

The Book of Mormon Evaluated



By Hyrum O. Smith



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In 1876 and 1877 Joseph Cook lectured in Tremont Temple, Boston, to an audience that is described, in the preface of his lectures on "Transcendentalism," as being composed of "representatives of the broadest scholarship, the profoundest philosophy, the acutest scientific research, and generally of the finest intellectual culture, of Boston and New England." His lectures on "Transcendentalism" were an effort to present proofs of the divinity of the Bible and to create faith in that book. After practically exhausting his proofs composed of external evidences, he presents one of the finest tributes of the value of that sacred record that has ever come under my notice. He says:

The chief proof, after all, that the Bible is good food, is the eating of it. The healing efficacy of a medicine when it is used is the demonstration that it is good. Now, the world has been eating the Bible as it never ate any other book, and the Bible has been saturating the veins of the ages as they were never saturated by the food derived from any other volume; but there is no spiritual disease that you can point to that is the outcome of biblical inculcation. We all feel sure that it would be better than well for the world, if all the precepts of this volume were absorbed and transmuted into the actions of men. *The astounding fact is that the Bible is the only book in the world that will bear full and permanent translation into life.* The careless and superficial

sometimes do not distinguish from each other the biblical record and the biblical inculcation. I know that fearful things are recorded in the Bible concerning men, who, in some respects, were approved of God; but it is the biblical inculcation which I pronounce free from adulterate elements, not the biblical record. Of course, in a mirror held up before the human heart, there will be reflected blotches; but the inculcation of the Scriptures, from the beginning to the end of the sixty-six pamphlets, is known by experience to be free from adulterate elements; and I defy the world to show any disease that ever has come from the absorption into the veins of the ages of the biblical inculcation. And, moreover, I defy the ages to show any other book that could be absorbed thus in its inculcations, and not produce dizziness of the head, pimples on skin, staggering at last, and the sowing of dragon's teeth.

There is something very peculiar about this one book, in the incontrovertible fact that its inculcations are preserved from such error as would work out, in experience, moral disease in the world. Plato taught such doctrines, that if the world had followed him as it has the Bible, and had absorbed not his account of men's vices, but his positive inculcation, we today would be living in barracks, and we could not know who are our brothers and who are our sisters. (Grote's Plato, *The Republic, Social Laws*).

There was in Plato, you say, inspiration. Very well. His inculcation under what you call inspiration, and I call illumination, would, as every scholar knows, have turned this fat world into a pasture-ground for the intellectual and powerful on the one side; but the poor on the other side it would have ground down into the position of unaspiring and hopeless hewers of wood and drawers of water; and worse than that, it would have quenched the divinest spark in natural religion,—family life.—*Transcendentalism*, pp. 93, 94.

Hitherto, perhaps, we as advocates of the divinity of the Book of Mormon, have confined ourselves largely to an endeavor to prove its divinity from evidence outside of itself. Would it not be well for us to evaluate the book from what we believe would be its inculcations and the effect it might produce in

the lives of men? If we do, I think we may safely claim that it will rival the Bible in its moral teachings, and thus rival the Bible in defying the world to show any disease that ever has come from the absorption into its veins of the Book of Mormon inculcation. It is true that the Book of Mormon has not had the test that the Bible has had, so far as years are concerned; but in the hundred years of its existence as a guide for humanity it has stood the test. And while some who have been so-called believers in its divinity have committed abominations, the book can not be made responsible for their actions any more than can the Bible, for they professed a belief in that sacred record as well as in the book under discussion. In fact, those who have introduced the doctrine of polygamy endeavor to prove its divinity from the Bible, not from the Book of Mormon. In fact, one of the leading opponents of the book has made this statement:

As to the ethical status of this book, I think no unfavorable comment can reasonably be made. Its moral precepts are unquestionably good. They are all that its friends claim for it, and, indeed, superior in some respects to the Bible.—
D. H. Bays.

Admitting this, however, Mr. Bays argues that “The mere fact that its moral precepts may be regarded as faultless, can not serve to prove it to be of divine origin.” How can one prove a thing to be of divine origin? Must one depend upon external evidences alone? I claim that the fact that its moral precepts are faultless is strong evidence of its divine origin. In fact, I might say conclusive evidence, under the circumstances.

Motive Must Be Pure

The Book of Mormon is either what it claims to be, or it is one of the most stupendous frauds that was ever perpetrated. Frauds are perpetrated for reasons. There are two outstanding motives in all the activities of men. The first of these two is, perhaps, a desire for fame, or to stand high in the estimation of one's fellow men. Experience compels me to disregard the statements of individuals that they care not for the opinions of men; there is no one who will not glow with satisfaction when standing high in the estimation of his neighbors, and few of us will deliberately do that which will bring us the enmity of those with whom we associate.

The other outstanding motive which moves men to action is the desire for gain in wealth. Between these two it would be difficult to choose the chief. Men have sacrificed gain for fame, and they have sacrificed fame for gain. Among the former we count the man of high ideals; among the latter we find men of sordid minds and low ideals. Neither of these motives can be attributed to the man who brought forth the Book of Mormon. The narrative tells us that there was committed to his care a set of gold plates. He was young, and poor. Naturally the first thought that would come to his mind would be the value of this find in worldly comforts. But he was given to understand that the one who should bring this book into public notice must have no thought of worldly benefits, that if he used the plates to get gain they would be taken from him, and he would incur the wrath of God. He was furthermore told that he would be known in all the world, but to

a few he would be famous, to the many he would be infamous. These plates had engravings upon them, and he was told to translate them, and that in spite of his lack of learning the Lord would inspire him to make the translation. As a result we have the Book of Mormon. In translating the plates the following sentiment was found recorded:

He [God] commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain, and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion. Behold the Lord hath forbidden this thing; wherefore, the Lord God hath given a commandment, that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity, they were nothing: wherefore, if they should have charity, they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish. But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.—2 Nephi 11: 106-110.

In this one quotation both of these outstanding motives which usually prompt men to action, “to get gain, and praise of the world,” are disposed of as unworthy motives; and love of right, a desire to do good, are exalted, and made the only motives that should prompt the laborer in Zion. We are forced to the conclusion, then, that the motives that usually prompt the perpetration of a fraud were entirely absent in the mind of the person who was instrumental in bringing forth the Book of Mormon, and love for right and truth prevailed.

Judged by Fruits

We think it pertinent to ask this question: Could a man who was conscious of perpetrating a fraud write a book full of fraudulent claims, and yet make

that book faultless in its moral teachings? I think not. Christ evidently thought not when he gave utterance to the following:

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.—Matthew 7: 16-18.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.—Luke 6: 45.

And the Lord is represented as saying:

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots; then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.—Jeremiah 13: 23.

With these facts before us, the candid man, unhampered by prejudice, must concede that the Book of Mormon has very strong claims upon our belief and is worthy of our consideration. These claims will be more and more apparent as we proceed with our investigation.

Why the Book of Mormon?

It may be asked, Why the Book of Mormon? What is its place in religious literature? Has it a distinct mission? On these questions I propose to let the book speak for itself. In order to get the right perspective, it will be well to give a brief statement of what the book purports to be.

All well-informed men know that a mighty civilization once existed upon the continent of America. Whence they came and whither they went

remains a mystery to most students of archæology. We know their remains are here, and that their ruins are covered with hieroglyphics which the learned men have been unable to decipher. The Book of Mormon claims to be a history of that civilization. The record consists of the writings of a succession of prophets, or men of God, who enjoyed the same spirit of revelation and vision that was enjoyed by the men who wrote the Bible. And while a history of the people with their years and periods of peace and war is given, this history is interspersed with spiritual instruction received through visions, dreams, and direct revelations from God. The first prophet to write was a man by the name of Nephi. In one of his earliest visions he was permitted to see the future of his own people, and was also permitted to see much of the subsequent history of the world; and if the narrative is to be credited, he saw this present age with its happenings, especially along spiritual lines. In this vision he claims to have seen records come forth, and describes those records so minutely that there is no difficulty in recognizing them. He sees two records which he describes as "the book of the Lamb of God," and the record written by his own seed, and the seed of his brethren. His description of that portion of his vision relating to these records reads as follows:

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 the 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 can not 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.— 1 Nephi 3: 190-197.

Mission of the Book

There are two distinct objects to be attained in the coming forth of certain records designated here as "these last records." These records are unquestionably the Book of Mormon. And these objects to be attained are establishing the truth of the first, or the Bible, and to make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father. These are the two outstanding objects to be attained. A third may be mentioned and enlarged upon later; that is, to restore some plain and precious things that had been taken from the Bible. These objects represent the mission of the Book of Mormon, in part at least. It may be said that around these three objects cluster all the teachings of this remarkable book. To boil it down still further, it may be said that the whole

effort of the book is to emphasize the importance of an acceptance of Christ as our Savior.

It Teaches Christ

The man through whom the book was given to the world has frequently been accused of trying to take the place of Christ, and the people who have accepted his message have been accused of placing his name above that of Jesus Christ. But the object of the book is plainly stated here: that is, to present Christ as the Savior of the world, and that all men must come to him or they can not be saved. To show that the record consistently keeps this mission in view, I cite a number of passages from different parts of the book, and from different writers, showing that no matter who occupied the center of the stage of action, this central thought was ever uppermost in their minds. The first passage that I cite is from the pen of this same prophet from whom I have already quoted. In his second book, chapter 11, verses 39 to 48, we find the following:

Yea, behold, I say unto you, that as these things are true, and as the Lord God liveth, there is none other name given under heaven, save it be this Jesus Christ of which I have spoken, whereby man can be saved. Wherefore, for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write, shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation, that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph, that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand. Wherefore, these things shall go from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand; and they shall go according to the will and pleasure of God; and the nations which shall possess them, shall be judged of them according to the words which are written; for we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in

Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do.

And notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled; for, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ, because of our faith; yet we keep the law because of the commandments; and we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins.

In explanation of the peculiar statements made here, I will state that the above quotations were all written about six hundred years before Christ, and to account for the knowledge they had of Christ and the Bible, they claimed to have had all of the five books of Moses containing the law that he gave to Israel, and also all of the prophets up to and including part of Jeremiah. Much of their knowledge of Christ, however, came from direct revealments through the influence of the Spirit, dreams, visions, and like agencies.

Attention is called to an iteration of the mission of the Book of Mormon, in the passages last quoted, reasserting that the object of the preservation of the record was to hand down from generation to generation a knowledge of the Christ and his mission on earth. Certain it is that no people ever did more to keep the knowledge of the gospel ever fresh in the minds of those to whom they administered the word.

Passing on in the narrative, we are told that over five hundred years had passed away, and several prophets had succeeded each other in the land, each contributing his testimony to the fact that Jesus

Christ is the Savior of the world, and we come down to a prophet by the name of Alma. He has about run his race, and in preparing to depart this life, leaves behind instruction to his sons. To one of them he writes this:

And now my son, I have told you this, that ye may learn wisdom, that ye may learn of me that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only in and through Christ. Behold he is the life and the light of the world. Behold he is the word of truth and righteousness.—Alma 18: 11, 12.

These quotations give no uncertain sound. They are clear, concise, and conclusive, but only a few of many that might be quoted if space would allow or necessity demanded. The climax of this testimony of the Christ comes during his suffering upon the cross and after his death and resurrection. At the time of his birth, a very remarkable sign was given to the people of this continent. One of their prophets known as Samuel the Lamanite, predicted, five years before the birth of Christ, that at the time of his birth there would be two days with no darkness between. The prophecy is as follows:

Behold, I give unto you a sign: for five years more cometh, and behold then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name. And, behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his 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; 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 shall be the night before he is born.—Helaman 5: 55-58.

This prediction, the narrative says, came to pass, and it was quite an evidence of the Christ to the people who witnessed it, and many believed on him. This same prophet predicted that at the death of Christ there would be a great calamity come upon the land and people. This occurred as predicted. Great earthquakes destroyed cities and lands, and the narrative says:

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 shook till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate. . . . 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; yea, 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.—Book of Nephi 4: 11-15.

This Nephi was a prophet that came many hundreds of years after the first Nephi, from whom I have quoted. That such a calamity as is here described once came upon this land no one can doubt if he has traveled through the mountainous part of the country; for there is evidence of it everywhere. Not only does the narrative say that these things came, but it says that it all happened in about the space of three hours. Immediately after the scene just described, silence fell upon the land, but the darkness was not dispersed for three days. Soon after the dispersion of the darkness, Christ appeared and delivered to them the gospel with all its ordinances and blessings, organized his church among them, and the result was that for about one

hundred and sixty-three years there was continual peace in the land, all being united in one nation.

If to teach Christ is a worthy object, then the Book of Mormon deserves, and should receive our approbation, and should be respected by all Christian people, and hailed as a second witness for the Master.

Supports the Claims of the Bible

Coming in a day when unbelief is rampant, and the claims of the Bible are called in question, and the higher criticism is making inroads upon the faith of men, the Book of Mormon boldly proclaims itself a champion of the word of God, as well as of the claims of the Christ. I have already quoted the statement. Let me quote it again:

And the angel spake unto me, saying, These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles shall establish the truth of the first.

These last records represent the Book of Mormon; the first records represent the Bible. The Book of Mormon is to serve to establish the truth of the Bible. Is this a worthy object to be attained? Is this a worthy mission in which to be engaged? Christians will agree that it is. If, as Joseph Cook says, "We all feel sure that it would be better than well for the world, if all of the precepts of this volume were absorbed and transmuted into the actions of men," should we not hail with delight a champion such as this? Where men accept the Book of Mormon as divine, all doubt of the Bible's divinity is removed. The two books stand together as two unimpeachable witnesses, and the two together form

a fulfillment of the prediction made in Ezekiel 37: 15-19:

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. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes.

The obvious meaning of the word *stick* as it is here used is *a record*, and two records are to be made, one for Joseph and one for Judah; both are to contain God's word, written at his command, and they are to become one in his hand in the accomplishment of his work among men, one in the sense that they are to teach the same thing. The reason for this is given in the Book of Mormon:

Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, hath created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together, the testimony of the two nations shall run together also. And I do this that I may prove unto many, that I am the same yesterday, today, and for ever. . . . For I command all men, both in the east, and in the west, and in the south, and in the north, and in the islands of the sea, that

they shall write the words which I shall speak unto them: for out of the books which shall be written, I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written.—2 Nephi 12: 56-66.

Thus we discover that the Book of Mormon constantly holds before its readers the fact that Christ is the Son of God, and that the Bible is a true record of God's will revealed to men, and it should be hailed with delight by every true believer in Christ and the Bible, as a second witness for God. It is conceded by all thoughtful men that the gospel of Christ holds the solution for all the troubles of this world—that in it is to be found the remedy for all ills. Anything, therefore, that would be conducive to a better understanding of the gospel, would unquestionably be a factor in bringing about the condition for which we all long, and which Christ taught his disciples to pray for, when he said:

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Christians may devoutly hope, pray, and work for such a condition. Why should we reject any movement that has this for its sole purpose, end, or aim? I unhesitatingly assert that no man can accept the Book of Mormon for his guide and reject either Christ or the Bible.

Believing that I have presented strong claims for the acceptance of the Book of Mormon as divine, I will proceed to give what I think are equally as strong and cogent reasons why it should be respected by all Christian people.

Second Witness for God

First, however, I will present some reasons why it should be regarded as a second witness for God. When the Book of Mormon came forth, the religious world was without a universally accepted standard by which to decide religious controversies. This may seem a bold statement, but it is true. As proof that it is true, I will present a quotation from Alexander Campbell in the preface of his *Living Oracles*, a translation of the New Testament by Doctors George Campbell, James Macknight, and Philip Doddridge. This little book was published by Alexander Campbell in 1833, "with prefaces, various emendations, and an appendix." In his first preface, Mr. Campbell expresses himself as follows:

But in the preceding remarks it has been taken for granted, that the Common Version was an exact representation of the original at the time in which it was made. This, however, is not admitted by any sect in Christendom. All parties are occasionally finding fault. None are willing to abide by its every sentence. And, indeed, there is no translation that could be made that would prove all the tenets of any party. And if a translation that does not prove all the tenets and ceremonies of a sect, is to be censured by that sect, then there can not exist any translation that would be considered correct. It is, however, true that the Common Version was made at a time when religious controversy was at its zenith; and that the tenets of the translators, whether designedly or undesignedly, did, on many occasions, give a wrong turn to words and sentences bearing upon their favorite dogmas.

To such an extent has this distrust of the Common Version increased that it has become increasingly difficult to get a man to enter into a religious controversy with the understanding that the Common Version be considered the standard of evidence.

But each controversialist insists on his right to translate any passage to suit himself or his theories. To such an extent has this practice prevailed that I have in my possession a book in which the author translates the same passage differently, in order to make it fit the particular topic he is discussing at the time. I am right, then, in saying, that the religious world is now and has been for centuries without a universally accepted authority to which it can appeal as a court of final resort in questions theological. I believe that Isaiah foresaw this condition, and saw what the remedy would be. I think he foresaw the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; for in his twenty-ninth chapter he mentions a book that was to come forth—it is called “a book that is sealed.” He describes the conditions that will prevail in the land of Palestine, and predicts the return of the Jews to that land, and adds:

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book; and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness; and the meek also shall increase, and their joy shall be in the Lord; and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. . . . They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.—Isaiah 29: 18, 19, 24.

At the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, religious controversy was rampant, and new translations of the Bible were coming thick and fast. In 1864 Benjamin Wilson put out what is known as the Emphatic Diaglott, a translation of the New Testament, with the Greek and English in parallel columns. In his preface he gives as his reasons for this new translation, the following:

To trouble the reader with any lengthy remarks on the important advantages to be derived from a new translation of the Sacred Writings is deemed altogether unnecessary. Much information on this point has been given by others who have published modern versions of the New Testament, with the reasons which have induced them to do so. These reasons will serve in a great measure also for this. It is generally admitted by all critics that the Authorized or Common Version of the Scriptures absolutely needs revision. Obsolete words, uncouth phrases, bad grammar and punctuation, etc., all require alteration. But this is not all. There are errors of a more serious nature that need correction. The translators of the Common Version were circumscribed and trammled by royal mandate; they were required to retain certain old ecclesiastical words which, accordingly, were left untranslated. Thus the minds of many who had no means of knowing the meaning of the original words have been misled and confused. Biblical criticism, however, during the last two hundred years, has done much to open up and elucidate the word of God, by discovering many things which were unknown to the old translators, making great improvements in the text, detecting numerous interpolations and errors, and suggesting far better renderings of many passages. Many modern versions have availed themselves of this valuable assistance, and it is believed they have thereby been enabled to give the English reader a better understanding of what was originally written.

Mr. Wilson then proceeds to give a list of what he calls the most noted translations of the Scriptures, following what is known as the King James Version. He says:

Since 1611, many translations of both Old and New Testaments, and portions of the same, have been published. The following are some of the most noted:

The Family Expositor; or a Paraphrase and Version of the New Testament, with Critical Notes. By Philip Doddridge, 1755.

The Four Gospels Translated from the Greek. By George Campbell, 1790.

A New Literal Translation, from the Original Greek, of the Apostolic Epistles. By James Macknight, 1795.

A Translation of the New Testament. By Gilbert Wakefield, 1795.

A Translation of the New Testament, from the original Greek. Humbly attempted by Nathaniel Scarlett, assisted by men of piety and literature. 1798.

The New Testament in an Improved Version, upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's New Translation, with a corrected text, 1808.

The New Testament in Greek, and English, the Greek according to Greisbach; the English upon the basis of the fourth London edition of the Improved Version, with an attempt to further improvement from the translations of Campbell, Wakefield, Scarlett, Macknight, and Thompson. By Albert Kneeland, 1822.

A New Family Bible, and improved version, from corrected texts of the original, with notes critical, &c. By B. Boothroyd, 1823.

The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, translated from the original, by Campbell, Macknight, and Doddridge, with various emendations by A. Campbell, 1833.

A New and Corrected Version of the New Testament. By R. Dickinson, 1833.

The Book of the New Covenant, a critical revision of the text and translation of Common Version, with the aid of most ancient MSS. By Granville Penn, 1836.

The Holy Bible, with 20,000 emendations. By J. T. Conquest, 1841.

The Good News of Our Lord Jesus, the Anointed; from the critical Greek of Tittman. By N. N. Whiting, 1849.

A Translation of the New Testament from the Syriac. By James Murdock, 1852.

Translation of Paul's Epistles. By Joseph Turnbull, 1854.

The New Testament, translated from Griesbach's Text. By Samuel Sharpe, 1856.

Eight years later Mr. Wilson put out his Emphatic Diaglott. If he had written fifty years later, he could have cited as many more attempts to improve upon the translation of the Bible as are here enumerated, and the end is not yet. Into this confusion of translations comes the Book of Mormon with its claims to divine origin, and admirably fills

the prediction of Isaiah, wherein he says that those who receive it, and who have erred in spirit shall come to understand, and those who murmured shall learn doctrine.

Those Who Err Learn Doctrine

Let us take up, then, one by one, some of the controverted points of doctrine upon which the religious world has been divided and subdivided. A condition that has been brought about, according to Doctor Theodore Heysham, because of a lack of knowledge of the Bible by the masses. In his recent book entitled, *The Birth of the Bible*, in his preface he says:

Widespread darkness overshadows the church in relation to the Book. The great mass of the people are in almost total ignorance as to the facts about the Bible. No seminary, college, or university as yet has equipped men to bridge the gulf between the people and the facts about the Bible. The result of this failure is seen in the chaos and confusion and conflict among the churches and within the churches.

An acceptance of the Book of Mormon will bring harmony out of this chaos, as thousands can testify, and bring men to a knowledge of the Bible never possessed before. And the beauty of it is that the humblest, the most unlearned, as well as the scholar, can come to an understanding of the Bible and its relationship to human needs.

Infant Baptism

Briefly I present the following doctrines that have been in controversy:

First, the doctrine of infant baptism. Debates have been held, and books have been written on both sides of this subject, and so far the matter has not

been settled by an appeal to the Bible. The controversy still rages in places, each party claiming that the Bible is on his side in the discussion. But let us now see what the Book of Mormon says upon the question. The last prophet to write of the proceedings of this ancient people was a man of the name Moroni, and he quotes from an epistle that his father wrote him before his death. The following is that portion of the epistle that relates to infant baptism:

And now my son I speak unto you concerning that which grieveth me exceedingly; for it grieveth me that there should be disputations rise among you. For if I have learned the truth, there have been disputations among you concerning the baptism of your little children. And now my son, I desire that ye should labor diligently, that this gross error should be removed from among you; for, for this intent I have written this epistle. For immediately after I had learned these things of you, I inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And the word of the Lord came to me by the power of the Holy Ghost, saying, Listen to the words of Christ, your Redeemer, your Lord, and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them; and the law of circumcision is done away in me. And after this manner did the Holy Ghost manifest the word of God unto me; wherefore my beloved son, I know that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children.—Book of Moroni 8: 4-10.

To those who accept the Book of Mormon, this is the end of controversy, as there can be no mistake as to the meaning of the language used.

Baptism

As in infant baptism, so we find the ordinance of baptism of adults a disputed point, and the contro-

versy has raged to the writing of many books, and the indulging in many debates, oral and written; but the matter can not be settled by an appeal to the Bible. At least it has not been settled. Upon this question, however, the Book of Mormon gives no uncertain sound. Hear it:

And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they can not be saved in the kingdom of God. And if they will not repent, and believe in his name, and be baptized in his name, and endure to the end, they must be damned.—2 Nephi 6: 48, 49.

And I heard a voice from the Father, saying, Yea, the words of my beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this, that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he can not be saved; wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen, that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire, and by the Holy Ghost.—2 Nephi 13: 18-24.

And he said unto them, On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you. Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them: Behold, ye shall go down into the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. And now behold, these are the words that ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name, for, behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one.—3 Nephi 5: 23-27.

This last quotation is the report of the words of Christ himself as he preached to the people upon this continent, giving explicit instructions as to the purpose and mode of baptism, and the manner in which it should be administered. This settles the question of the mode, and also destroys all foundation for the doctrine of trine immersion, or that true baptism consists in three separate immersions, one in the name of the Father, one in the name of the Son, and one in the name of the Holy Ghost. The words here explicitly are, "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye immerse them," etc. There is no chance for controversy here. I quote again:

Repentance is unto them that are under condemnation, and under the curse of a broken law. And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling of the commandments; and the fulfilling of the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God.—Book of Moroni 8: 28, 29.

Four disputed questions are clearly settled in these quotations, and we are distinctly told that baptism is necessary to salvation; that only those who are capable of repentance are proper subjects for the ordinance; that it is for the remission of sins; and that its mode is a single immersion in water. Hence those who erred come to understanding, just as Isaiah predicted they would.

Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost is another disputed point, and with many has passed into innocuous desuetude. When Christ organized his church in this land, he chose twelve disciples to represent him, and the narrative says that he gave them his special blessing; but the multitude did not hear the words that he said unto them. They only knew that he laid his hands upon them and talked to them. The narrative is as follows:

And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of these sayings, he touched with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen, one by one, even until he had touched them all, and spake unto them as he touched them, and the multitude heard not the words which he spake, therefore they did not bear record; but the disciples bear record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost. And I will show you hereafter that this record is true.—Book of Nephi 8: 70-72.

The last prophet who makes his contribution to the narrative gives this transaction in full, with many other important instructions as to the ordinances of the church. This prophet's name was Moroni. He was the sole survivor of the nation he represented in a great battle that took place between the warring nations which were composed of the original inhabitants of this continent. His rendition of the scene between Christ and his disciples is as follows:

The words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them. And he called them by name, saying, Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer, and after ye have

done this, ye shall have power that on him whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles. Now Christ spake these words unto them at the time of his first appearing; and the multitude heard it not, but the disciples heard it, and on as many as they laid their hands, fell the Holy Ghost.—Moroni 2.

Blessing of Children

This makes clear the establishment by Christ of the ordinance of laying on of hands for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, not only in his church organized in Palestine, but here on this continent. Not only is this purpose of the laying on of hands clearly indicated, but other purposes are indicated. A very wonderful account of Christ's work upon this continent is given when the scene depicting the blessing of little children is described. This occasion is described thus:

And it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought. So they brought their little children and sat them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him. And it came to pass that when they had all been brought, and Jesus stood in the midst, he commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground. And it came to pass that when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and saith, Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel. And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth, and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed can not be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him. And after this manner do they bear record: the eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father; and no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard

Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy that filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father. And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude, that they were overcome. And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise. And they rose from the earth, and he said unto them, Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold my joy is full. And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bear record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.—Book of Nephi 8: 12-23.

A wonderful setting to introduce one of the most impressive ordinances of the gospel! And we are told that God and the angels gave approval to this ordinance. The narrator continues:

And when he had done this he wept again, and he spake unto the multitude, and saith unto them, Behold your little ones. And as they looked to behold, they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were, in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about; and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them, and the multitude did see and hear, and bear record; and they know that their record is true, for they all of them did see and hear, every man for himself.—Verses 24-26.

Sacramental Service Instituted

Immediately at the close of this impressive scene, Christ gave them instruction as to the way they should administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper, administering it himself to the twelve disciples whom he had chosen and then instructing these disciples to administer it to the multitude, and in the following words making it a perpetual ordinance in his church:

And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the disciples, Behold, there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread, and bless it, and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name. And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread, and blessed it, and gave it unto you.—Verses 33, 34.

The Prophet Moroni, who gave such a plain account of the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, which we have already quoted, gives the form of the prayer that shall be used in administering the bread and wine, and gives Christ as his authority for this prayer. This prayer is given in Moroni, chapter five, and reads, with preliminaries, as follows:

The manner of their elders and priests administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the church. And they administered it according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true; and the elder or priest did minister it. And they did kneel down with the church, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, saying, O God, the eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

Similar instruction is given concerning the administration of the wine, the prayer being almost identical with the prayer blessing the bread, the word *wine* being used instead of the word *bread*.

In regard to laying on of hands in ordination, the instructions are just as explicit. This same prophet gives the method used. He says:

The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priests and teachers. After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said, In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest; (or if he be a teacher,) I ordain you to be a teacher, to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the ordinance of faith on his name to the end. Amen. And after this manner did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was in them.—Moroni 3.

A Period of Unity

It is said that immediately after the appearance of Christ upon this continent the whole nation was converted to him, and not only the whole nation, but their traditional enemies also became converts to his gospel. For about one hundred and sixty-three years there were no isms in the land, but all were united in serving the Lord. All this because of the plainness of the teachings of those who had been instructed directly by Christ himself. Describing this period the historian says:

And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people. And there were no envyings, 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.—Book of Nephi 1: 17-19.

Other Doctrines Made Plain

Thus we see that a unity of teaching on the fundamentals of the gospel of Christ is found in this book, and it is quite safe to conclude that the prediction of Isaiah that those that murmured should learn doctrine is really fulfilled in the coming forth and acceptance of the teachings of this book. But not only

in what are usually termed the first principles of the doctrine of Christ do we find clearness of thought and expression, but in all the matter of dispute in the Christian world there is found that which ends controversy, and brings men to a unity of belief. As in the case of baptism, infant baptism, and so forth, we find there are various beliefs in the land in regard to the state of the soul between death and the resurrection. Books have been written, and discussions have been held, but the matter has not been settled by an appeal to the Bible.

Dual Nature of Man

The question of the dual nature of man is a disputed theme. Some claim that when a man dies he dies completely; that there is no spiritual existence for man, no soul to return to God who gave it; that the scriptures that hold out that idea are wrongly translated and interpreted. Thus the controversy has raged, and no satisfactory solution to the trouble has been found. But in this book, free from the private interpretation of men, is found a solution of the problem, given in no uncertain language. I have quoted in this article from one of these ancient American prophets by the name of Alma. He lived many years before the coming of Christ, but had a very definite knowledge of the salvation that Christ was to bring to the world through the gospel. He was the head of the church in his day. Just prior to his demise, he was told to give his sons instruction as to their work in the church, for they were to take up his work when he passed away. The names of these sons were Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton,

and it is to an extract from his epistle to the last named that I wish to call attention now. I seems that this boy's mind had been somewhat disturbed over the question of the resurrection of the dead, and the period between death and the resurrection, hence his father instructs him in regard to this matter, and the following is a quotation from this man's writings on the topic:

Now there must needs be a space betwixt the time of death and the time of the resurrection. And now I would inquire what becometh of the souls of men, from this time of death, to the time appointed for the resurrection? Now whether there is more than one time appointed for men to rise, it mattereth not: for all do not die at once: and this mattereth not; all is as one day with God; and time only is measured unto men; therefore there is a time appointed unto men, that they shall rise from the dead; and there is a space between the time of death and the resurrection. And now concerning this space of time. What becometh of the souls of men, is the thing which I have inquired diligently of the Lord to know; and this is the thing of which I do know. And when the time cometh when all shall rise, then shall they know that God knowteh all the times which are appointed unto man. Now concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection. Behold it has been made known unto me, by an angel, that the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from this mortal body; yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life. And then it shall come to pass that the spirits of those who are righteous, are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise; a state of rest; a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles, and from all care, and sorrow, etc. And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil; for behold they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord: for behold they choose evil works, rather than good: therefore the spirit of the Devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house; and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; and this because of their own iniquity; being led captive by the will of the Devil.—Alma 19: 36-46.

There is no chance for an argument here. The language is clear and convincing. The statement of the writer, "And this is the thing of which I do know," leaves no room for doubt in the mind of the reader as to the authority of the statements made. It settles the question as to the dual nature of man, and the separation of the spirit from the body at death, and while the matter of the resurrection of the body is not discussed at length, it leaves no doubt in the mind of the investigator as to the reality of that resurrection. If after reading the statement just quoted, the mind of the reader is not convinced that this book teaches the resurrection of the dead, he needs but to turn to the Second Book of Nephi, and read the following:

O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit. And because of the way of deliverance of our God, the Holy One of Israel, this death, of which I have spoken, which is the temporal, shall deliver up its dead, which death is the grave. And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death, shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored, one to the other; and it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel. O how great the plan of our God! For on the other hand, the paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the body of the righteous: and the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls, having a perfect knowledge like unto us, in the flesh; save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect; wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness, and our nakedness; and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteous,

ness, being clothed with purity, yea, even with the robe of righteousness. And it shall come to pass, that when all men shall have passed from this first death unto life, insomuch as they have become immortal, they must appear before the judgment seat of the Holy One of Israel; and then cometh the judgment; and then must they be judged according to the holy judgment of God. And assuredly, as the Lord liveth, for the Lord God hath spoken it, and it is his eternal word, which can not pass away, that they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the Devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames ascendeth up for ever and ever; and has no end.—2 Nephi 6: 24-40.

This leaves no doubt in regard to the resurrection of the body and the restoration of the soul to the body from which it is separated at death.

Nature of Punishment of the Wicked

Incidentally another disputed question is made clear. Much contention has been had in religious circles as to the nature and duration of the punishment that men will undergo at death, or after death. Some contend that the punishment of the wicked consists of being cast into a lake of real fire and brimstone. But in the passage just quoted one is led to believe that the punishment of the wicked is compared to a lake of fire and brimstone, and the real punishment is a consciousness of guilt, the wicked having a perfect knowledge of their guilt, as the righteous will have a perfect consciousness of their righteousness: thus guilt will bring regret, and righteousness will bring satisfaction. Another writer brings this out more clearly. This writer is Mormon, the compiler of the book we are discussing.

He writes a book bearing his name, and in the fourth chapter he says:

And now, I speak also concerning those who do not believe in Christ. Behold, will ye believe in the day of your visitation; behold, when the Lord shall come; yea, even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; yea, in that great day when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God, then will ye say that there is no God? Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of your guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold I say unto you, that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you.—Verses 57-64.

The first writer says their torment will be “as a lake of fire,” and this writer, that their torment will be produced by a consciousness of guilt, a consciousness of what they have lost by disobedience and unbelief.

Duration of Punishment

We have in this book, too, a very plain indication that endless punishment and eternal punishment do not mean that one is to suffer these punishments endlessly, but that one may suffer eternal punishment and yet that punishment may come to an end. One of these prophets exclaims:

My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now

I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was wrecked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more.—Mosiah 11: 191-193.

Afterwards, in describing this experience to his son, this prophet, whose name was Alma, writes:

But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree, and racked with all my sins. Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell. . . . And now, for three days and three nights I was racked with the pains of a damned soul. And it came to pass as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people, concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world. Now as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart, O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who art in the gall of bitterness, and art encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. And now behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. And O, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain; yea, I say unto you my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as was my pain. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy.—Alma 17: 10-19.

Thus we see that this book, despised by those who claim that they desire to see religious controversies settled, speaks with no uncertain sound upon all matters with which it deals, and it deals with all of the mooted questions of the day, and, if accepted by the religious world, it would end dispute upon theological questions, and furnish the world with the solution of a mystery that has held the attention of the scientific world since Columbus discovered America, the mystery of the origin of the ancient American civilization.

Its Moral Teachings

We will present the moral teachings of the book now, and challenge comparison with any book on earth, not excepting the Bible.

The Marriage Question

There is no more vital principle in the welfare of nations than the marital relation. Nations have risen, flourished for a period, and fallen because of a disregard of the sacredness of the marriage covenant. To some the Bible speaks clearly upon the question. To others a looseness in this matter is thought to be justified, because of the things that are written of the practices of the kings of Israel, notably David and Solomon. But this book speaks definitely and positively upon the question. One of the prophets, Jacob by name, addressed the people, and his words are presented under the heading, "The words which Jacob, the brother of Nephi, spake unto the people of Nephi, after the death of Nephi." One of the sins that prompted the address of this man to the people is stated, just before recording the address, as follows:

And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices, such as like unto David of old, desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son.—Jacob 1: 15.

Two topics were especially handled by this prophet; the whole of the second chapter of his book is devoted to the discussion of them. First he reproves them for their pride, but we will take up the consideration of this under another heading, and take the second topic first. He says:

And now I make an end of speaking unto you concerning this pride. And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime, my heart would rejoice exceedingly, because of you. But the word of God burthens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord, This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures: for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son. Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph. Wherefore, I, the Lord, will not suffer that these people shall do like unto them of old. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none; for I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me: thus saith the Lord of hosts. Wherefore, these people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of hosts, or cursed shall be the land for their sakes.—Verses 29-38.

The country was divided between two nations that were continually at war with each other, engendering the fiercest of hatred. One was a civilized, industrious nation, while the other lived by hunting, and preying upon the more civilized portion of the land. The prophet commends this latter nation for its fidelity to the marriage covenant, and predicts that they shall be an instrument of punishment in the hands of the Lord, destroying the civilized people because of their failure to abide by his commands. He says:

And the Lamanites which are not filthy like unto you, shall scourge you even unto destruction. And the time speedily cometh, that except ye repent, they shall possess the land of your inheritance, and the Lord God will lead

away the righteous out from among you. Behold the Lamanites, your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursings which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our fathers, that they should have, save it be one wife: and concubines they should have none; and there should not be whoredoms committed among them. And now this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore because of this observance in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people. Behold their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands, and their husbands and their wives love their children.—Verses 52-58.

It would be difficult to make a thing plainer than this. It seems according to this prophet of God that God considers the crime of infidelity to the marriage covenant the worst of crimes, the climax of crimes, and the nation that tolerates it has forfeited its right to be a nation, and disintegration and destruction are sure. Even the wicked nation, a nation that has violated all other laws of God, but has been true to this covenant is worthy of preservation, and to be used as an instrument to punish those who have been false to that covenant.

In consequence of their failure to listen to the exhortation of this prophet, Jacob, they were driven out of their land, called the land of their first inheritance, and after years had passed by, a certain number of men concluded to go back and see if they could not recover this land from their enemies. This, in a measure, they succeeded in doing, but had to occupy the land subject to the rule of their enemies. They were led by a man by the name of Zeniff, who was a righteous man. God prospered them, and

preserved them from being destroyed, although they had to pay tribute to their enemies. But Zeniff died, and the narrative says:

And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father. For behold he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And did cause his people to commit sin, and to do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness.—Mosiah 7: 1-5.

As in the other case cited, God at once sent a prophet to warn them of destruction if they did not repent of this evil. This they failed to do, and the result was that they were destroyed.

There is one other case mentioned in the Book of Mormon, which is almost identical with the last one I have cited. The record states it as follows:

And it came to pass that Riplakish did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord, for he did have many wives and concubines, and did lay that upon men's shoulders which was grievous to be borne; yea, he did tax them with heavy taxes; and with the taxes he did build many spacious buildings.—Ether 4: 48.

This man reigned forty and two years, and then the people rose up in rebellion and destroyed him, and his family or all of his descendants were driven out of the land. So we see God did not sanction any departure from the strict law of marriage he had instituted in the beginning.

Other Moral Teachings

Perhaps it will be conceded, by all Christian people at least, that prayer to God is one of the refining

influences in the lives of men, especially if prayer be sincere. If this be true, then the following instruction given a congregation by one of the preachers of the gospel would certainly bring about desirable results in the formation of character.

Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you; yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him; cry unto him when you are in your fields; yea, over all your flocks; cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, midday, and evening; yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the Devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them: cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness; yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, . . .—Alma 16: 218-222.

I have purposely cut this quotation off in the middle of a sentence, for the reason that I want to refer to it later under another heading, wherein another phase of spiritual and moral development will be considered from the teachings of this book. I presume that no Christian or professed Christian will object to the teaching set forth in this quotation, but will be ready to commend it as of the highest worth in the formation of Christian character. But if these teachings can be exceeded in value, I think the next quotation will be given the prize.

A company of very wicked men had banded themselves together for the purpose of plundering their fellow men. They had formed a secret band, governed by oaths and covenants, signs and passwords,

enabling them to steal, murder, and plunder with impunity. This band of robbers had become such a menace to the nation that the authorities had formed an expedition against them and destroyed them, capturing their secret plans and signs, etc. The Prophet Alma was giving his sons instruction as to how to carry on their ministry after his departure from this life, and this quotation is part of the instruction given to one of these sons. After giving him a recital of the wickedness of these lawless men, he says:

And now my son, remember the words which I have spoken unto you: trust not those secret plans unto this people, but teach them an everlasting hatred against sin and iniquity; preach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ: teach them to humble themselves, and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the Devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; teach them to never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart: for such shall find rest to their souls. O remember my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God; yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord for ever; counsel the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good: yea, when thou liest down at night, lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning, let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.—Alma 17: 65-70.

I think it will be conceded by every Christian that it would be difficult to find better instruction given by a father to a son than is found in this quotation. Many such quotations might be cited, but to give them all would be to rewrite the book. A con-

sideration of these facts will lead one to agree with the testimony of one of our opponents quoted in the beginning of this paper, and from which we requote here: "As to the ethical status of this book, I think no unfavorable comment can reasonably be made. Its moral precepts are unquestionably good. They are all that its friends claim for it; and, indeed, superior in some respects to those of the Bible."

In connection with the quotations already made, I wish to take up another phase of the teachings of this book, in which one is given to understand that one's attitude towards those with whom one is associated or surrounded will determine one's worthiness to receive salvation. In nearly all of the passages so far cited, one's attitude towards those with whom one is surrounded is made the test of one's sincerity, and consequent acceptance with God. In other words, everyone who would come to God and be accepted by him must manifest the

Spirit of Stewardship

First, I want to complete a quotation made before, and which I stated was cut in two in the middle of a sentence purposely. To make it intelligible I will quote the verse complete in which the divided sentence is found:

Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you. And now behold, my brethren, I say unto you, Do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and the afflicted, and impart of your substance if ye have, to those who stand in need; I say unto you, If ye do not any of these things, behold your prayer is

vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who deny the faith; therefore if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out (it being of no worth) and is trodden under the foot of men.—Alma 16: 222-225.

Thus it is taught that prayer, and righteous living are not the only things required of the follower of Christ; but even in our prayers we are to be mindful of those with whom we are surrounded. In the next quotation is found the finest plea that it has ever been my lot to read, setting forth our relationship to our fellow men who are needy. Judged by this sentiment, I am afraid but few of us will escape condemnation.

And ye shall not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due. And ye will not suffer your children, that they go hungry or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the Devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers; he being an enemy to all righteousness; but ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another; and also ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say, The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance, that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just. But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this, the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done, he perisheth for ever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God. For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same being, even God, for all the substance which we have; for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind?

And behold, even at this time, ye have been calling upon his name, and begging for a remission of your sins. And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay; he has poured out his Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped, that ye could not find utterance, so exceeding great was your joy. And now, if God who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives, and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how had ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have, one to another? And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance, that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation, for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you, but to God, to whom also, your life belongeth; and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou hast done. I say unto you woe be unto that man, for his substance shall perish with him; and now I say these things unto those who are rich, as pertaining to the things of this world. And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts, that I give not because I have not; but if I had, I would give. And now, if ye say this in your hearts, ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned, and your condemnation is just; for ye covet that which ye have not received. And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you; that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God, I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants, and see that all these things are done in wisdom and order: for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength.—Mosiah 2: 24-44.

Here is the very essence of Christian stewardship. It is the doctrine that all belongs to God, and that we are only stewards over that which we possess, and are under obligation to impart a portion

of that which is in our possession to the relief of our fellow men who may be less fortunate than are we, whether that condition has been brought about by accident or mismanagement for more often it is our mismanagement than accident that puts us out of harmony with God, and yet we are very voluble in our petitions to him for a forgiveness of our sins. But all of this is to be done in wisdom and order. A very wise provision.

We will now turn back to the talk made by Jacob, the brother of Nephi, to the people soon after the death of the latter. The talk wherein he reproved them for the sin of pride and then passed on to their grosser crime of polygamy. We will find in this talk the climax of the principle of stewardships.

And now behold, my brethren, this is the word which I declare unto you, that many of you have begun to search for gold, and for silver, and all manner of precious ores, in the which this land, which is the land of promise unto you, and to your seed, doth abound most plentifully. And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren, ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks, and high heads, because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren, because ye suppose that ye are better than they. And now, my brethren, do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and if ye persist in these things, his judgments must speedily come unto you. O that he would show you that he could pierce you, and with one glance of his eye, he can smite you to the dust. O that he would rid you of this iniquity and abomination. And O that ye would listen unto the word of his commands, and let not this pride of your hearts destroy your souls. Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye

shall obtain riches if ye seek them; and ye will seek them, for the intent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.—Jacob 2: 14-24.

Sometimes we think that if men would obey the golden rule, doing unto others as they would have others do unto them, it would transform this world. We would have a new heaven and a new earth; and it is so. But what about this statement of Jacob's? What would be the result if all men would engage in business and work for the sole purpose of getting riches that they might do good with them, as outlined here? Would it not transform this world into a paradise? One of our noted men, Horace Bushnell, makes this statement:

One more revival, only one more is needed, the revival of Christian stewardship, the consecration of the money power to God. When that revival comes, the kingdom of God will come in a day.

It is certainly true that if the teachings of the Book of Mormon could be incorporated into all the beliefs of mankind, not just as beliefs, but as a rule guiding all our activities, this world would be a better place in which to live, and the will of God would be done in earth as it is in heaven. For all of men's activities would be motivated by one desire only that they might do good with that which came into their possession. Surely the kingdom of God would come in a day.

Is There Demand for Such a Book?

As early as 1839 the demand for such a book was expressed by the Right Reverend Charles P. McIlvaine, D. D., bishop of the diocese of Ohio. In

that year a book was published entitled, An Inquiry into the Origin of the Antiquities of America, by Delafield. In the preface of this work Reverend McIlvaine wrote as follows:

Suppose that in searching the tumuli that are scattered so widely over the country, the silent, aged, mysterious remembrance of some populous race, once carrying on all the business of life where now are only the wild forests of many centuries, a race of whom we ask so often, who they were, whence they came, whither they went, suppose that under one of these huge structures of earth which remain of their works, a book were discovered, an alphabetic history of that race for a thousand years, containing their written language, and examples of their poetry and other literature, and all undeniably composed many hundreds of years before any of the nations now possessing this continent were here! What a wonder would this be! What intense interest would attach to such a relic! What price would not the learned be willing to give for it!

Ten years before, the Book of Mormon came to public notice, claiming to be just what this man was longing for. Did the learned hail it with delight? Did they offer fabulous prices for it? There is no doubt but what the possessor of the plates of the book could have made himself rich by offering them for sale, had he been permitted. But he claimed to have discovered them through revelation from God, and that they had come to the world at the time they did to make men wiser in spiritual things. But the wise and learned had long before forestalled anything of this kind by concluding that God had withdrawn himself from the affairs of men, and ceased to interest himself in their welfare in any sense. Hence, no matter what might be the value of the book theologically or scientifically, they persistently refused to give it credence. And not only

have they persistently refused to give it credence, but they have just as persistently continued to remain ignorant of the contents and mission of the book, instead of hailing it with pleasure, because it would be of assistance in solving some of the problems of the religious and scientific world, and would be of inestimable value in converting the world to Christ and the Bible.

Some Efforts to Discredit the Book

As a sample of the efforts to discredit the Book of Mormon, I will cite the reader to a quotation from the book from which I have already quoted a portion of the preface, Theodore Heysham's *Birth of the Bible*. He says:

The history of the Bible is a part of this great record of facts. To be true to the facts about the Bible is to be true to the Bible and to God. Scriptured facts are rocks that can not be shaken. A house of faith built on these rocks stands. A house of faith on which these rocks of fact fall is ground to powder.

On the rock of fact paganism was shattered. Paganism pretended to possess the secret of life's origin. It presumed to have penetrated into the realm of mystery in religion. The problem of the pagan priest centered in an idol, not in a book. To him the idol was sacred. In his zeal to account for its origin, he disregarded facts. The worshipers of Diana were taught that the little wooden image of the goddess in the temple at Ephesus had fallen bodily from heaven and in perfected form. In like manner, the devotees of Minerva were led to believe that the little ivory image of the goddess in the temple at Athens had been formed in heaven and passed down to earth. Faith was built upon falsehood.

Idolatry thus preceded bibliolity in pretense at knowledge and presumption of explanation. Pagan ideals had a new birth in bibliolity; the explanation of the origin of an idol was used to account for the origin of sacred books. Mohammedanism and Mormonism are classic illustrations. This new paganism proclaims not a perfect idol but a perfect book

fallen bodily from heaven and in perfected form. Between these theories of perfect origins, between a perfect idol fallen bodily from heaven and in perfected form and a perfected book so fallen, there is no choice. The one is a perversion of the religious ideal in the realm of art; the other is a perversion of that ideal in the realm of literature. Both are contradicted by facts.

The Bible warns against any kind of idolatry, whether of form or of letter. He who would venture to trespass into the mystery of the origin of the Bible should take counsel from the priests of paganism and avoid their errors. No sadder accusation could be brought against those who love the Bible than to charge them with being peddlers of paganism. For the Bible did not come to earth as the idols of paganism were said to have come, nor did the Bible originate as the books of this newborn paganism were declared to have originated. The Bible was not written in heaven and carried to earth by angels. No, the Bible was born on earth through the experiences of men.—Birth of the Bible, pp. 2-4.

No grosser misconception of what the Book of Mormon is could well be presented. No claim has ever been made that the Book of Mormon was written in heaven and brought to earth by an angel. It was written by men, and was "born on earth through the experiences of men"; and the men who wrote it did not claim perfection for it; they did not even claim plenary inspiration, any more than did the writers of the Bible. They simply presented the history of their nation in a plain, straightforward way, with the dealings of God with them. The only miraculous feature of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is the manner of its preservation, discovery, and translation. The men who wrote the book wrote of their experiences, of God's dealings with them and their people. And they wrote with the assurance that their writings would be preserved and sometime would come forth and be a witness

for God, and would be of worth to future generations. Its miraculous translation only assures us that we have a faithful and true translation of what they recorded. Those who believe in its divinity will never cease to thank God for its preservation, and that in his providence he has not left it to the manipulations of men that they might play battle-dore and shuttlecock with its sacred teachings, thus bringing about the condition that the Reverend Heysham confesses has been brought about in the churches, as quoted from the preface of his book, "chaos and confusion and conflict among the churches and within the churches."

The Character of Its Translator Has Been Assailed

Evidently realizing that the ethical teachings of the Book of Mormon can not be assailed, men have attacked the character of the translator, and they have gone to the limit in their accusations against him. I think that the most unjust and vindictive statement that has ever been recorded is the following:

His life and teaching stamps him as one of the vilest of the false prophets of ancient or modern times. . . . We have examined the character of the prophet who founded this religion, and we can not escape the conviction that he was false in his pretensions, grossly immoral in his ideals, wicked and malicious in his purposes, and utterly unworthy to be recognized as a prophet of Jehovah.—Foundations of Mormonism, pp. 234, 235.

The writer of the above had strange ideas of ideals if he classed the teachings of Joseph Smith as grossly immoral. The Book of Mormon is considered the crowning achievement of the man. It

was the first declaration of his ideals, and it continued to be the basis of his teachings until his death. And it might be well to ask, What is there grossly immoral in teaching men to pray? in teaching men an everlasting hatred against sin and evil? in advising men to be charitable to the poor? in advising men to work with but one motive in view, to do good with that which comes in their possession? to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and to administer relief to the sick and the afflicted? It might be pertinent to ask, What is there immoral in teaching the sacredness of the marriage covenant? in condemning polygamy, with all of its attending evils? It might be pertinent to ask, What is there immoral in holding Christ up to the world as the only Savior of men, and his name as the only name given under heaven whereby men shall be saved? What is there immoral in teaching that the Bible is the word of God? Yet all of these things are found in the book we have been examining. But all of this is brushed aside, and men assail the character of Joseph Smith from statements made long after his death as to his teachings. Or they have taken the declarations of his enemies as to what he is supposed to have taught. Or the writers have taken some of his teachings, misquoted, distorted, and garbled them to make a case against him. Yet these same men claim to be followers of the Christ!

Laying aside the teachings of the man, either actual or supposed, there is indisputable testimony as to his character, testimony that will stand against his accusers at the judgment day, and this testi-

mony is found in the character and attributes of his posterity. There is an old saying, "Like father, like son." The law of heredity is strong, but these traducers of Joseph Smith ask us to believe that the law of heredity was completely reversed in the case of this man and his family. That a man, lacking in all the moral qualities, "grossly immoral in his ideals, wicked and malicious in his purposes," could beget such a man as is described in the following extract from the Decatur County, Iowa, History, and other sources, is utterly beyond belief. Speaking of the oldest son of the man under discussion, this history says:

His youth was passed amid trials, sorrows, and afflictions that would have embittered one of less noble character against the world. His life has been saddened by the events of those years, but his manhood has not deteriorated, and it may be that the persecution of his family, which did not end with the death of his father, has had much to do with forming his character. No semblance of intolerance has place there. The same liberty of action and thought he exercises himself, he freely accords to all. . . . In religion, loyal to the faith of his father, he recognizes in every work of good, a brother. As a citizen, no man outranks him in fealty to the Government. As a man, his character of honor and integrity stands unquestioned. . . . He has with others labored diligently, . . . has seen the church over which he presides grow from a handful, obscure and unpopular, into a body of persistent workers of many thousands of honest, honorable men, known and loved of their neighbors, and loyal to their country.—History of Decatur County, pp. 513, 514.

This same man lived for some time in Plano, Illinois, where the church of which he was president had its headquarters at that time. Afterward the headquarters were moved to Lamoni, Iowa, in 1881. Plano was situated in Kendall County, Illinois.

When Mr. Smith left for his new home, the *Kendall County Record* contained this tribute:

Mr. Smith leaves Plano, but carries the good will of Plano's citizens with him. He has lived here for the past fifteen years, and has always borne the reputation of a good citizen. Always to be found on the side of right, he maintained his position to the end, and goes to his future home with sad farewells and good wishes of his many friends.

As President of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, after fifty-four years of active service for humanity, loyal always to the faith of his father, Joseph Smith, the son, passed from this earthly life December 10, 1914. Of his character the *Kansas City Journal* has this tribute to offer:

In the ecclesiastical dogmas which make up the denominational belief of the late Joseph Smith, the general public has no particular interest. But in the death of the late venerable head of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the country loses an interesting and useful citizen. Joseph Smith was considerably more than a powerful church man, into whose keeping had been committed the destinies of one of the great denominations of the world.

Those who ignorantly confounded the Reorganized Church with Mormonism, in the objectional acceptance of that term, will not appreciate the theological distinctions between the two, nor understand that nothing was more hateful to Joseph Smith than the doctrines of Brigham Young, with their polygamous teachings and all the other features that make Utah Mormonism obnoxious in the eyes of the average American.

But all who ever came in contact with Joseph Smith could readily appreciate the broad charity of his tenets; the untarnished private life he lived; the unswerving devotion to duty which he always displayed; and the simple modesty of his relations toward his church and the world at large. To his church he was the prophet whom all its communicants revered, but he was also the unostentatious leader who constantly practiced the virtues which he enjoined upon his

followers. To the world he was the blameless citizen who walked before all men as an example, and whose interest in the movements that made for the welfare of the community always had his heartiest support.

Perhaps nothing could give a clearer insight into the character of Joseph Smith than the directions which he issued shortly before his death in respect to his funeral. Disliking nothing so much, next to sham, as ostentation, he directed that his funeral should be conducted with the utmost simplicity, without any of the elaborateness which his followers would otherwise have provided in order to testify to the honor in which they held him. He was the prophet, but first of all he was the Christian gentleman and the good citizen. As such he lived; as such he died; as such he will be remembered by all outside the household of his faith. His followers themselves can have no legacy of remembrance more honorable than this appraisal of the people among whom he lived and labored so many years.

Kindly, cheerful, loyal to his own creed, tolerant of those of others, standing for modesty, simplicity, good citizenship, embodying in his private and public life all the virtues which adorn a character worthy of emulation—such is the revelation which Joseph Smith leaves to the world, as the real interpretation of an ecclesiastical message translated into terms of human character.—Editorial Department, *Kansas City Journal*, December 12, 1914.

Again I assert, a man who was entirely devoid of Christian virtues could not have been the father of such a character as these extracts describe. If his oldest son had been the only one who developed into an admirable character, it might be accounted for, but Joseph Smith's direct descendants have not shown any taint of viciousness or criminal tendencies. So far as this writer knows, for at least two generations the descendants of Joseph Smith can present as clean a bill of honesty and uprightness of character as can be found in the world today. Have the laws of heredity been entirely set aside, reversed, or abrogated with this one family?

What has been said of the direct descendants of Joseph Smith may be said of his true followers, those who have followed the precepts he taught as outlined in our discussion of the book under consideration. I will content myself in giving but one testimony to the character of the true followers of Joseph Smith, but thousands could be given.

At one time the State of Iowa was the home of more Latter Day Saints than any other State in the Union. Many of the general gatherings, reunions, conferences, and so forth were held in the western part of that State. In 1892 the annual reunion of this body was held near Missouri Valley, Iowa. While they were still in session, the *Missouri Valley News* published the following editorial:

Many are the agencies that together are shaping the future of the great civilization now centering in this Garden Valley of the world. Silent and unnoticed are the forces moving into position for the final fulfillment of our destiny as a nation. . . . By disintegration the Latter Day Saints found themselves separated from the polygamous Mormons and left to develop into a moral civilizing force in the fertile valleys where Mormonism first found foothold, while the evil portion went on to its rapid rise to power and even more rapid fall to pieces. . . . These Latter Day Saints in camp in our country for their annual harvest of souls, point with pride to their open creed as evidence of their true Christian spirit, and the world can not but say: "Ye have done well, abide with us." Their devotions are genuine. Their moral lives of the best. Their presses are messengers bearing good tidings. Their loyalty leads them to place the national colors over their holy altars. It is well. . . . Tried by these signs, the Latter Day Saints are worthy of a welcome as one of the forces that will at all times hold high the Starry Banner, honor the powers that in creating it gave them a home where freedom of conscience is the key-stone of all liberty, of all Christianity, and of all civilization.

In the beginning of this article, I quoted Joseph Cook's eulogy of the Bible. I believe that portions of that eulogy can be applied with equal force to the Book of Mormon. I feel sure that it would be better than well for the world were all the precepts of this volume absorbed and transmuted into the actions of men. And it would not detract from any man's Christian manhood to believe the book divine. It is the Book of Mormon inculcation that I pronounce free from adulterate elements. There is something peculiar about this book, in the incontrovertible fact that its inculcations are preserved from such error as would work out, in experience, moral disease in the world. The fact that these paraphrases from Mr. Cook's eulogy of the Bible are true in regard to the Book of Mormon is shown by the testimonies offered in regard to Joseph Smith the second of his followers. One of these testimonies says, "He was loyal to the faith of his father." Another says, "Loyal to his own creed," and that creed was based upon the teachings of his father as found in the Book of Mormon as one of the sacred books of his church. And then this *Kansas City Journal* editor says: "Such is the revelation which Joseph Smith leaves to the world, as the real interpretation of an ecclesiastical message translated into terms of human character." This ecclesiastical message that produced such a character as the late Joseph Smith, had its foundation in the Book of Mormon. It was an introduction, not of a new paganism as asserted by the Reverend Heysham, but a new evangel, wherein the character of the Christ was exalted, the Bible glorified, and

men's faith strengthened in God and a better understanding of his purposes was brought about. It emphasized the fact that God is, and that he is now immanent in the church and ready to direct that church for good.

That which wrought this wonderful development in this man brought the same to his followers, if we can credit the statement made by the Honorable Julius C. Burrows, of Michigan, in his speech on the Reed Smoot case. Mr. Burrows said:

The death of Joseph Smith in 1844, however, carried dismay and demoralization throughout the entire membership of the Mormon Church, scattering its adherents in divers directions, and for the time being seemed to presage the complete overthrow and dissolution of the organization. Recovering, however, from the shock, the scattered bands soon reappeared in various parts of the country and promulgated their doctrines with increased zeal, and set to work to reassemble and reorganize their scattered forces, resulting finally in the formation of what is now known as the "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints" with headquarters at Lamoni, Iowa, and presided over by Joseph Smith, a son of the Prophet. The courts have repeatedly declared this organization to be the legitimate successor of the original Mormon Church, and its adherents, numbering some 50,000 peaceable, patriotic, and law-abiding citizens scattered throughout the United States in small church societies, conforming to the laws of their country wherever they may be and adhering to the faith of the founder of their creed, repudiating and denouncing the doctrine of polygamy and its attendant crimes, without temple, endowment house, or secret order, worship in the open like other church organizations, unquestioned and unmolested.

I wish to call especial attention to the statement, "adhering to the faith of the founder of their creed," a creed based upon the teachings of the Book of Mormon and the ideals set forth therein.

Conclusion

We have shown, by citing passages from the book, that its teachings are worthy of the belief of all Christian people; that men are made better, not by an abstract belief in those teachings, but by an earnest application of the principles taught, in the development of character. We furthermore assert that a belief in the Book of Mormon would injure no one, but, on the contrary, would bring the believer closer to God; increase his faith in that being; his faith in Jesus Christ and his great mission; his faith in the Bible as the word of God; and would be a factor in uniting the Christian world, and hastening that time, prophesied of by Isaiah in his eleventh chapter, when every knee is to bow to Jehovah and acknowledge him as Lord of lords and King of kings.



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