaps by different races, that the idea of successive civilizations in Ancient America is established. In the matter of language no less than in ruins is this fact proclaimed. "Traces are also supposed to have been met with of a more ancient language than the Maya, Nahuac or their derivatives," remarks Nadaillac, in a footnote to page 264 of his *Pre-Historic America*, and cites Humboldt's *Views of the Cordilleras* in support of his statement. This, however, is a subject which is too extensive to be considered here.

Closely connected with the subject of successive civilizations is also that of ancient migrations, but that is a matter I shall treat in another chapter, and more especially for another reason than maintaining successive civilizations, as I esteem what is here set down as sufficient proof for the existence of successive civilizations in ancient America.

III.

Peruvian Antiquities.

It will be observed that thus far, in dealing with American antiquities, I have said nothing concerning Peru and the monuments of its civilization. Still, as Book of Mormon peoples inhabited South America as well as North America, some attention should be paid to the monuments of Peruvian civilization. For the general description of South American antiquities I find what Professor Baldwin says to be most acceptable:

The ruins of Ancient Peru are found chiefly on the elevated tablelands of the Andes, between Quito and Lake Titicaca; but they can be traced five hundred miles farther south, to Chili, and throughout the region connecting these high plateaus with the Pacific coast. The great district to which they belong extends north and south about two thousand miles. When the marauding Spaniards arrived in the country, this whole region was the seat of a populous and prosperous empire, complete in its civil organization, supported by an efficient system of industry, and presenting a very notable development of some of the more important arts of civilized life. These ruins differ from those in Mexico and Central America. No inscriptions are found in Peru; there is no longer a "marvelous abundance of decorations;" nothing is seen like the monoliths of Copan, or the bas-reliefs of Palenque. The method of building is different; the Peruvian ruins show us remains of cities, temples, palaces, other edifices of various kinds, fortresses, aqueducts (one of them four hundred and fifty miles long), great roads (extending through the whole length of the empire), and terraces on the sides of mountains. For all these constructions the builders used cut stone laid in mortar or cement, and their work was done admirably, but it is everywhere seen that the masonry, although sometimes ornamented, was generally plain in style and always massive. The antiquities in this region have not been as much explored and described as those north of the isthmus, but their general character is known, and particular descriptions of some of them have been published.^[15]

The chief thing to be noted with reference to South American monuments of ancient civilization is the fact that, if the theory of the first landing of the Nephite colony from Jerusalem was in South America, and within modern Chili—then they are located along the line of supposed Nephite movement from thirty degrees south latitude northward along the western plateau of South America, though it must be confessed that during their movements northward the Nephites were not sufficiently numerous nor did they stay sufficiently long in the southern part of the region now covered with ancient ruins to erect such permanent monuments of civilization as are now to be found there in ruins. In their alleged occupancy of the northern section of the region it is different. There, in the land of Nephi and the land of Anti-Lehi-Nephi—supposed to embrace say the northern part of Peru and Ecuador,—we have reason to believe they stayed a sufficient length of time and were also sufficiently numerous to leave enduring monuments of their sojourn in that country. For the existence of the more southern monuments we must suppose one of two things, or perhaps both of them united, viz.:

First: Lamanites who remained in the far south paid more attention to civilized pursuits than has usually been accredited to them, and the remarks of the Book of Mormon concerning the Lamanites being an idle people, living upon the fruits of the chase, and their marauding excursions into Nephite lands are to be more especially applied to those Lamanites more immediately in contact with the Nephites, while further southward they were pursuing the arts of

peace. Or, second: that after the fall of the Nephites at Cumorah there were strong colonies of Lamanites that pushed their way through Central America down into Peru, subdued the inhabitants who had remained there and established themselves as the ruling class, constituting, in fact, the invasion of the Incas, under whom arose the monuments of civilization found in the land by the Spaniards when they invaded it. The difference between the monuments found in Peru and those found in Mexico and Central America arises, in my judgment, from the fact that there was not present in South America the monuments of the great Jaredite civilization to crop up through and become intermingled with the Nephite and Lamanite monuments of civilization.

The whole subject of Book of Mormon peoples being the authors of very ancient Peruvian civilization is full of difficulty.

IV.

The Mound Builders.

As I have noted South American antiquities, so also I think it necessary to note the more northern antiquities of North America—the works of the Mound Builders of the valleys of the Mississippi and its tributaries. It is matter of common knowledge that throughout the region of country just named there exists in great number artificial hillocks of earth, "nearly always constructed," says Nadaillac, "with a good deal of precision." "They are of various forms, round, oval, square, very rarely polygonal or triangular. Their height varies from a few inches to more than ninety feet, and their diameter varies from three to about a thousand feet."^[16] Evidently the mounds were erected for a variety of purposes, and the author last quoted, following Mr. Squier^[17] and Mr. Short,^[18] makes the following classification: 1, defensive works; 2, sacred enclosures; 3, temples; 4, altar mounds; 5, sepulchral mounds, and 6, mounds representing animals. Short (*North Americans*, p. 81) gives slightly different classifications, as follows: I., Enclosures: for defense; for religious purposes; miscellaneous. II., Mounds of sacrifice: for temple sites; of sepulchre; of observation."^[19]

On the subject of the mounds being erected for purposes of fortification, Nadaillac says:

The whole of the space separating the Alleghanies from the Rocky Mountains affords a succession of entrenched camps, fortifications generally made of earth. There were used ramparts, stockade, and trenches near many eminences, and nearly every junction of two large rivers. These works bear witness to the intelligence of the race, which has so long been looked upon as completely barbarous and wild, and an actual system of defences in connection with each other can in some cases be made out with observatories on adjacent heights, and concentric ridges of earth for the protection of the entrances. War was evidently an important subject of thought with the Mound Builders. All the defensive remains occur in the neighborhood of water courses, and the best proof of the skill shown in the choice of sites is shown by the number of flourishing cities, such as Cincinnati, St. Louis, Newark, Portsmouth, Frankfort, New Madrid, and many others, which have risen in the same situations in modern times.^[20]

Concerning the matter of the Mound Builders in general we are again in the presence of a subject concerning which there is very great diversity of opinions on the part of authorities. Learned opinion is divided as to whether the mounds represent an indigenous or exotic civilization; whether they were built by the ancestors of the near or remote Indian tribes of North America, or by a race now extinct, or by some mysterious process or other, "vanished." Also they differ as to the antiquity of the mounds, some ascribing to them quite a recent origin, and others ascribing to them an antiquity of thousands of years. It must be obvious that I cannot enter into a consideration of all these questions, and hence content myself with a few quotations from those whose information and judgment I most esteem.^[21]

Upon the subject of Mound Builders, as upon so many subjects in American antiquities, I find what Mr. Baldwin has said—except wherein his remarks are against migrations from other continents for very ancient American peoples—most acceptable:^[22]

That appears to me the most reasonable suggestion which assumes that the Mound Builders came originally from Mexico and Central America. It explains many facts connected with their remains. In the Great Valley their most populous settlements were at the south. Coming from Mexico and Central America, they would begin their settlements on the gulf coast, and afterwards advance gradually up the river to the Ohio valley. It seems evident that they came by this route; and their remains show that their only connection with the coast was at the south. Their settlements did not reach the coast at any other point.

Their constructions were similar in design and arrangement to those found in Mexico and Central America. Like the Mexicans and Central Americans, they had many of the smaller structures known as teocallis, and also large, high mounds, with level summits, reached by great flights of steps. Pyramidal platforms or foundations for important edifices appear in both regions, and are very much alike. In Central America important edifices were built of hewn stone, and can still be examined in their ruins. The Mound Builders, like some of the ancient people of Mexico and Yucatan, used wood, sun-dried

brick, or some other material that could not resist decay. There is evidence that they used timber for building purposes. In one of the mounds opened in the Ohio valley two chambers were found with remains of the timber of which the walls were made, and with arched ceilings precisely like those in Central America, even to the overlapping stones. Chambers have been found in some of the Central American and Mexican mounds, but there hewn stones were used for the walls. In both regions the elevated and terraced foundations remain, and can be compared. I have already called attention to the close resemblance between them, but the fact is so important in any endeavor to explain the Mound Builders that I must bring it to view here.

Consider, then, that elevated and terraced foundations for important buildings are peculiar to the ancient Mexicans and Central Americans; that this method of construction, which, with them, was the rule, is found nowhere else, save that terraced elevations, carefully constructed, and precisely like theirs in form and appearance, occupy a chief place among the remaining works of the Mound Builders. The use made of these foundations at Palenque, Uxmal and Chichen-Itza, shows the purpose for which they were constructed in the Mississippi valley. The resemblance is not due to chance. The explanation appears to me very manifest. This method of construction was brought to the Mississippi valley from Mexico and Central America, the ancient inhabitants of that region and the Mound Builders being the same people in race, and also in civilization, when it was brought here.

A very large proportion of the old structures in Ohio and farther south called "mounds," namely, those which are low in proportion to their horizontal extent, are terraced foundations for buildings, and if they were situated in Yucatan, Guatemala, and Mexico, they would never be mistaken for anything else. The high mounds also in the two regions are remarkably alike. In both cases they are pyramidal in shape, and have level summits of considerable extent, which were reached by means of stairways on the outside. The great mound at Chichen-Itza is 75 feet high, and has on its summit a ruined stone edifice; that at Uxmal is 60 feet high, and has a similar ruin on its summit; that at Mayapan is 60 feet high; the edifice placed on its summit has disappeared. The great mound at Miamisburg, Ohio, is 68 feet high; and that at Grave Creek, West Virginia, is 75 feet high. Both had level summits, and stairways on the outside, but no trace of any structure remains on them. All these mounds were constructed for religious uses, and they are, in their way, as much alike as any five Gothic churches.

Could these works of the Mound Builders be restored to the condition in which they were when the country was filled with their busy communities, we should doubtless see great edifices, similar in style to those in Yucatan, standing on the upper terraces of all the low and extended "mounds," and smaller structures on the high mounds, such as those above named. There would seem to be an extension of ancient Mexico and Central America through Texas into the Mississippi and Ohio valleys; and so, if there were no massive stone work in the old ruins of those countries, it might seem that the Mound Builders' works were anciently extended into them by way of Texas.

The fact that the settlements and works of the Mound Builders extended through Texas and across the Rio Grande indicates very plainly their connection with the people of Mexico, and goes far to explain their origin. We have other evidence of intercourse between the two peoples; for the obsidian dug from the mounds, and perhaps the porphyry also, can be explained only by supposing commercial relations between them.

We can not suppose the Mound Builders to have come from any other part of North America, for nowhere else north of the Isthmus was there any other people capable of producing such works as they left in the places where they dwelt. Beyond the relics of the Mound Builders, no traces of the former existence of such a people have been discovered in any part of North America save Mexico, and Central America, and districts immediately connected with them. At the same time it is not unreasonable to suppose the civilized people of these regions extended their settlements through Texas, and also migrated across the gulf into the Mississippi valley. In fact, the connection of settlements by way of Texas appears to have been unbroken from Ohio to Mexico.

This colonizing extension of the old Mexican race must have taken place at a remote period in the past; for what has been said of the antiquity of the Mound Builders shows that a very long period, far more than two thousand years, it may be, must have elapsed since they left the valley of the Ohio. Perhaps they found the country mostly unoccupied, and saw there but little of any other people until an eruption of warlike barbarians came upon them from the northwest. * * * * *

The supposition that the Toltecs and the Mound Builders were the same people seems to me not improbable. The reasons for it will be stated when we come to a discussion of the antiquities, books, and traditions of Central America. I will only say here that, according to dates given in the Central American books, the Toltecs came from "Huehue-Tlapalan," a distant country in the northeast, long previous to the Christian era. They played a great part and had a long career in Mexico previous to the rise of their successors in power, the Aztecs, who were overthrown by the Spaniards.^[23]

Bancroft, in a general way, coincides with the views of Mr. Baldwin. Discussing several theories respecting the Mound Builders, he speaks of this as "the most reasonable [hypothesis], and best supported by monumental and traditional evidence. The temple-mounds strongly resemble, in their principal features, the southern pyramids; at least they imply a likeness of religious ideas in the builders. The use of obsidian implements shows a connection, either through origin, war, or commerce, with the Mexican nations, or at least with nations who came in contact with the Nahuas. There are, moreover, several Nahua traditions respecting the arrival on their coasts from the northeast, of civilized strangers."^[24] He further says: "I am inclined to believe that the most plausible conjecture respecting the origin of the Mound Builders is that which makes them a colony of the ancient Mayas who settled in the north during the continuance of the great Maya empire of Xibalba, in Central America, several centuries before Christ."^[25]

It will be observed that these views harmonize almost to completeness with the requirements of the Book of Mormon for such evidences. Whether the Jaredites built some of these mounds or not does not so much matter, though I am inclined to think they did. If some of the earlier monuments of Central America, such as Copan, Quirigua and Palenque, represent Jaredite ruins, as I am inclined to believe, then it is most likely that the truncated mounds in the north—which so much resemble the stone-faced pyramids of the south—were also built by them. Undoubtedly, during the two centuries following the advent of Messiah the Nephites also extended their occupancy of the continent into the valleys of the Mississippi and its tributaries, and then during the next two hundred years of troubled warfare, erected the numerous fortifications throughout that land which now are so distinctly recognized and spoken of by the authorities which I have here quoted. In any event it is to be seen that the Book of Mormon requires that the civilization of the Mississippi valley should find its origin in Central America, and the fact that such distinguished authorities recognize Central America as its source, is a strong presumptive evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon.

Summary.

I have now presented to the reader all the matter on that part of American antiquities pertaining to the extent and location of the ruined cities and other monuments of ancient American civilization that my space will allow, and I only pause before closing this chapter to summarize the ground covered. Beyond question we have established the following facts:

- (1) There existed in ancient times civilized races in both of the American continents.
- (2) The monuments of these civilizations are located chiefly through Central America, and in the Mississippi valley—lands occupied by the Jaredites and Nephites respectively; that is to say, the monuments of these ancient civilizations are found where the Book of Mormon requires them to be located.
- (3) Successive civilizations have existed in America in ancient times; and the older civilization was the most advanced.
- (4) The chief center of this ancient American civilization, and its oldest and most enduring monuments are in Central America, where the Book of Mormon locates its oldest race of people, and where civilization longest prevailed and built its most enduring monuments; and is the center from which civilization, beyond question, extended into the north continent.

In making these claims I am not unmindful of the fact that there are authorities who hold somewhat different views from those whose works I have so extensively quoted; but I do not believe that the conclusions here summarized can be disturbed either by facts or theories of those other authorities. And however divergent the views of authorities may be, this much can be absolutely claimed, that there is nothing in their works which, on the matters so far considered, directly conflicts with the claims of the Book of Mormon; while so much as is here stated is certainly very strong evidence in its favor.

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Bancroft, *Native Races*, vol. IV, p. 285.
- [2.](#) *Native Races*, vol. IV, pp. 361-2.
- [3.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. II, pp. 405, 406.
- [4.](#) *Ancient America*, J. D. Baldwin, ch. 6.
- [5.](#) *Native Races*, vol. II, pp. 83, 84.
- [6.](#) One of the old American cities located in Central Guatemala.
- [7.](#) *Native Races*, vol. IV, p. 128.
- [8.](#) One of the old cities of northern Yucatan.
- [9.](#) *Native Races*, vol. IV, p. 361.

- [10.](#) *Central America*, vol. II, p. 186.
- [11.](#) *Ancient America*, pp. 155, 156.
- [12.](#) *Ancient America*, p. 221.
- [13.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 156.
- [14.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 165.
- [15.](#) *Ancient America*, pp. 222, 223.
- [16.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 81.
- [17.](#) *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*.
- [18.](#) *Footprints of Vanished Races*.
- [19.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, pp. 87, 88.
- [20.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 88.
- [21.](#) Those desiring to enter upon a further inquiry of this subject will find it somewhat elaborately treated in Allen's *Pre-Historic World or Vanished Races*, chapter 10; also Nadaillac's *Pre-Historic America*, chapter 3; *History of America Before Columbus*, P. De Roo, chapter 3; and in *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, by E. George Squier.
- [22.](#) Throughout this writing I have often felt the need of some sort of compendious work to guide me in my researches, and in all the collection of my works upon the subject I have found Mr. Baldwin's *Ancient America* the most useful; and should the readers of these chapters desire a special work upon the subject of American antiquities I do not think they could find a single book on the subject which would be more satisfactory than the little work (293 pages) here referred to; and since I have quoted so extensively from it, I cite the following to show in what esteem Mr. Baldwin is held by one who is the author of the most elaborate work on the subject of American antiquities: "Mr. Baldwin's most excellent little book on *Ancient America* is the only comprehensive work treating of this subject now before the public. As a popular treatise, compressing within a small duodecimo volume the whole subject of archaeology, including, besides material relics, tradition, and speculation concerning origin and history as well, this book cannot be too highly praised." Bancroft's *Native Races*, vol. IV, 2.
- [23.](#) *Ancient America*, pp. 20-24. Rev. J. G. Fish speaking of some of these North American mounds declares that "the summit level of some of them contains more than twelve acres. At their base they appear like walls stretching up to heaven and it requires but a stretch of the imagination to fancy them mouldering bastions and ramparts of some ancient fortress." *Bible in the Balance*, p. 237.
- [24.](#) *Native Races*, vol. IV, pp. 788, 789.
- [25.](#) *Native Races*, vol. V, p. 539.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN TRADITIONS AND MYTHOLOGIES.

Turning from that branch of American antiquities which deals with the extent and location of ruined cities and monuments of the ancient American civilizations to the consideration of American traditions concerning the origin, migrations, cosmogony, and the religion of the people of the western world, we by no means leave behind us the difficulty of divided authorities, and varying opinions. One could not hope, even in an extended work on the subject, to bring order out of the chaos which obtains concerning American traditions and mythologies; therefore, I need say nothing of the futility of attempting it in the few brief chapters which I have resolved to devote to these traditions. But this much must be evident respecting the relationship of the Book of Mormon to American traditions and mythologies, viz., that several epoch-making incidents in the Book of Mormon must have made such indelible impressions upon the mind of the ancient peoples of America that they would be perpetuated in various forms in their traditions. Such incidents, for example, as the Jaredite and Nephite migrations from the old world to the western hemisphere; and since the former colony came directly from the Tower of Babel, it is to be expected that they would bring with them a knowledge of the creation, the fall of man, the flood, the escape of Noah and his family by means of the ark, and the building of the Tower of Babel.

Lehi's colony came from Jerusalem, bringing with them the Jewish scriptures, which speak so clearly of the creation, the flood, the escape of Noah, the building of Babel and the confusion of tongues, hence it would be expected that they, too, would have a knowledge of these chief events in the history of man down to this last named event, and a knowledge also of the chief events in the history of Israel down to the time of the departure of Lehi's colony from Jerusalem—six hundred years B. C. It is but a reasonable expectation, I say, that these things would be perpetuated in American traditions and mythologies. Are traces of them to be found there? So also as to the signs given on the American continent of Messiah's birth; and certainly as to the signs of his crucifixion, witnessed by the terrible cataclysms which continued in the western hemisphere during three hours, followed by three days of awful darkness. Also some trace in their traditions would be found of Messiah's personal advent on the American continent to the survivors of those events. So, too, would the recollection of the golden age of peace and plenty which followed Messiah's advent, and the promise of Messiah's return at some future time—some memory of all this would most likely be perpetuated in native traditions. And while both traditions and mythologies may be regarded as troubled pools which, like mirrors shattered into a thousand fragments, distort into fantastic shapes the objects on their banks, still there is a basis of truth in them; and American traditions and mythologies may yield up something of value in the way of evidence to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Surely we would be greatly disappointed if this turned out not to be the case, for the historical incidents referred to in the Book of Mormon are so impressive that they would be found to live in the traditions of the people, whatever became of their written records. As remarked by H. H. Bancroft:

Every trace of the circumstances that give rise to a tradition is soon lost, although the tradition itself in curiously modified forms is long preserved. Natural convulsions, like floods and earthquakes, famines, wars, tribal migrations, naturally leave an impression on the savage mind which is not easily effaced, but the fable in which the record is embodied may have assumed a form so changed and childish that we pass over it today as having no historical value, seeking information only in an apparently more consistent tale, which may have originated at a recent date from some very trivial circumstances. * * * * But the traditions of savages, valueless by themselves for a time more remote than one or two generations, begin to assume importance when the events narrated have been otherwise ascertained by the records of some contemporary nation, throwing indirectly much light on history which they were powerless to reveal.^[1]

Accepting as reasonable these reflections, I wish to add that having in part the written records of the people among whom the events happened of which the traditions treat, we are in possession of that which makes these traditions assume the importance to which our author alludes. And while the record referred to—the Book of Mormon—gives the necessary importance to the traditions, the traditions bear testimony to the truth of the record at many points.

It should be remembered, however, that such were the conditions existing among the Lamanites after their triumph at Cumorah, that everything is confused and distorted into most fantastic shapes and relations by the idle speculations and vain imaginings of half, and sometimes wholly, barbarous minds, often bent on concealing or supplanting the truth by their fabulous inventions.

The limits of this work will not permit anything like an extended investigation of the field proposed. I shall merely take up the most important facts and historical events of the Book of Mormon, and seek confirmation of them in American traditions and myths.

I.

The Creation.

I begin with the creation; and select upon that subject a passage from the book of the Quiches^[2] of Guatemala called *Popol Vuh*, which, I believe, exhibits the fact that the ancient Americans held in their traditions conceptions of creation found in the Jewish scriptures. A word upon the *Popol Vuh* will be necessary. This is one of the most important of the native American books translated into modern languages. It was found by Dr. Scherzer, in 1854, among the manuscripts of Francisco Ximenez, "a Dominican father of great repute for his learning and his love of truth," who, while fulfilling the duties of his office of curate, in a small Indian town in the highlands of Guatemala, translated this native book into the Spanish language. It was written by one or more Quiches in the Quiche language, but in Roman letters, some time after the Spaniards had occupied Guatemala. The meaning of *Popol Vuh* is "National Book," or "Book of the People," but the real original "National Book" had been lost, and this was written to replace it. The title of the book, however, is that given to it by the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg, who translated it into French; and by Ximenez, who translated it into Spanish. This name, Max Muller says, "is not claimed for it by its author. He [the native author] says that he wrote when the *Popol Vuh* [that is, the real original National Book of the Quiches, and which this book in question was written to replace] was no longer to be seen. Now, *Popol Vuh* means the Book of the People, and referred to the traditional literature in which all that was known about the early history of the nation, their religion and ceremonies, was handed down from age to age."^[3] Nadaillac, however, says that *Popol Vuh* may be translated "Collection of Leaves."^[4] In the conclusion of a long note on the subject Bancroft says, "We seem justified, then, in taking this document for what Ximenez and its own evidence declare it to be, viz., a reproduction of an older work or body of Quiche traditional history, written because the older work had been lost and was likely to be forgotten; and written

by a Quiche not long after the Spanish conquest."^[5]

As the passage I quote is from Bancroft's abridgment of the *Popol Vuh*, I give also his brief explanation of the book:

Of all American peoples the Quiches, of Guatemala, have left us the richest mythological legacy. Their description of the creation as given in the *Popol Vuh*, which may be called the national book of the Quiches, is in its rude, strange eloquence and poetic originality, one of the rarest relics of aboriginal thought. Although obliged in reproducing it to condense somewhat, I have endeavored to give not only the substance, but also, as far as possible, the peculiar style and phraseology of the original. It is with this primeval picture, whose simple, silent sublimity is that of the inscrutable past, that we begin:^[6]

And now the passage on the creation:

And the heaven was formed, and all the signs thereof set in their angle and alignment, and its boundaries fixed toward the four winds by the Creator and Former, and Mother and Father of life and existence—he by whom all move and breathe, the Father and Cherisher of the peace of nations and of the civilization of his people—he whose wisdom has projected the excellence of all that is on the earth, or in the lakes, or in the sea.

Behold the first word and the first discourse. There was as yet no man, nor any animal, nor bird, nor fish, nor crawfish, nor any pit, nor ravine, nor green herb, nor any tree; nothing was but the firmament. The face of the earth had not yet appeared, only the peaceful sea and all the space of heaven. There was nothing yet joined together, nothing that clung to anything else; nothing that balanced itself, that made the least rustling, that made a sound in the heaven. There was nothing that stood up; nothing but the quiet water, but the sea, calm and alone in its boundaries; nothing existed; nothing but immobility and silence, in the darkness, in the night.

Alone also the Creator, the Former, the Dominator, the Feathered Serpent, those that engender, those that give being, they are upon the water, like growing light. They are enveloped in green and blue; and therefore their name is Gucumatz. Lo, now how the heavens exist, how exists also the Heart of Heaven; such is the name of God; it is thus that he is called. And they speak; they consulted together and meditated; they mingled their words and their opinion. And the creation was verily after this wise: Earth, they said, and on the instant it was formed; like a cloud or a fog was its beginning. Then the mountains rose over the water like great lobsters; in an instant the mountains and the plains were visible, and the cypress and the pine appeared. Then was the Gucumatz filled with joy, crying out: Blessed be thy coming, O Heart of Heaven, Hurakan, Thunderbolt. Our work and our labor has accomplished its end.

The earth and its vegetation having thus appeared, it was peopled with the various forms of animal life. And the Makers said to the animals: Speak now our name, honor us, as your mother and father; invoke Hurakan, the Lightning-flash, the Thunderbolt, that strikes, the Heart of Heaven, the Heart of the Earth, the Creator and Former, him who begets, and him who gives being, speak, call on us, salute us! So was it said to the animals. But the animals could not answer; they could not speak at all after the manner of men; they could only cluck, and croak, each murmuring after his kind in a different manner. This displeased the Creators, and they said to the animals: Inasmuch as ye can not praise us, neither call upon our names, your flesh shall be humiliated; it shall be broken with teeth; ye shall be killed and eaten.

Again the gods took counsel together; they determined to make man. So they made a man of clay; and when they had made him, they saw that it was not good. He was without cohesion, without consistence, motionless, strengthless, inept, watery, he could not move his head, his face looked but one way; his sight was restricted, he could not look behind him; he had been endowed with language, but he had no intelligence, so he was consumed in the water.

Again is there counsel in heaven: Let us make an intelligent being who shall adore and invoke us. It was decided that a man should be made of wood and a woman of a kind of pith. They were made; but the result was in no wise satisfactory. They moved about perfectly well, it is true; they increased and multiplied; they peopled the world with sons and daughters, little wooden mannikins like themselves; but still the heart and the intelligence were wanting; they held no memory of their Maker and Former; they led a useless existence, they lived as the beasts lived; they forgot the Heart of Heaven. They were but an essay, an attempt at men; they had neither blood, nor substance, nor moisture, nor fat; their cheeks were shrivelled, their feet and hands dried up; their flesh languished.

Then was the Heart of Heaven wroth; and he sent ruin and destruction upon those ingrates; he rained upon them night and day from heaven with a thick resin; and the earth was darkened. And the men went mad with terror; they tried to mount upon the

roofs and the houses fell; they tried to climb the trees and the trees shook them far from their branches; they tried to hide in the caves and the dens of the earth, but these closed their holes against them. The bird Xecotcovach came to tear out their eyes; and the Camalotz cut off their head; and the Cotzbalam devoured their flesh; and the Tecumbalam broke and bruised their bones to powder. Thus were they all devoted to chastisement and destruction, save only a few who were preserved as memorials of the wooden men that had been; and these now exist in the woods as little apes.

Once more are the gods in council; in the darkness, in the night of a desolate universe do they commune together, of what shall we make man? And the Creator and Former made four perfect men; and wholly of yellow and white maize was their flesh composed. These were the names of the four men that were made: the name of the first was Balam-Quitze; of the second, Balam-Agab; of the third, Muhucutah; and the fourth, Iqi-Balam. They had neither father nor mother, neither were they made by the ordinary agents in the work of creation; but their coming into existence was a miracle extraordinary wrought by the special intervention of him who is preeminently the Creator. Verily, at last, were there found men worthy of their origin and their destiny; verily, at last, did the gods look on beings who could see with their eyes, and handle with their hands, and understand with their hearts. Grand of countenance and broad of limb the four sires of our race stood up under the white rays of the morning star. Sole light as yet of the primeval world—stood up and looked. Their great clear eyes swept rapidly over all; they saw the woods and the rocks, the lakes and the sea, the mountains and the valleys, and the heavens that were above all; and they comprehended all and admired exceeding. Then they returned thanks to those who had made the world and all that therein was: We offer up our thanks, twice—yea verily, thrice! We have received life; we speak, we walk, we taste; we hear and understand; we know, both that which is near and that which is far off; we see all things, great and small, in all the heaven and earth. Thanks, then, Maker and Former, Father and Mother of our life! we have been created; we are.

But the gods were not wholly pleased with this thing; Heaven they thought had overshot its mark; these men were too perfect; knew, understood, and saw too much. Therefore there was council again in heaven: What shall we do with man now? It is not good, this that we see; these are as gods; they would make themselves equal with us; lo, they know all things, great and small. Let us now contract their sight, so that they may see only a little of the surface of the earth and be content. Thereupon the Heart of Heaven breathed a cloud over the pupil of the eyes of men, and a veil came over it as when one breathes on the face of a mirror, thus was the globe of the eye darkened; neither was that which was far off clear to it any more, but only that which was near.

Then the four men slept, and there was council in heaven: and four women were made, to Balam-Quitze was allotted Caha-Paluma to wife; to Balam-Agab, Chomiha; to Muhucutah, Tzununiha; and to Iqi-Balam, Cakixaha. Now the women were exceedingly fair to look upon; and when the men awoke, their hearts were glad because of the women.

Notwithstanding some incongruities in the foregoing passage a comparison of it with the account of creation in Genesis will not fail to convince the thoughtful reader that the Quiche story of the creation, and that of Genesis doubtless had the same origin, and after reading it again and again, as suggested by Max Muller, one must come to the conclusion that "some salient features standing out more distinctly, make us feel that there was a ground work of noble conceptions which has been covered and distorted by an aftergrowth of fantastic nonsense."^[7] Indeed, so "startling," as Muller further remarks, are some of the coincidences between the Old Testament and the Quiche manuscripts that it has been suspected by some authors^[8] that the Quiche writers followed rather the Spanish, Christian teachings than the Quiche tradition in that part of their work; "yet even if a Christian influence has to be admitted," remarks our author, "much remains in these American traditions which is so different from anything else in the national literature of other countries that we may safely treat it as the genuine growth of the intellectual soil of America."^[9] In the light which the Book of Mormon throws upon the subject, however, we are not under the necessity of admitting the "Christian influence" referred to by Muller; that is, that the natives arrived at the Biblical knowledge of the creation facts after the advent of the Christians among them, since the Jaredites brought with them a knowledge of creation as held by antediluvians, and the Nephites brought with them a knowledge of that same account of creation as crystallized in the writings of Moses, which undoubtedly became permanently fixed both in the written records and traditions of the native inhabitants of America; and which are reflected in this old Quiche book, *Popol Vuh*.

There is a quotation from another authority that I wish to add to the statement of Professor Max Muller in the foregoing, relative to the creation ideas of the Quiches, being a "groundwork of noble conceptions which has been covered and distorted by an aftergrowth of fantastic nonsense." That additional authority—though the remark I quote has reference to another people, the Aztecs, is in the same line of thought as that which Professor Muller suggests, but applied to the whole religion of the natives—is from Prescott:

In contemplating the religious system of the Aztecs, one is struck with its apparent

incongruity, as if some portion of it had emanated from a comparatively refined people, open to gentle influences, while the rest breathes a spirit of unmitigated ferocity. It naturally suggests the idea of two distinct sources, and authorities the belief that the Aztecs had inherited from their predecessors a milder faith, on which was afterwards engrafted their own mythology. The latter soon became dominant, and gave its dark coloring to the creeds of the conquered nations—which the Mexicans, like the ancient Romans, seem willingly to have incorporated into their own, until the same funereal superstitions settled over the farthest borders of Anahuac.^[10]

If the noted German and American authors respectively had been writing with full knowledge of what the Book of Mormon reveals on this subject, they could not more exactly have stated the case than they have here done, though enlightened only by the facts they discovered in the religion of the natives; for surely the Book of Mormon gives us the information that both the Jaredite and the Nephite people had knowledge of the true God, and the latter, especially, a full knowledge of the mild and gentle religion taught by Jesus Christ; which religion, however, was subverted in the western world, and overlaid by the revolting superstition and horribly ferocious idolatry, attended by human sacrifice and cannibalism of the Lamanites or Aztecs.

Another point of the coincidence [between native American traditions and the Bible] is found in the goddess Cioacoatl, "our lady and mother;" "the first goddess who brought forth;" "who bequeathed the suffering of childbirth to women, as the tribute of death;" "by whom sin came into the world." Such was the remarkable language applied by the Aztecs to this venerated deity. She was usually represented with a serpent near her; and her name signified the "serpent-woman." In all this we see much to remind us of the mother of the human family, the Eve of the Hebrew and Syrian nations.^[11]

On this passage Prescott also has the following note:

Torquemada, not content with the honest record of his predecessor, whose manuscripts lay before him, tells us, that the Mexican Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel.^[12] The ancient interpreters of the Vatican and Tellerian Codices add the further tradition, of her bringing sin and sorrow into the world by plucking the forbidden rose; (*Antiquities of Mexico*, vol. VI, explan. of Plate. 7, 20); and Veytia remembers to have seen a Toltec or Aztec map, representing a garden with a single tree in it, round which was coiled the serpent with a human face! (*Hist. Antiq.*, lib. 1, ch. 1).^[13]

"After this," continues Prescott, sarcastically, "we may be prepared for Lord Kingsborough's deliberate confession that the Aztecs had a clear knowledge of the Old Testament and most probably of the New, though somewhat corrupted by time and hieroglyphics!" I see no occasion for the sarcasm on the part of the admirable author of the *Conquest of Mexico*, since he himself furnishes much of the material that would warrant a conclusion similar to that of Kingsborough.^[14] Kingsborough's conclusion comes in his note two,^[15] in which he deals with "American traditions which appear to be derived from a Hebrew source;" and as the passage referred to by Prescott is of great value as material in proof not only of his lordship's position that the ancient Americans were acquainted with portions, at least, of the Old Testament, but also sustains the truth of the Book of Mormon at a number of points—which will be noted later—I give it *in extenso*:

It is unnecessary to attempt in this place to trace out any further scriptural analogies in the traditions and mythology of the New World, since the coincidences which have been already mentioned are sufficiently strong to warrant the conclusion that the Indians, at a period long antecedent to the arrival of the Spaniards in America, were acquainted with a portion at least of the Old Testament, although time, superstition, and above all, such an imperfect mode of transmitting to posterity the memory of the past events as that of painting, had greatly corrupted their ancient traditions. We shall close these observations with the following curious extract from Torquemada, from which it might appear that even the New Testament had been known to the Indians: "Another ecclesiastic, named Brother Diege de Mercado, a grave father, who has been definer of this province of the Holy Gospel, and one of the most exemplary men and greatest doers of penance of his time, relates, and authenticates this relation with his signature, that some years ago conversing with an aged Indian of the Otomies, above seventy years old, respecting matters concerning our faith, the Indian told him that they in ancient times had been in possession of a book which was handed down successively from father to son, in the person of the eldest, who was dedicated to the safe custody of it and to instruct others in its doctrines. These doctrines were written in two columns, and between column and column Christ was painted crucified, with a countenance as of anger. They accordingly said that God was offended; and out of reverence did not turn over the leaves with their hands, but with a small bar which they had made for that purpose, which they kept along with the book. On this ecclesiastic's questioning the Indian as to the contents of that book and its doctrines, he was unable to give him further information, but simply replied that if the book had not been lost, he would have seen that the doctrine which he taught and preached to them, and those which the book contained, were the same; that the book had rotted in the earth, where the persons who kept it had buried it on the arrival of the Spaniards. He likewise informed him that they knew the world had been destroyed by the deluge, and that only seven

persons had escaped in the ark, and that all the rest had perished, together with the animals and birds, excepting those which had been saved therein. They were also acquainted with the embassy of the angel of Our Lady, under a figure, relating that something very white, like the feather of a bird, fell from heaven, and that a virgin stooped down and took it up and put it in her bosom and became pregnant; but what she brought forth they could not tell. What they said of the deluge, is attested likewise in Guatemala by the Indians named Achies, who assert that they possessed paintings recording the event, with other matters of antiquity, all of which the Brothers, [Spanish Catholic priests] with the spirit and zeal with which they were animated for the destruction of idolatry, took from them and burnt, holding them to be suspicious.^[16]

II.

The Flood.

I next call attention to the native American traditions concerning the flood, consulting those passages, however, let me say, which most nearly resemble the account of our Hebrew scriptures; and without pretending to enter into an exhaustive consideration of native flood myths. My purpose is accomplished in this, as in the matter of the traditions concerning the creation, if I produce those proofs which, in my judgment, establish the fact that the native Americans have been made acquainted with the facts of the creation and the flood, found in our Jewish scriptures; and I am not at all concerned here with the variations that native traditions have given to the main truths.

The following is from Prescott:

No tradition has been more widely spread among nations than that of a Deluge. Independently of tradition, indeed, it would seem to be naturally suggested by the interior structure of the earth, and by the elevated places on which marine substances are found to be deposited. It was the received notion under some form or other, of the most civilized people in the Old World, and of the barbarians of the new. The Aztecs combine with this some particular circumstances of a more arbitrary character, resembling the accounts of the east. They believed that two persons survived the deluge, a man, named Coxcox and his wife. Their heads are represented in ancient paintings, together with a boat floating on the waters, at the foot of a mountain. A dove is also depicted, with the hieroglyphical emblem of languages in his mouth, which he is distributing to the children of Coxcox, who were born dumb. The neighboring people of Michuacan, inhabiting the same high plains of the Andes, had a still further tradition, that the boat, in which Tezpi, their Noah, escaped, was filled with various kinds of animals and birds. After some time, a vulture was sent out from it, but remained feeding on the dead bodies of the giants, which had been left on the earth, as the waters subsided. The little humming-bird, huitzililín, was then sent forth, and returned with a twig in its mouth. The coincidence of both these accounts with the Hebrew and Chaldean narratives is obvious.^[17]

This is from Bancroft:

In Nicaragua, a country where the principal language was a Mexican dialect, it was believed that ages ago the world was destroyed by a flood in which the most part of mankind perished. Afterward the teotes, or gods, restocked the earth as at the beginning.^[18]

Connected with the great flood of water, there is a Mexican tradition presenting some analogies to the story of Noah and his ark. In most of the painted manuscripts supposed to relate to this event, a kind of boat is represented floating over the waste of water and containing a man and a woman. Even the Tlascaltecs, and Zapotecs, the Miztecs, and the people of Michoacan are said to have had such pictures. The man is variously called Coxcox, Teocipactli, Tezpi, and Nata; the woman Xochiquetzal and Nena. The following has been usually accepted as the ordinary Mexican version of this myth: In Atonatiuh, the Age of water, a great flood covered all the face of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were turned into fishes. Only one man and one woman escaped, saving themselves in the hollow trunk of an ahahuete or bald cypress; the name of the man being Coxcox, and that of his wife Zochiquetzal. On the waters abating a little they grounded their ark on the Peak of Colhuacan, the Ararat of Mexico. Here they increased and multiplied, and children began to gather about them, children who were all born dumb. And a dove came and gave them tongues, innumerable languages. Only fifteen of the descendants of Coxcox, who afterward became heads of families, spake the same language or could at all understand each other; and from these fifteen are descended the Toltecs, the Aztecs, and the Acolhuas. * * * * * In Michoacan a tradition was preserved, following which the name of the Mexican Noah was Tezpi. With better fortune than that ascribed to Coxcox, he was able to save, in a spacious vessel, not only himself and his wife, but also his children, several animals, and a quantity of grain for the common use. When the waters began to subside, he sent out a vulture that it might go to and fro on the earth and bring him word again when dry land began to appear. But the vulture fed upon the carcasses that were strewn in every part, and never

returned. Then Tezpi sent out other birds, and among these was a humming-bird. And when the sun began to cover the earth with a new verdure, the humming-bird returned to its old refuge bearing green leaves. And Tezpi saw that his vessel was aground near the mountain of Colhuacan and he landed there.^[19]

The Peruvians had several flood-myths. One of them relates that the whole face of the earth was changed by a great deluge, attended by an extraordinary eclipse of the sun which lasted five days. All living things were destroyed except one man, a shepherd, with his family and flocks. * * * * According to another Peruvian legend, two brothers escaped from a great deluge which overwhelmed the world in much the same manner, by ascending a mountain which floated upon the flood. When the waters had retired, they found themselves alone in the world; and having consumed all their provisions, they went down into the valleys to seek for more food.^[20]

The following is from Lord Kingsborough's works:

The Peruvians were acquainted with the deluge, and believed that the rainbow was the sign that the earth would not again be destroyed by water. This is plain from the speech which Mango Capac, the reported founder of the Peruvian empire, addressed to his companions on beholding the rainbow rising from a hill; which is thus recorded by Balboa in the ninth chapter of the third part of his *Miscellanea Antarctica*: "They traveled on until a mountain, at present named Guanacauri, presented itself to their view, when, on a certain morning, they beheld the rainbow rising above the mountain, with one extremity resting upon it, when Mango Capac exclaimed to his companions, This is a propitious sign that the world will not be again destroyed by water; follow me, let us climb to the summit of this mountain, that we may thence have a view of the place which is destined for our future habitation. Having cast lots and performed various superstitious ceremonies, after this manner, they directed their course towards the mountain. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that to draw omens or to determine chances by throwing lots, was an ancient Hebrew custom, resorted to on the most solemn, as well as the most trivial occasions. Proof having been afforded in the passage quoted from the history of Balboa, that the Peruvians were acquainted with the history of the rainbow, as given in the ninth chapter of Genesis, it may be interesting to add, that according to the account of an anonymous writer, they believed that the rainbow was not only a passive sign that the earth would not be destroyed by a second deluge, but an active instrument to prevent the recurrence of such a catastrophe: the latter curious notion proceeded upon the assumption that as the water of the sea (which, like the Jews, they believe to encircle the whole earth) would have a tendency to rise after excessive falls of rain, so the pressure of the extremities of the rainbow upon its surface would prevent its exceeding its proper level."^[21]

Nadaillac calls attention to the fact of a general belief in a deluge or a flood among the American races and comments upon the fact that we are dependent upon writers for our account of the traditions who are not always free from mental bias and who have derived their information from individuals who had been subjected to missionary teachings and who were more or less familiar with what he calls the myths and legends of the Christians. "Notwithstanding these disadvantages," he remarks, however, "it will be seen that a general belief, for instance, of a deluge or flood is widely spread among American races, and can hardly be attributed to Christian teachings."^[22]

One might continue quoting passages of the foregoing character indefinitely, but I consider what has been set down on these matters sufficient.^[23]

Footnotes

[1.](#) The reader will find preceding the table of contents in this volume a pronunciation of the principal Spanish and Mexican proper names found in this work.

[2.](#) *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. I, p. 325.

[3.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 144, note.

[4.](#) *Native Races*, vol. III, pp. 42, 43.

[5.](#) *Native Races*, vol. III, pp. 42, 43. [24]

[6.](#) *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. I, pp. 328-9.

[7.](#) Nadaillac *Pre-Historic America*, p. 144, note. This writer says of the book in question. "It contains several details strangely resembling those of Genesis, and some have seen in them an adaptation by a pious fraud of Indian mythology to the dogmas of Christianity."

[8.](#) *Chips from a German Workshop*, p. 128.

[9.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. I, Prescott, p. 62.

- [10.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, Prescott, vol. II, p. 387.
- [11.](#) *Morarch Ind.*, lib. 6, chap. 31.
- [12.](#) Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. II, pp. 387, 388, note.
- [13.](#) See Appendix no. 1, vol. II, of Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*.
- [14.](#) Vol. VI, Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, pp. 401-409.
- [15.](#) *Antiquities of Mexico*, Kingsborough, vol. XI, p. 409.
- [16.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, Prescott, vol. II, appendix pp. 385, 386.
- [17.](#) *Native Races*, Bancroft, vol. III, p. 75.
- [18.](#) *Native Races*, vol. III, pp. 65-67.
- [19.](#) *Native Races*, vol. V, pp. 14, 16.
- [20.](#) Kingsborough's *Mexican Antiquities*, vol. VIII, p. 25, note.
- [21.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 525.
- [22.](#) Whoever desires to pursue the subject further may do so by consulting Bancroft's *Native Races*, vol. V, chapter one, and vol. III, chapter two; as also the works of Prescott, the monumental volumes of Kingsborough, (the latter can be accessible to but few, however), and chapter 5 of Ignatius Donnelly's *Atlantis*. Also *Pre-Historic America* (Nadaillac), chapter 10, and *The History of America Before Columbus*, (De Roo) vol. I, chapter sixteen.
- [23.](#) *Native Races*, vol. V, pp. 137, 138.

CHAPTER XXIX.

INDIRECT EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—AMERICAN TRADITIONS. Continued.

Always closely allied with the native American traditions of a deluge are those which bear close analogy to the Bible account of the existence of giants in the earth,^[1] of the Tower of Babel,^[2] the confusion of languages,^[3] the dispersion of mankind throughout the earth,^[4] including migrations to this western hemisphere. The first four items above enumerated will be recognized as Bible events; while the last will be remembered as a very important Book of Mormon event fulfilled in the migration of the Jaredite colony from the Tower of Babel to the western hemisphere.^[5] But as the Nephite migration, as also that of Mulek's colony, is committed to the traditions of the native Americans, one must not be surprised if these several migrations are sometimes confounded, resulting in confusion that is quite perplexing.

III.

Tradition of the Tower of Babel

On the way between Vera Cruz and the capital not far from the modern city of Puebla, stands the venerable relic, with which the reader has become familiar in the course of this narrative—called the temple of Cholulua. It is, as he will remember, a pyramidal mound, built, or rather cased, with unburnt brick, rising to the height of nearly one hundred and eighty feet. The popular tradition of the natives is that it was erected by a family of giants, who had escaped the great inundation, and designed to raise the building to the clouds; but the gods, offended with their presumption, sent fires from heaven on the pyramid, and compelled them to abandon the attempt. The partial coincidence of this legend with the Hebrew account of the Tower of Babel, received also by other nations of the east, cannot be denied.^[6]

Prescott also has a footnote on this passage, from which I make the following quotation:

A tradition, very similar to the Hebrew one, existed among the Chaldeans and the Hindoos. (*Asiatic Researches*, vol. III, mem. 16.) The natives of Chiapa, also, according to the bishop Nuez de la Vega, had a story, cited as genuine by Humboldt (*Vues des Cordilleres*, p. 148), which not only agrees with the scripture account of the manner in which Babel was built, but with that of the subsequent dispersion, and the confusion of tongues.^[7]

Ixtlilxochitl the Christian descendant of the ancient rulers of Anahuac, relates that after the dispersion of the human race which succeeded the attempt at building the Tower of Babel (which he had learned from his Catholic instructors)^[8] seven Toltecs reached America and became the parents of a numerous race. The Quiches speak of white men who came from the land of the sun. The people of Yucatan believe that their ancestors had come from the east, across a great body of water that God had dried up to let them pass over. ^[9]

The Mexicans round Cholula had a special legend, connecting the escape of a remnant from the great deluge with the often mentioned story of the origin of the people of Anahuac from Chicomoztoc, or the Seven Caves. At the time of the cataclysm, [i. e. the flood] the country, according to Pedro de los Rios, was inhabited by giants. Some of these perished utterly; others were changed into fishes; while seven brothers of them found safety by closing themselves into certain caves in a mountain called Tlaloc. When the waters were assuaged, one of the giants, Xelhua, surnamed the architect, went to Cholula and began to build an artificial mountain, as a monument and a memorial of the Tlaloc that had sheltered him and his when the angry waters swept through all the land. The bricks were made in Tlamanalco, at the foot of the Sierra de Cocotl, and passed to Chulua from hand to hand along a file of men—whence these came is not said—stretching between the two places. Then were the jealousy and the anger of the gods aroused, as the huge pyramid arose slowly up, threatening to reach the clouds and the great heaven itself; and the gods launched their fire upon the builders and slew many, so that the work was stopped. But the half-finished structure, afterwards dedicated by the Cholultecs to Quetzalcoatl, still remains to show how well Xelhua, the giant, deserved his surname of the Architect.^[10]

"The Tower of Babel is," indeed, clearly remembered by several aboriginal nations of our continent," says P. DeRoo, "especially of Central America," and then he adds:

Ixtlilxochitl relates the tradition of the Toltecs, according to which the few men who escaped the deluge, after multiplying again, built a "zacuali" or tower of great height, in which to take refuge when the world should be destroyed a second time. After this their tongues became confused and, not understanding one another any longer, they went to different parts of the world. The Toltecs, seven in number, and their wives, who understood one another's speech, after crossing great lands and seas and undergoing many hardships, finally arrived in America, which they found to be a good land and fit for habitation. When Coxcox and his wife Xochiquetzal had landed on the peak of Calhuacan they increased and multiplied, and children began to gather about them; but these were all born dumb. A dove came, however, and gave them tongues, innumerable languages. On an ancient hieroglyphical map, first published by Carreri, who was vindicated from suspicion as to his integrity by Boturini, Clavigero, and von Humboldt, there is also depicted a dove with the hieroglyphic emblem of languages, which it is distributing to the children of Coxcox. Only fifteen of the descendants of Coxcox could not all understand one another, and these were the ancestors of the Nahua nations. Thus runs the Mexican tradition, which the learned Von Humboldt further relates when he says, "Wodan, one of the fifteen ancestors of the American nations, was a grandson of the venerable old man, who with his family escaped the fury of the flood, and was one of those who, according to the Chiapan legend, had helped in building the monument that was to reach heaven but remained unfinished through the anger of the gods. After each family had received a different language, Teotl ordered Wodan to go and settle Anahuac"^[11]—(the Mexican table land).

The Cholulan tradition, as told by Duran, differs somewhat from the foregoing version. "I inquired," he says, "about the ancient Mexican legends, from a native of Cholula who was a hundred years old, and well versed in the antiquities of his tribe. 'Take pen and paper,' he answered me, 'because you could not remember all that I am to tell you: At first, there was nothing but a dark world, without any creature in it; but as soon as light was made with the sun rising in the east, gigantic men with ugly features made their appearance and took possession of this earth. Desirous of knowing the rising and the setting of the sun, they divided themselves into two groups, those of one group traveling east on their search, and the others west, until the ocean prevented them from going any further. They returned, therefore, and, unable to get at the sun by his rising or sinking, whilst, however, they were enamoured with his light and beauty, they decided to build a tower tall enough to reach him in his course. They set out gathering materials, found clay and a very sticky bitumen, and they hurried on to erect the tower, and raised it so high that, they say, it seemed to attain to the sky. And the Lord above, annoyed at their work, spoke to the inhabitants of heaven: 'You have noticed how those of the world have built a high and superb tower to climb up higher, after the beauty and light of the sun; come and let us confound them, for it is not right that those of the world living in the flesh, should mix up with us.' The inhabitants of heaven sallied forth at once, like thunderbolts, by the four corners of the earth and demolished the monument. Terrified and trembling, the giants fled in every direction."^[12]

Passages of like description to these might be multiplied, but the foregoing are sufficient for our purpose here.^[13]

I have already called attention to the fact that authorities upon the subject of traditions and legends of the new world are as much divided and as irreconcilable as they are upon the origin and antiquity of American ruins. A number of writers, especially those of recent date, seek to discount the value of the analogy which is plainly evident between these native American accounts of the creation, the flood, the building of the Tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues, the dispersion of mankind, and the Bible accounts of the same events; but I fail to find any reason advanced sufficiently strong to discredit the obvious analogy, and the significance there is in such analogy, viz., that the native Americans in ancient times were acquainted with the Bible facts concerning these several things. Those who accept the Book of Mormon know by what means and how the ancient Americans became acquainted with these scriptural truths. Those writers who seek to discredit the native traditions resort in the main to the theory that these so-called creation, flood, and tower legends have not escaped the "renovating touch of the Spanish priests and chroniclers, who, throughout their writings, seem to think it their bounden duty to make the ideas of the history of the new world correspond to those of the old;"^[14] while others see in them an adaptation by pious fraud of Indian mythologies to Bible statements.^[15] Such Nadaillac represents the theories of some other writers to be; but he himself, in speaking of a number of traditions which resemble Bible historical incidents, disclaims the necessity of accrediting them to Christian origin:

A general belief * * * * in a deluge or flood is widely spread among the American races, and can hardly be attributed to Christian teachings. * * * * * It is probable that all these traditions have some foundations in truth. * * * * No dissemination of merely Christian ideas since the conquest is sufficient to account for these myths.^[16]

With the Book of Mormon in hand, however, one does not need to accept these strained explanations nor this wholesale repudiation of the writings of respectable authorities on the validity of these legends among native Americans, derived—not as some would have us believe, from picture-paintings of the natives alone, but from these, supplemented by the oral traditions of the natives. The source of traditions here referred to is made clear by the Book of Mormon.

IV.

Migrations.

As already stated, some confusion exists in native American traditions relative to migrations. This doubtless arises from the fact that the native traditions confound the three great migrations of which the Book of Mormon speaks, viz., the Jaredite, Nephite and Mulek migrations, and also the subsequent intercontinental movements among both Nephites and Lamanites, especially those following the disaster at Cumorah, with the general migrations from the old world. This confusion in the native traditions results in dividing the writers on American antiquities, both in respect of the number of migrations and the direction whence they came, as also the time of them. It should be stated that there are some respectable authorities who doubt ancient migrations at all, holding the native population of America, and also its civilization, to be indigenous.

Migration passages already quoted in connection with the Tower of Babel matter, are as follows: "The Toltecs reached America [from the Tower] and became the founders of a numerous race." "The Quiches speak of white men who came from the land of the sun. The people of Yucatan believe that their ancestors had come from the east across a great body of water that God had dried up to let them pass over."^[17] Here it will be observed that with these traditions of the migration from the east has been coupled the Bible story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, through which God opened a way to let them pass.^[18]

It is also to be observed that in some instances the American traditions fix the building of the notable tower to escape floods in the western world.^[19] Not a surprising variation when one considers how oral tradition, unchecked by written annals, distorts facts. From another passage already given,^[20] after referring to the facts of the confusion of languages, it is stated that the people went to different parts of the world; then, "the Toltecs, seven in number, and their wives, who understood one another's speech, after crossing great lands and seas and undergoing great hardships, finally arrived in America, which they found to be good land and fit for habitation. * * * Only fifteen of the descendants of Coxcox could at all understand one another, and these were the ancestors of the Nahuac nations."^[21] In this last quotation one perceives very clearly in outline the story of the Jaredite migration as follows: First, the number of the colony is small. The Book of Ether represents that the Jaredite colony crossed the great waters between their native land and America in eight barges;^[22] and they were small.^[23] The two principal families of this colony, that of Moriancumr and Jared, some time after reaching America, are set down as follows: The former had of sons and daughters twenty-two; while the number of sons and daughters of the latter were twelve, he having four sons. Some of these sons and daughters may, of course, have been born en route to, and after the arrival in, America—that, at least, is a very great probability—and hence the original colony would be cut down by as many as were so born.^[24] The number of "friends" of Jared and his brother who accompanied them from Babel to America are set down at "about twenty and two souls, and they also begat sons and daughters before they came to the promised land."^[25] This may mean that the twenty-two friends were all adults, while the number of children is not given; or it may mean that they numbered twenty-two including children. In any event the Jaredite colony was not large, and it is quite possible that the

families were not more than seven in number as held in the native tradition before us.

Second, the American traditions represent that the colony which came from the tower and peopled America all understood each other's language, and the number of them was fifteen; which, if this number represents the adult members of the colony, we have again about the seven families indicated in the foregoing passage; and it will be remembered that when the Lord made known to the prophet Moriancumr that he was about to confound the languages of the people, his brother Jared suggested to him that he ask the Lord not to confound their language; "and it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon Jared, therefore he did not confound the language of Jared."^[26] A second appeal was made in behalf of their friends (who we have already learned numbered twenty-two) that their language might not be confounded; "and the Lord had compassion upon their friends, and upon their families also, that they were not confounded."^[27]

Third, this colony, of the American traditions, crossed great lands and seas and underwent many hardships before finally arriving in America. Now Ether's account of the Jaredite journey: "And it came to pass that they did travel in the wilderness, and did build barges, in which they did cross many waters, being directed continually by the hand of the Lord. And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promise"—America.^[28] Arriving on the shores of the great ocean which separated them from the land of their destination they received a commandment to build barges for crossing this ocean. "And it came to pass that when they had done all these things they got aboard of their vessels or barges and set forth into the sea, commending themselves unto the Lord their God. And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters, towards the promised land; and thus they were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind."^[29] This journey continued three hundred and forty-four days upon the water. This surely was "crossing great lands and seas and undergoing many hardships."

Fourth, the American tradition says that the Toltec colony finally arrived in America, which they found to be a good land, "and fit for habitation." Concerning the land to which the Jaredite colony came Ether says that it is "a land of promise, which is choice above all other lands which the Lord had preserved for a righteous people."^[30] In other words, to use the language of the native American tradition, it was "a land fit for habitation."

Other passages on the fact of ancient migrations to America follow; but I caution the reader again concerning the confusion existing in the traditions on this subject, which arises, as I believe, from the traditions mingling indiscriminately together the three migrations of the Book of Mormon, and later movements of native tribes since the overthrow of the Nephites at Cumorah.

One fact appears probable, and that is that there was a tendency of population extending over a long period from the north toward the south, one driving another before it as one wave of the sea follows that in advance of it. We cannot do better than compare these successive invasions, with those of the barbarous races that quarreled over the parts of the dismembered Roman empire, or with that of the Aryans, who from the farther end of Asia fell in hordes first upon India and Persia and then upon the different countries of Europe, giving to the vanquished as the price of their defeat a culture undoubtedly superior to that they had formerly possessed.^[31]

That successive waves of migration occurred there is no reason to doubt, and that these successive bodies of immigrants differed to some extent in culture and in race is highly probable.^[32] * * * The ancient American races preserved the tradition of distinct migrations, in their hieroglyphics and pictographs.^[33]

That America was peopled from Asia, the cradle of the human race, can no longer be doubted, but how and when they came is a problem that cannot be solved.^[34]

The testimony "of migration to the western coast of America from the eastern coast of Asia," Rivero and Tschudi hold to be strong and conclusive; and further "that it explains many facts in America, which long perplexed our archaeologists;" but "it by no means aids us in determining the origin of our earliest population."^[35] On the same subject Gallatin remarks:

After making every proper allowance, I can see no possible reason that should have prevented those who, after the dispersion of mankind, moved towards the east and northeast from having reached the extremities of Asia and passed over to America within five hundred years after the flood. However small may have been the number of those first emigrants, an equal number of years would have been more than sufficient to occupy in their own way every part of America.^[36]

Bancroft, quoting the substance of a passage from Sahagun, whom he pronounces one of the best of authorities, says:

Countless years ago the first settlers arrived in New Spain. Coming in ships by sea, they approached a northern port and because they disembarked there it was called Panutla, or Panoaia, "place where they arrived who came by sea," now corruptly called Pantlan (Panuco); and from this port they began to follow the coast, beholding the

snowy Sierras and the volcanoes, until they reached the province of Guatemala; being guided by a priest carrying their god, with whom he continually took counsel respecting what they ought to do. They came to settle in Tamoanchan^[37] where they remained a long time, and never ceased to have their wise men, or prophets, called amoxoaque, which means "men learned in the ancient paintings," [books], who, although they came at the same time, did not remain with the rest in Tamoanchan; since leaving them there, they re-embarked and carried away with them all the paintings [books] which they had brought relating to religious rites and mechanical arts.^[38]

Speaking of the traditions of the migration of the Nahuatl nations Bancroft says:

In its ancient center—not in Anahuac, whether it was in the north or south—the primitive Nahua power was overthrown, or from that center it was transferred to be re-established by exiled princes and their descendants on the Mexican plateaux. This transfer, whose nature we may vaguely comprehend, but of whose details we know nothing, is the event or series of events referred to by various migration-traditions. The recollections of these events assumed different forms in the traditions of different tribes until each nation claimed, or were deemed by the Spaniards to claim, a distinct migration from its former home.^[39]

After the creation of the first men Balam-Quitze, Balam-Agab, Machucutah and Iqui-Balam, wives were given to them, and these were the parents of the Quiche nation. * * * *
* All seem to have spoken one language and to have lived in great peace, black men and white men together. Here they awaited the rising of the sun and prayed to the Heart of Heaven. The tribes were already very numerous including that of the Yaqui (Nahuas). At the advice of Balam-Quitze and his companions they departed in search of gods to worship, and came to Tulan-Zuiva and seven caves where gods were given. * * * *
* * * Tohil was also the god of Tamub and Ilocab and the three tribes or families kept together, for their god was the same. Here arrived all the tribes; * * * * and here their language was confounded. They could no longer understand each other and they separated, going to the east, and many coming hither (to Guatemala). They dressed in skins and were poor, but they were wonderful men, and when they reached Tulan-Zuiva long had been their journey, as the ancient histories tell us.^[40]

Bancroft condenses the foregoing from *Popol Vuh*, of which work I have already given a description,^[41] and in it may be observed the essential facts of the Jaredite migrations to the new world. That is, some time after the creation men are represented as living together and speaking one language. Later comes the confusion of tongues. Certain families adhere together because they speak the same language. There is a general dispersion and after a very long journey one of the groups reaches Guatemala; i. e., Central America.

Concluding the primitive period of Guatemala history, Bancroft quotes a striking passage from the Spanish writer Juarros; who, he says, follows the manuscript writings of Fuentes y Guzman, founded, as is claimed, on native documents, "but full of inconsistencies," he adds, "and doubtless also of errors." There is, it is true, some confusion in the story told in this quotation; yet, making allowance for the imperfections of oral traditions, and confusion likely to occur in them, one may see in it something akin to the Nephite migration recounted in the Book of Mormon. And now the story:

The Toltecs referred to were of the house of Israel, and the great prophet Moses freed them from the captivity in which they were held by Pharaoh; but, having passed the Red Sea, they gave themselves up to idolatry, and persisting in it notwithstanding the warnings of Moses, either to escape the chidings of his law-giver, or for fear of punishment, they left him and their kindred and crossed the sea to a place called the Seven Caves on the shores of the Mar Bermejo (Gulf of California) now a part of the Mexican kingdom, where they founded the celebrated city of Tula. The first chief who ruled and conducted this great band from one continent to the other, was Tamub, ancestor of the royal families of Tula and of Quiche, and first king of the Toltecs. The second was Capichoch; the third Calel Ahus; the fourth Ahpop; the fifth Nimaquiche, who, being the best beloved and most distinguished of all, at the order of his oracle, led those people away from Tulan, where they had greatly increased in numbers, guided them from the Mexican kingdom to this of Guatemala. In this migration they spent many years, suffered unspeakable hardships, and journeyed in their wanderings for many leagues over an immense tract of country, until, beholding a lake (that of Atitan), they determined to fix their habitation at a certain place not far from the lake, which they named Quiche, in memory of the king Nimaquiche (or, the "great" Quiche), who had died during their long wanderings. There came with Nimaquiche three of his brothers, and by an agreement between the four they divided the region.^[42]

In some respects—in the matter of the seven caves and the name of the leader of the colony, Tamub—the story touches the tradition which doubtless refers to the advent of the Jaredites; and also, perhaps, some of the later migrations of native tribes in Central America. But one has, in the foregoing tradition, the Hebrew origin of the colony plainly declared; their departure from their kindred and the journey across the sea; their leader becomes the first king, as did Nephi;^[43] he founds a royal line—becomes, in fact, the ancestor of the royal families of Tula and Quiche, as

Nephi founded the royal line among his people;^[44] the fifth king, greatly beloved, instructed by his oracle—God—led part of the people away from an old place of settlement, where they had greatly increased, and led them to another land. Both character and achievement corresponds admirably with the first Mosiah of the Book of Mormon, and his leading the more righteous part of the Nephites from the land of Lehi-Nephi to Zarahemla;^[45] and there is also the Nephite custom of naming lands after distinguished leaders who first settled them;^[46] while one may see in the fact that with Nimaquiche there came three brothers in his migration, a close resemblance to the fact of three brothers being associated with Nephi in the Nephite colony led from Jerusalem.^[47]

Let it be remembered also that this is a tradition concerning the "Nahuatl" tribes. Is this very name "Nahuatl" but a variation of the Hebrew root whence the word Nephi is derived, as undoubtedly the following words are: Nepheg,^[48] Nephish,^[49] Nephishesim,^[50] Nephusim,^[51] Naphtali,^[52] and Nephtoah?^[53]

This Nahuatl tradition very much resembles one among the Peruvians concerning their migration to Peru; but which still more closely resembles some of the facts of the Nephite migration, except as to the matter of the time of it, which is placed at five hundred years after the deluge. The tradition is thus related by Rivero and Tschudi, following Montesinos:

Peru, says Montesinos, was populated five hundred years after the deluge. Its first inhabitants flowed in abundantly towards the valley of Cuzco, conducted by four brothers. * * * The eldest of the brothers mounted to the summit of a ridge, and threw with his sling a stone to each of the four quarters of the world, thus taking possession of the soil for himself and his family. He afterward gave a name to each one of the quarters which he reached with his sling, calling that beyond the south, Colla; beyond the north, Tahuá; beyond the east, Antisuyu; beyond the west, Contisuyu, and for that reason the Indians called their kings Tahuantín-Suyu-Capac, i. e., lords of the four quarters of the globe. The younger of the brothers, who, according to tradition, was at the same time the most skilful and hardy, wishing to enjoy alone the plenitude of power, rid himself of two of his brothers, by enclosing one of them in a cave, and throwing the other into a deep hole and thus caused the third to fly to a distant province. The fratricide consoled his sisters, and told them that they must consider him as the only child, or son of the sun, and obey him as such. He commanded his kinsmen to level the ground and make houses of stone; such was the origin of the city of Cuzco. * * * For sixty years did this first king govern (whom Indian tradition also called Puhua-Manco), leaving the throne to his eldest son.^[54]

Here we have undoubted reference to historical events, but the tradition in which they are held has assumed a form somewhat childish. That, however, does not prevent one from seeing in the tradition some of the main facts of the Nephite migration. The migration is conducted by four brothers, as was the Nephite migration—for Lehi, the patriarchal head of the Nephite colony, seems to have influenced the migration after its departure into the wilderness of Arabia but very little; the eldest of the brothers seeks for the leadership on arrival in the new world, by asserting his dominion over the four quarters of the land, in which one may see reflected the claims which the unworthy Laman, the eldest of the four Nephite brothers, made to leadership over the Nephite colony. In the younger brother of the Peruvian tradition being the more worthy of leadership, and finally attaining it, one may see the Book of Mormon historical fact of the youngest of the four sons of Lehi, taking his leadership of the colony, though arriving at undisputed leadership of his people not by the means described in the Peruvian tradition, but by the blessing and favor of God, and by separating from his brothers and their following, and removing his people a long distance from the place of the first landing of the colony in America.

In that part of the tradition where the youngest brother is represented as commanding his kinsmen "to level the ground and make houses of stone," we have the evidence that he taught them the arts of civilization; a circumstance which corroborates the Book of Mormon fact that the first Nephi did the same thing. It is thus recorded by him:

And I did teach my people to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, and of iron, and of copper, and of brass, and of steel, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious ores, which were in great abundance. * * * * And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did cause my people to be industrious, and to labor with their hands. ^[55]

This youngest brother of the tradition—after reigning sixty years, (the first Nephi's reign was also long, but the exact number of years may not be ascertained,^[56]) bequeathed his throne to his eldest son; so also did Nephi. At least that he did so is a most reasonable conclusion from the Book of Mormon data. In his old age, seeing death approaching, Nephi "anointed a man to be a king * * * over his people, according to the reign of kings."^[57] Being anxious to revere the name of this first ruler, the people provided that those who came to the throne should be called First Nephi, Second Nephi, Third Nephi,^[58] etc. Of course this does not prove that Nephi chose his eldest son to succeed him; but a later writer than Jacob, speaking of the Nephite kingdom, makes the statement that "the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi."^[59] Hence it must have been that the man whom Nephi anointed king when his own career was closing, was his own son, and most likely his eldest son.

Thus every item of the native Peruvian tradition under consideration, is met by the facts of the Book of Mormon; and the tradition gives strong presumptive evidence of the truth of the Book of Mormon statement, and hence also to the book itself.

Nadaillac has a passage which wonderfully confirms the possibility of the Nephites being able to make the journey from the coast of Arabia to South America. After discussing the probability of migrations from Asia via Behring Strait, he says:

On the other hand, a knowledge of navigation no better than that possessed at present by the lowest people of Melanesia would have enabled a migration on the line of the thirtieth parallel, south, to reach the coast of South America, and, in time, to give it a considerable population. A different distribution of land and water from that at present existing, is a possible factor in the problem, but of which it is too early in ocean exploration to avail ourselves. Squier, Gibbs, and numerous other American ethnologists believed in a migration from the west to South America.^[60]

An item of interest connected with the Nephite migration, and one very likely to fasten itself in the traditions of the natives, would be the Nephite "Director" or "Liahona" as the Nephites called it. This "Director" was found by Lehi, early in the Nephite migrations, at his tent door, and is described as "a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness. * * * And we did follow the directions of the ball, which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness."^[61] Later, when the prophet Alma refers to it, after informing his son Helaman that it was called, by their fathers, "Liahona," he adds:

And behold, it was prepared to show unto our fathers the course which they should travel in the wilderness. And it did work for them according to their faith in God; therefore, if they had faith to believe that God could cause that those spindles should point the way they should go, behold, it was done.^[62]

In the traditional account of how the first Inca and his sister-wife were directed to Peru, one may see the distorted account of this Book of Mormon fact. The tradition is thus related by Prescott:

The celestial pair, brother and sister, husband and wife, advanced along the high plains in the neighborhood of Lake Titicaca to about the sixteenth degree south. They bore with them a golden wedge, and were directed to take up their residence on the spot where the sacred emblem should without effort sink into the ground. They proceeded accordingly but a short distance, as far as the valley of Cuzco, the spot indicated by the performance of the miracle, since there the wedge speedily sank into the earth and disappeared forever. Here the children of the Sun established their residence, and soon entered upon their beneficent mission among the rude inhabitants of the country; Manco Capac teaching the men the arts of agriculture, and Mama Oello initiating her own sex in the mysteries of weaving and spinning."^[63]

Squiers relates the tradition substantially in the same manner, except that in place of a "golden wedge," he represents the celestial pair as being divinely guided by "a golden rod," which sinks into the earth on reaching the divinely appointed place of their destination.^[64]

The student of the Book of Mormon will at once recognize how well the Nephite and Lamanite religious wars, at some periods of their history, are described in the following passage:

There appear to have been very hotly contested religious disputes; constant wars broke out between the sectarians following the god Votan and those who worshiped Quetzalcohuatl, and the vanquished on either side perished under horrible tortures, or were compelled to fly their country^[65]

Much confusion exists among authorities concerning the Toltecs. Because of their clear knowledge of the creation, flood, tower of Babel, confusion of languages and dispersion of mankind,^[66] they are thought to have commenced their wanderings at the dispersion of mankind from Babel. But if a people had in their possession a version of the Hebrew scriptures, as the Nephites had, for instance, it is not difficult to understand how these Bible facts could be incorporated in their traditions, without insisting that they were immediately connected with those very ancient Bible events. In whatever way the controversies about the Toltecs may terminate, the following description of them could well stand for a description of the Nephites, barring the items of cruelty, revengefulness, and sanguinary nature of their religion, and their ignorance of iron.^[67]

In spite of wars and discord the time of the Toltec domination is enshrined in the memory of the Nahuas as their golden age. The Toltecs, they tell us, were tall, well proportioned, with clear, yellow complexions; their eyes were black, their teeth very white; their hair was black and glossy; their lips were thick; their noses were aquiline, and their foreheads were receding. Their beards, were thin, and they had very little hair on their bodies; the expression of their mouths was sweet, but that of the upper part of their faces severe. They were brave, but cruel, eager for revenge, and the religious rites practiced by them were sanguinary. Intelligent and ready to learn, they were the first to make roads and aqueducts; they knew how to utilize certain metals;

they could spin, weave and dye cloth, cut precious stones, build solid houses of stone cemented with lime mortar, found regular towns; and, lastly, build mounds which may justly be compared with those of the Mississippi valley. To them popular gratitude attributes the invention of medicine, and the vapor bath (temazcalli). Certain plants to which curative properties were attributed were the remedies mostly used.^[68] In the towns we are told, were hospitals where the poor were received and cared for gratuitously. Our information respecting the commerce of the Toltecs is very vague. We know, however, that it was important. At certain periods of the year regular fairs were held at Toltan and Cholula; the products of the regions washed by both oceans were seen side by side with numerous objects made by the Toltecs themselves. These objects were of great variety, for though iron was unknown to them, the Toltecs worked in gold, silver, copper, tin and lead. Their jewelry is celebrated, and the few valuable ornaments which escaped the rapacity of the Conquistadores are still justly admired. The Toltecs cut down trees with copper hatchets, and sculptured bas-reliefs and hieroglyphics with stone implements. For this purpose flint, porphyry, basalt, and above all obsidian, the istlie of the Mexicans, were used. Emeralds, turquoises, amethysts, of which large deposits were found in various places, were sought after for making jewelry for both men and women. At Cholula a famous kind of pottery was made, including vases and the utensils in daily use, censers, and idols for the temples of the gods and common ornaments for the people.^[69]

Let this description be compared with that which Helaman^[70] gives of the Nephites in the sixty-fourth year of the Nephite republic—a date corresponding with the year 27 B. C.—and it will be seen that either one might stand for the other.

These traditions concerning the Toltecs, reflecting as they do the state of their civilization, which so nearly resembles that of the Nephites in so many particulars; as also all the traditions and mythologies dealt with in this and the preceding chapter respecting the creation, the flood, the great tower, the confusion of language, the dispersion of the people, the migrations to a new home, the strife for power among the leaders of these colonies—usually brothers, and most strikingly "four brothers," as also the status and nature of their civilization—all these things constitute strong testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon.

Footnotes

[1.](#) Gen. 6:4.

[2.](#) Gen. 11.

[3.](#) Gen. 11:9.

[4.](#) Gen. 11:8.

[5.](#) See Book of Ether, chs. 1, 2, 3, 4.

[6.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. II, pp. 386, 387, Prescott.

[7.](#) *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. II, p. 187, note, Prescott.

[8.](#) The suggestion of Nadaillac in this clause in parenthesis to the effect that this tradition of the Tower of Babel had its origin in the Christian teachings imparted to Ixtlilxochitl, will receive consideration at the conclusion of this series of quotations on the subject of the Tower of Babel, etc.

[9.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, p. 526.

[10.](#) *Native Races*, vol. III, pp. 67, 68. For this statement Bancroft in a foot note quotes the following authorities: *Boturini, Idea de una Hist.*, pp. 113, 114; id., *Catalogo*, pp. 39, 40; *Clavigero, Storia Ant. del Messico*, tom. 1, pp. 129, 130, tom. 2, p. 16; *Spiegazione delle Tavole del Codice Mexicano* (Vacano) tav. 7, in Kingsborough's *Mex. Ant.*, vol. V, pp. 164, 165; Gemelli Carreri, in *Churchill's Col. Voy.*, vol. IV, p. 481; Humboldt, *Vues des Cordilleres*, tom. 1, pp. 114, 115, tom. 2, pp. 175-8; Tylor's *Anahuac*, pp. 276, 277; Gondra, in Prescott, *Conquesta de Mexico*, tom. 3, pp. 1-10. The remainder of Bancroft's note following this citation of authorities, wherein he seeks to discredit the force of these native traditions concerning the Tower, the confusion of tongues and the dispersion of mankind, as in the case of Nadaillac's effort of a similar character, remarked in a previous note, will receive consideration at the close of this series of quotations concerning the Tower, etc., p. 273.

[11.](#) *America Before Columbus*, P. De Roo, vol. I, pp. 415, 416.

[12.](#) *America Before Columbus*, P. De Roo, vol. I, pp. 417, 418.

[13.](#) Should any one desire to make a larger collection I refer him to the authorities already referred to in a previous note on a passage from Bancroft; as also Nadaillac's *Pre-Historic America*, ch. 10; P. De Roo, *America Before Columbus*, vol. I, chapters sixteen to twenty inclusive; and Rivero & Tschudi's *Peruvian Antiquities*, chapter VII.

- [14.](#) *Native Races*, vol. V, p. 12.
- [15.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, p. 530. For the objections of the agnostic Bancroft see *Native Races*, vol. III, 68, 69, note; and for the objections urged by Prescott see *Conquest of Mexico*, vol. II, appendix, p. 387.
- [16.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, pp. 525, 531.
- [17.](#) Ante., p. 436.
- [18.](#) Exodus, 14.
- [19.](#) Ante., pp. 435, 436.
- [20.](#) Ante., p. 436.
- [21.](#) Ante., p. 436. Ibid.
- [22.](#) Ether 3:1.
- [23.](#) Ether 2:16.
- [24.](#) Ether 6:20.
- [25.](#) Ether 6:16.
- [26.](#) Ether 1:35.
- [27.](#) Ether 1:37.
- [28.](#) Ether 6:4, 5.
- [29.](#) Ether 6:4, 5.
- [30.](#) Ether 2:6, 7.
- [31.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, p. 261.
- [32.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, p. 523.
- [33.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, p. 272.
- [34.](#) Dupaix, quoted by Bancroft, *Native Races*, vol. V, p. 31.
- [35.](#) *Peruvian Antiquities*, Tschudi, p. 24.
- [36.](#) *American Ethnology and Sociology*, vol. I, p. 179.
- [37.](#) This place, according to Sahagun, is the first home of the Nahua nation. It is definitely located, says Bancroft, (*Native Races*, vol. V, p. 191) down the coast from Panuco, in the province of Guatemala.
- [38.](#) *Native Races*, Bancroft, vol. V, p. 189.
- [39.](#) *Native Races*, Bancroft, vol. V, p. 220.
- [40.](#) *Native Races*, Bancroft, vol. V, pp. 546, 547.
- [41.](#) Ante., p. 463, *et seq.*
- [42.](#) *Native Races*, Bancroft, vol. V, pp. 564, 566. Stephens also relates this tradition at length, see *Central America*, vol. II, pp. 172, 173.
- [43.](#) II Nephi 5: 18.
- [44.](#) Jacob 1:11; Mosiah 25:13.
- [45.](#) Omni 1:1-23.
- [46.](#) Alma 8:7.
- [47.](#) I Nephi 2:5.
- [48.](#) Exod. 6:21.
- [49.](#) I Chronicles 5:19.
- [50.](#) Nehemiah 7:52, see also margin.
- [51.](#) Ezra 2:50.

- [52.](#) Gen. 30:8.
- [53.](#) Joshua 15:9.
- [54.](#) *Peruvian Antiquities*, Tschudi, pp. 52, 53. See also Baldwin, *Ancient America*, p. 264.
- [55.](#) II Nephi 5:15, 17.
- [56.](#) Jacob 1:11.
- [57.](#) Jacob 1:9.
- [58.](#) Jacob 1:11.
- [59.](#) Mosiah 25:13.
- [60.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, p. 523.
- [61.](#) I Nephi 16:10, 16.
- [62.](#) Alma 37:39, 40.
- [63.](#) *Conquest of Peru*, vol. I, p. 31.
- [64.](#) Peru, *Travel and Exploration in the Lands of the Incas*, pp. 301, 331.
- [65.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, p. 174.
- [66.](#) See their associations with the events as given by Ixtlilxochitl, quoted by Bancroft, *Native Races*, vol. V, pp. 19, 21, and 208-218.
- [67.](#) Concerning which more later.
- [68.](#) See Book of Alma 46:40.
- [69.](#) *Pre-Historic America*, Nadaillac, pp. 275, 277.
- [70.](#) See Helaman 6:7-13, see also p. 124.

END OF VOLUME II.

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