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THE BOOK OF MORMON.

WHAT IS IT?

THE Book of Mormon is an historical record of the peoples who lived upon the American continents from very early times until about four hundred years after Christ. The book was published in 1830, before scientific investigation had thrown light upon the story of prehistoric America.

The Book of Mormon gives an account of the migrations and wars of these peoples, and of their faith and religious practices. It gives a most interesting view of the rise and fall of nations and of the forces that build or destroy humanity. It also gives an account, of exceeding beauty, of the visit of Jesus Christ to His "other sheep" on the American continent. It is altogether a notable book; reinforcing the teachings of the Bible, and setting up high ideals for humanity.

ORIGIN.

The Book of Mormon was translated by Joseph Smith, a young man untaught in worldly learning. A heavenly being, the angel Moroni, revealed to this young man that a set of plates, made of gold, upon which the historians of the early inhabitants had engraved the record of their national history, were buried in a hill in Western New York State, now known as the Hill Cumorah. The language and the characters, the latter in "reformed Egyptian," used on the plates, were both unknown to the young man; but he was able to effect the translation by means provided by his heavenly visitor.

AUTHENTICITY.

The Book of Mormon itself contains nothing impossible to the historian or to one who believes that the Lord guides the destinies of mankind. Yet, the method of its discovery and translation have awakened doubts as to its authenticity, and often caused open hostility to the book.

The contents of the Book of Mormon show such maturity of wisdom and such complete consistency, that the opponents of the book at first declared that Joseph Smith had published a manuscript written by someone else, learned and gifted in writing. This charge has been fully disproved, and is no longer made by those who are well informed.

During the century of its existence, the Book of Mormon has been subjected by unfriendly critics to an almost constant, searching inquiry as to its authenticity. Internal and external

evidence against its genuineness has been sought. To-day, the evidences for its truth are greater than ever before. It has so far met successfully every test imposed upon it. Only a few of these can be sketched in this brief writing, such as are derived from 1. Witnesses; 2. Consistency; 3. Modern Discovery; 4. Bible Predictions; 5. Inspired Contents; 6. A Proposed Test.

Careful detailed study of these evidences compel the conclusion that the Book of Mormon must have been produced under divine inspiration.

WITNESSES.

Eleven men, in groups of three and eight, have given written testimony that they saw and examined the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated. These men were honest, honourable and sane men. Not all remained followers of Joseph Smith, yet none of them denied the statement he had made concerning the plates. Not one of them threw doubt upon his testimony by suggesting that he might have been deceived. All of them lived and died true to their testimony that the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God from golden plates which they had seen.

CONSISTENCY.

The Book of Mormon is consistent throughout its whole extent. Nowhere in its 522 pages does it contradict itself. Several early American historians made the records on the plates over many centuries of time. The difference in style, as different men wrote, is plainly discernable in the different books. Such consistency would be most improbable if the untaught Joseph Smith had concocted the book out of his own head. The consistency of the book is a powerful proof of its authenticity.

MODERN DISCOVERY.

Since the publication of the Book of Mormon, American archæology and ethnology have practically been born. The discoveries made in these scientific fields corroborate to a remarkable degree the truth of the Book.

The Book of Mormon relates the story of three main peoples who came to the American from the Eurasian continent. The first group arrived soon after the historical episode known as the dispersion of tongues, or the Tower of Babel, and the other two about six hundred years before Christ. Recent scientific investigation has shown the existence of several prehistoric civilizations on the American continents, one at least, dating back several thousand years, and one, the Mayan, dating back about six hundred years before Christ, thus confirming remarkably the claims of the book.

It is generally conceded also that these peoples came eastward,

probably from Asia, and that they may well have been of Israelitish origin as set forth by the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon teaches that the American aborigines were in possession of copies of the Hebrew sacred records, and, at the time of Christ were taught Christianity. Their form of worship was at first pure Israelitish, later Christian, both of which in process of time became corrupted. According to scientific study, the worship and customs of the peoples of prehistoric America, as shown in temple and city ruins, burial mounds, and present Indian legends and customs, confirm the view that Jehovah, the Hebrew deity, was known among the early peoples of the American continents and that a knowledge of Christ was also had among them.

The accumulated evidence of scientific research, in the field of prehistoric America, favours strongly the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

BIBLE PREDICTIONS.

Many prophecies in the Bible foreshadow the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. For example, Ezekiel says, "The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand."

The men who engraved the plates of the Book of Mormon were descendants of Ephraim and his brother Manasseh, thus making the Book of Mormon the "Stick of Ephraim."

Isaiah says, speaking of certain peoples not of Judah, "And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." Just so, the Book of Mormon plates came out of the ground.

Other equally striking predictions concerning the Book of Mormon occur in the Bible.

INSPIRED CONTENTS.

One can not read the Book of Mormon, soberly, without noting that the contents are not like those provided by writers of ordinary books. Wisdom and inspiration are found on every page, far beyond the power of an unlearned youth.

For example, there are prophecies in the book, which seem to be gradually in a state of fulfillment, none more striking than those in relation to the reception that the Book of Mormon would

have when published. The people will say "A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible." This is exactly what has been said about the Book of Mormon.

Doctrines of singular beauty and profound philosophical value, penetrate every division of the Book of Mormon. The best known statement in the Book, "Adam fell that man might be, and man is that he might have joy," is of such vast import that it forms as it were the safe foundation for a new philosophy of human life, in which purpose is foremost and joy the end in man's existence.

The contents of the book add greatly to the evidence for its authenticity.

A PROPOSED TEST.

The Book of Mormon offers a test of its genuineness, which has been used by thousands with never a failure. Those who have used it, have become convinced of the truth and divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It is worded as follows:

"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."

Such a challenge makes the Book of Mormon unique. Men dare not present such a test for their human labours. A host of witnesses, living and dead, testify to the efficacy of this divine test. But, the test, to give full assurance, must be applied by one who loves truth above all else.

PURPOSE.

The Book of Mormon supplements but does not supplant the teachings of the Bible. It makes clear many doctrines which, because of errors in copying and translation, are difficult to understand in the Bible. It is an evidence that the Lord does not confine His blessings or His instructions to one place or people. His love is over all; and wherever men serve Him, He will bestow His choicest blessings.

The Book of Mormon, measured by any human test, proves its claim as a divinely inspired and translated record.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints use the Bible as the basis of their doctrinal structure, but hold that the canon of scripture is never full, and that the Lord guides His people to-day as anciently by continual revelation.

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