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## Editorial Thoughts - The Book of Mormon Geography

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**Abstract:** Contention over Book of Mormon geography is detrimental to the cause of truth. The reason for this contention is due to the fact that the Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer meant to teach geographical truths. The drawing of Book of Mormon maps is discouraged.

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## The Juvenile Instructor.

GEORGE Q. CANNON, EDITOR.

SALT LAKE CITY, JANUARY 1, 1890.

### EDITORIAL THOUGHTS.

#### The Book of Mormon Geography.

HERE is a tendency, strongly manifested at the present time among some of the brethren, to study the geography of the Book of Mormon. We have heard of numerous lectures, illustrated by suggestive maps, being delivered on this subject during the present winter, generally under the auspices of the Improvement Societies and Sunday Schools. We are greatly pleased to notice the increasing interest taken by the Saints in this holy book. It contains the fullness of the gospel of Christ, and those who prayerfully study its sacred pages can be made wise unto salvation. It also unravels many mysteries connected with the history of the ancient world, more particularly of this western continent, mysteries which no other book explains. But valuable as is the Book of Mormon both in doctrine and history, yet it is possible to put this sacred volume to uses for which it was never intended, uses which are detrimental rather than advantageous to the cause of truth, and consequently to the work of the Lord.

We have been led to these thoughts from the fact that the brethren who lecture on the lands of the Nephites or the geography of the Book of Mormon are not united in their conclusions. No two of them, so far as we have learned, are agreed on all points, and in many cases the variations amount to tens of thousands of miles. These differences of views lead to discussion, contention and perplexity; and we believe more confusion is caused by these divergences than good is done by the truths elicited.

How is it that there is such a variety of

ideas on this subject? Simply because the Book of Mormon is not a geographical primer. It was not written to teach geographical truths. What is told us of the situation of the various lands or cities of the ancient Jaredites, Nephites and Lamanites is usually simply an incidental remark connected with the doctrinal or historical portions of the work; and almost invariably only extends to a statement of the relative position of some land or city to contiguous or surrounding places, and nowhere gives us the exact situation or boundaries so that it can be definitely located without fear of error.

It must be remembered that geography as a science, like chronology and other branches of education, was not understood nor taught after the manner or by the methods of the moderns. It could not be amongst those peoples who were not acquainted with the size and form of the earth, as was the case with most of the nations of antiquity, though not with the Nephites. Their seers and prophets appear to have received divine light on this subject,

The First Presidency have often been asked to prepare some suggestive map illustrative of Nephite geography, but have never consented to do so. Nor are we acquainted with any of the Twelve Apostles who would undertake such a task. The reason is, that without further information they are not prepared even to suggest. The word of the Lord or the translation of other ancient records is required to clear up many points now so obscure that, as we have said, no two original investigators agree with regard to them. When, as is the case, one student places a certain city at the Isthmus of Panama, a second in Venezuela, and a third in Guiana or northern Brazil, it is obvious that suggestive maps prepared by these brethren would confuse instead of enlighten; and they cannot be thus far apart in this one important point without relative positions being also widely separate.

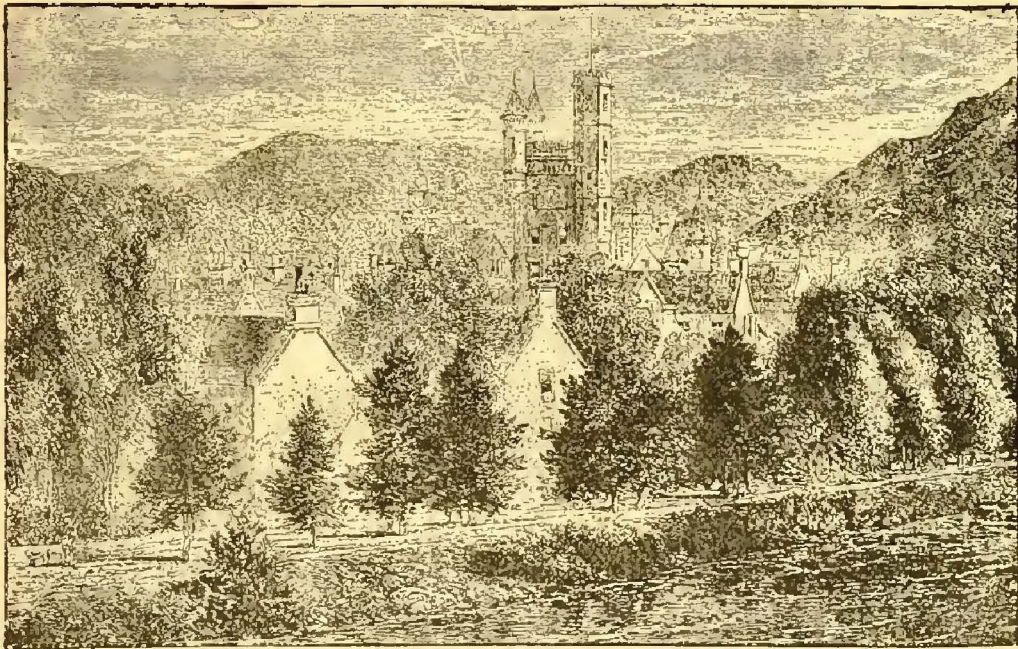
For these reasons we have strong objections to the introduction of maps and their circula-



tion among our people which profess to give the location of the Nephite cities and settlements. As we have said, they have a tendency to mislead, instead of enlighten, and they give rise to discussions which will lead to division of sentiment and be very unprofitable. We see no necessity for maps of this character, because, at least, much would be left to the imagination of those who prepare them; and we hope that there will be no attempt made to introduce them or give them general circulation. Of course, there can be no harm result from the study of the geo-

## ENGLAND'S QUEEN.

VICTORIA, the present queen of the United Kingdom of England, Scotland and Ireland, and empress of India, is doubtless the most remarkable of present ruling monarchs. She was born in 1819. Her father was the Duke of Kent, but he died when she was a babe, and on her mother, therefore, devolved the labor of rearing and educating the future ruler. It was on the death of William IV., when Victoria was but eighteen years of age, that she became queen. Her first ex-



BALMORAL. THE QUEEN'S HOME IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.

graphy of this continent at the time it was settled by the Nephites, drawing all the information possibly from the record which has been translated for our benefit. But beyond this we do not think it necessary, at the present time, to go, because it is plain to be seen, we think, that evils may result therefrom.

IN all that we do we have a right to consider the effect it will have upon our characters, or upon the upholding and development of our higher natures. No man is required to do what will belittle him.

clamation on hearing the announcement of her ascension to the throne from the Archbishop of Canterbury was, "I beg your grace to pray for me." Unquestionably many prayers have been uttered for Her Majesty, and it is due to divine aid that her reign has been so long and successful notwithstanding the many severe ordeals through which the nation has passed during more than half a century.

Though made a queen in 1837, Victoria was not crowned until June, 1838. Early in the morning of that day the cannon in St. James Park and at the Tower of London