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Lost Scriptures

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LOST SCRIPTURES.

BY FREDERIC CLIFT, A. B., M. D.

In a previous article* we considered more particularly the history and value of certain historical and alleged scripture writings, which, because of their uncertain origin and authority, have been excluded from the several canons of Sacred Writ. Many of these writings, however, were read in the public services of the early Church, and in addition were largely quoted from by the ancient Fathers in their theological discussions and treatises. They became, however, early corrupted by both intentional and unintentional omissions and interpolations; and to such an extent was this carried, that they are called the Apocryphal, or doubtful, Scriptures. Many authorities consider them to be absolutely spurious. Modern revelation reveals to the Latter-day Saints the fact that whilst "there are many things contained therein [the Apocrypha] that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly; there are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men." † In addition to these, however, we have traces of certain "Lost Scriptures" of, as yet, unascertained value, which are liable to be found at any time. Some

* IMPROVEMENT ERA, Vol. X, p. 849, "Apocryphal and Lost Scriptures."

† Doc. and Cov., sec. 91: 1-2.

of them are mentioned or referred to in the commonly accepted books of our Bible, but no recognized or authentic copies are known to exist. Alleged copies of some are claimed by a few critics to be authentic, but they are not accepted as such by Biblical authorities, even to the extent of being classed as Apocryphal. Among such "Lost Scriptures" we find the following:

1. Book of the Wars of Jehovah. Nu. 21: 14.
2. Book of Jasher. Jos. 10: 13.
3. Book of the Statutes of the Kingdom of Israel. I Sam. 10: 25.
4. Book of Acts of Solomon. I Ki. 11: 41.
5. Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. I Ki. 14: 19.
6. Book of Nathan the Prophet. I Ch. 29: 29.
7. Book of Gad the Seer. I Ch. 29: 29.
8. Book of Ahijah the Prophet. II Ch. 9: 29.
9. Book of Iddo the Seer. II Ch. 9: 29.
10. Book of Shemaiah the Prophet. II Ch. 12: 15.
11. Book of the Story of the Prophet Iddo. II Ch. 13: 22.
12. Book of Jehu. II Ch. 20: 34.
13. Book of the Sayings of the Seers. II Ch. 33: 19.
14. Book of the Story of the Kings. II Ch. 24: 29.
15. A third Epistle of Paul to Corinthians. Not found in N. T. I Cor. 5: 9.
16. A fourth Epistle of Paul to Corinthians. Not found in N. T. II Cor. 2: 3 and 7: 8.
17. A previous Epistle of Paul to Ephesians. Not found in N. T. Eph. 3: 3.
18. A previous Epistle of Paul to Colossians, from Laodicea. Col. 4: 16.
19. A previous Epistle of Jude. Jude. 3.
20. The Prophecy of Enoch. Jude. 14.
21. The many different Writers before Luke. Luke 1: 1-3.

Recalling the history of the Bible, we find that it is composed of a collection of sixty-six books or volumes of scripture. At the Council of Carthage, 397 A. D., these sixty-six books were held to be sacred, and inspired by God himself, whilst many others were held to be Apocryphal, doubtful or spurious, and were in consequence rejected by the bishops at that council. All the original manuscripts of both the accepted and rejected books are lost or destroyed. We are therefore compelled to rely upon copies made by scribes from the original manuscripts prior to their loss or destruction. This work being done by hand, prior to the discovery of the art of printing, the mistakes of the transcriber—oftentimes merely a copyist and not a linguist—whether intentional or otherwise, were perpetuated and added to in the subsequent copies. By

comparing the copies one with another it has been possible to build up certain texts, which have been accepted by Bible students as fairly accurate transcripts of that which the original manuscripts must have contained. All critical translators accept the following as being the most ancient and reliable copies yet discovered:

1. The Vatican, or Codex "B." This copy is now at Rome, in the custody of the Western or Latin-Roman Church.
2. The Sinaitic, or Codex "Alept." This copy is now at St. Petersburg, in the custody of the Eastern or Greek-Russian Church.
3. The Alexandrian, or Codex "A." This copy is now at the British Museum, London. It is a treasure of the English or Anglican and Protestant Churches.

The Alexandrian copy was formerly in the possession of Cyrilus, Patriarch of Constantinople. It was by him presented to King Charles I, of England, in the year 1628, A. D., seventeen years after the publication of the King James, or Authorized Version of the English Bible, and therefore too late to be of service in the preparation of that translation.

In addition to these standard copies, made in the language in which they were originally written, there are innumerable translations or so called versions, which have been made into the more modern languages of Christendom from the original Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldaic, Greek and other languages. Many of these, as well as perhaps original manuscripts, were purposely hidden, and being still undiscovered, are classed as "lost scriptures." The reasons for such concealment are found in the fact that during the several periods of persecution, it was often necessary to hide the Christian Scriptures, not only for their preservation, but also to conceal evidence which would have been sufficient to send those in possession of them to a martyr's death. Death, however, came to many who had no opportunity after their arrest to disclose to their associates the hiding places of these sacred treasures. Scientific research in Egypt and Asia has, however, already led to the recovery of many valuable records; and, as the hiding place of the plates of the Book of Mormon was revealed to Joseph Smith by direct revelation, it is reasonable to suppose that God may in his own due time—in like manner—reveal other records, as our necessities may require. The spirit of investigation is abroad among

the peoples of the earth. English, German, French, Americans, and others, have investigators in the various fields in which Archeological records may be found, and are vieing with one another in their efforts to unfold and obtain a correct estimate of their value. Some are anxious to establish the truth of the sacred historical record, as given to us in the Bible, by accurate and reverent investigation; whilst others seek to negative and minimize the confirmatory evidence arising from the cumulative effects of such discoveries, by destructive criticisms. The sustained efforts to recover the records of the past, from the tombs of Egypt and the libraries of the old eastern monasteries, have resulted in many important discoveries, which tend to establish our belief in the "God of Heaven"—the "Living God" and to discredit the theosophical worship of science. Among the records already discovered are fragments of gospels and epistles, which, with more or less evidence of truth, are alleged to have been written by the associates of our blessed Lord: as also some of more recent date. Further discoveries of inscribed tablets in the ruins of Babylonia, Assyria, etc., largely confirm the truth of the history as given to us in the Old Testament. The Book of Mormon establishes the origin and identity of the American Indian, and in due time, other scriptures may be brought forth from their hiding places for the encouragement and enlightenment of the children of men. Possibly we, as Latter-day Saints, may be negligent along these lines of investigation, and are not making diligent and prayerful efforts to obtain the further records, which we know to exist, of the Jaredites, the Nephites, and the Lamanites—the old time inhabitants of this continent.

Following, however, in the footsteps of those who have already done so much for the recovery of the records of the ancient people of Asia, the way is being opened for scientific exploration of the buried cities and prehistoric ruins of America. The University of Chicago has had an exploring party in the Asiatic field of archeology for several years. The University of Utah, as also the Brigham Young University, have seemingly adopted the idea of, "explore Asia if you will, but explore America first," by sending exploring parties to the south-eastern portions of Utah, and through Mexico and Central America, to the northern portion of South America, with the most promising results.

In Palenque, Chiapas, Copan, Quiragna, Izamal, Uxmal, Chichen-Itza, and other ancient cities of the Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs in Central America and Mexico, are to be found temples, palaces, statues and bas-reliefs, strikingly similar to, and rivalling in beauty and splendor, those of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Media and Palestine. Where are the "Lost Records or Scriptures" of the people who built these cities?

Le Plongeon, a noted explorer and author tells us:

The country known today as Yucatan, one of the states of the Mexican confederacy, may indeed be justly regarded by the ethnologist, the geologist, the naturalist, the philologist, the archeologist, and the historian, as a most interesting field of study. Its area of 73,000 square miles, covered with dense forests, is literally strewn with the ruins of numerous antique cities, majestic temples, stately palaces, the work of learned architects, now heaps of debris, crumbling under the inexorable tooth of time, and the impious hand of iconoclastic collectors of relics for museums. Among these the statutes of priests and kings, mutilated and defaced by the action of the elements, the hand of time and that of man, lie prostrate in the dust. Walls covered with bas-reliefs, inscriptions and sculptures carved in marble, containing the panegyrics of rulers, the history of the nation, its cosmogonical traditions, the ancient religious rites and observances of its people, inviting decipherment, attract the attention of the traveler. * * * *

Now mark Le Plongeon's statement as to the whereabouts of their "Lost Records:"

At the time of the invasion of the country by the turbulent and barbaric Nahutals, the books containing the record of the ancient traditions of the history of past ages, from the settlement of the Peninsula by its primitive inhabitants, had been carefully hidden (and have so remained to this day) by the learned philosophers and the wise priests who had charge of the libraries, in the temples and colleges, in order to save the precious volumes from the hands of the barbarous tribes from the west. These, entering the country from the south, came spreading ruin and destruction. They destroyed the principal cities: the images of the heroes, of the great men, of the celebrated women that adorned the public squares and edifices. This invasion took place in the year 522 or thereabout of the Christian era—according to the opinion of modern computators. *

Joseph Smith, the inspired Prophet of God, fixes this date in the following statement:

More than four hundred and twenty years have passed away since the sign was given of the coming [birth] of Christ. †

* *Queen Moo and The Egyptian Sphinx*, by Augustus Le Plongeon, Intro. p. 27.

† Book of Mormon. Moroni 10: 1. Helaman 14: 4.

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Dr. Le Plongeon is not a follower of Joseph Smith, and does not believe in his divine mission, or in the inspiration of the Book of Mormon. He refuses to recognize Joseph Smith as a competent "modern computator." He, however, spent many years in excavating and uncovering the secret chambers, and the many mysteries of these cities. He, today, asserts and believes that the records and history of these prehistoric peoples were "hidden by their philosophers and priests," but he fails to recognize the hand of God, and although a forerunner in the work of archeological research, it was not given to him to bring these records forth. The Lord's work, however, is not to be hindered by the unwillingness of men to recognize his divine power. Where, then, are we to look for these hidden records? Our Father will indicate the place, for when—the "times and seasons" according to his "determinate counsel and foreknowledge" shall have been fulfilled—he will sweep aside the barriers, which now prevent a thorough examination of the tombs and monuments of departed races; and the very stones will cry out and declare the power of the Most High. He who runs may read the history of the primitive races of this country, not only as found in the buried cities of Yucatan, but also in the hieroglyphics blazoned on the rocks of Utah and the other pristine abodes of a yet almost unknown people. As the miner has faith, and in consequence of that faith seeks for the gold and precious metals of the earth, so let us have the necessary faith to seek for knowledge, in the historic relics of the past—the buried cities of this continent—knowing well that archeological and scientific investigation will confirm the truth in part disclosed to us in the Book of Mormon. Geology forces the scientist to recognize conditions which can be readily accounted for by the happening of the event known to Biblical readers as the flood. Ethnological facts compel these same men to acknowledge a scattering of the people and a confounding of their language; as also that where these scattered families have further separated themselves and filled up the vacant places of the earth, they have carried with them in their several languages a common stock or root. A comparison of the Maya letters or symbols with those of the Chaldaic, Arabic, Hebrew and Egyptian languages, indicates to Le Plongeon's satisfaction that the Maya race possesses this root of a

common language. Today, archeology compels the scientist to acknowledge that the already discovered relics of the Mayas of Yucatan, indicate their Asiatic origin, whilst Le Plongeon suggests and seeks to prove,—from the fact that the civilization of Egypt sprung up suddenly, as in a night,—that Egypt was colonized from America by these same Mayas under the leadership of Queen Moo of Yucatan, and that the Maya race were already in possession of the highest arts of civilization. These facts, and the inferences to be derived therefrom, show that during the past fifty years the belief has taken root, and that there is now a general concensus of opinion in favor of the theory, that the American Indian is of Asiatic origin. On the other hand, what has Theology to say in regard to the Ethnological origin of these, our ‘‘Native Races?’’ The Bible tells us that after the flood—‘‘in his [Peleg’s] days was the earth divided’’*—‘‘and the whole earth was of one language and of one speech and it came to pass as they journeyed *in* the east, * * Jehovah said * * come, let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So Jehovah scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth.’’† We also read, in certain miraculously recovered Scriptures which had been hidden or lost, that at the time this took place there were two brothers—and that one of them named Jared requested the other—a man highly favored of the Lord—to ‘‘cry unto the Lord that he will not confound us that we may not understand our words.’’‡ The Lord granted their request and allowed them and their families to keep together, and promised to bless them and their seed. It is stated that they traveled northward, and ‘‘that the Lord did go before them and did talk with them,’’ and that they ‘‘did build barges in which they did cross many waters, being directed continually by the hand of the Lord;’’ and that they came ‘‘forth even unto the land of promise which was choice above all other lands.’’§ This ‘‘Lost Record’’ of Jared, who lived about 2,200 B.C., also relates the history of certain other

* Gen. 10: 25, Amer. Rev., 1901.

† Gen. 11: 1-8, Amer. Rev., 1901.

‡ Book of Mormon. Ether, Chap. 1: 34.

§ Book of Mormon. Ether 2: 5-7.

families, who left Jerusalem in Asia, and came to this continent of America some 600 years before the birth of Christ. It describes their cities, habits of life, and their wars. It also gives the name of the founder and the origin of the beautiful buildings, palaces and temples, described by Le Plongeon, as follows:

And it came to pass that King Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper; and he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood, and was ornamented with gold and silver, and with precious things. And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass. * * * And it came to pass that he caused many buildings to be built in the land Shilom; and he caused a great tower to be built on the hill north of the land Shilom, which had been a resort for the children of Nephi, at the time they fled out of the land.*

These recent explorers repudiate the idea that they consulted this "Lost Record," when they prepared their account of these cities and dwelling places of the Mayas, Toltecs and Aztecs. Nevertheless, the chief facts of the "record" are found to accord with the conditions found to exist today: and although these records confirm their scientific discoveries, they are declared by the wise and learned to have been a pure invention and fraudulent, chiefly on the ground that Joseph Smith claimed to have received them in a miraculous manner, as also, *mirabile dictu*, to have translated them under Divine inspiration. But whether miraculous or not, many of the most important facts of this record were unknown to the scientific men of 1828-1830, although known to Joseph Smith and by him published in 1830.

"Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" †
 "Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder, and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." ‡ Can it be urged with any degree of reason, that this ignorant boy could have invented and published

* Book of Mormon. Mosiah 11: 8-13.

† I Cor. 1: 20.

‡ Isa. 29: 14; Amer. Rev., 1901.

not merely one, but a number or series of historical facts which fifty years or more after his death,—by archeological and other scientific research,—are found to be absolutely true and correct? It is incredible, and those who are willing to probe into all the circumstances are driven to accept the fact that the records are true, and that Joseph Smith the uneducated youth must have been inspired when he made the translation of the recovered records. Consider, the Maya letters and symbols were at the time,—1830,—unknown, but a transcript of a portion of the Book of Mormon records having been submitted to Professor Anthon, a philologist of repute, he reported that the letters or symbols of that record resembled Chaldaic, Assyriac, Egyptian and Arabic characters. What a coincidence that these self-same letters and symbols of the record should be similar to those *since found* by Le Plongeon to have been used by the Mayas. What does the record itself say?—Nephi, one of the recorders writes: “I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.”* Another of the writers, Mormon, after whom the record is named, says, “And now behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters, which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also.”† This interesting question in philology is only one of many others which has to be explained by the scientist, if Joseph Smith was a fraud, and not an inspired translator of the record. The recovery of the “Lost Records” is in accord with our Father’s providential dealings with his children. He has been a revealer of secrets by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began: and in the recovery of a portion of those relating to this continent—the Book of Mormon, we see only the fulfilment of the promises relating to these latter days. He has declared that this American continent was the home of our first parents. Is it impossible or incredible? Wherein lay

* Book of Mormon. I Nephi 1: 1-2. Mosiah 1: 2-6.

† Book of Mormon. Mormon 9: 32-33 and notes.

the superiority of the Eastern hemisphere, that we should doubt the word of God? The Bible nowhere indicates the location of Paradise, except by general reference to geographical names such as Euphrates, etc.; these names being used since the Noachian dispensation to indicate certain places in Asia, which might just as readily refer to the Missouri and other known American locations. Some of the early Church Fathers expressed the belief that their ancestors came from a far off country in the West; but the idea was lost sight of, and was not clothed with any kind of reality until after Joseph Smith had declared such to be the case. If Joseph was the clever fraud that some would have us believe, he surely missed the mark, it seems to me, when he asserted himself to be a Prophet of God, and the recipient of angelic visitations, and thus placed himself in the one position of all others in which he would be hated of all men. He should have posed as a scientist, an ethnologist, or archeologist—an Agnostic or Unitarian, and, as such, been acclaimed a wise man instead of a fraud. If Tyndale, Huxley, Ingersoll, Payne, Darwin and others had advanced their theories in the name or under a religious sanction, some of them would probably have been hounded to death. On the other hand, the flag of infidelity, coupled with his admittedly wonderful gifts, would have carried Joseph Smith to the highest pinnacle of fame, if he had been other than a believer in the power and desire of God to reveal himself to his children. Science has no doubt led to the discovery of many of the secrets of the past history of the nations; if, however, it be coupled with the Divine blessings, there is no reason to doubt but that men will be led to discoveries which will far exceed any yet made. One of the most recent and notable is that of Brugech Bey, the great Egyptologist, who has found an inscription, telling how the Nile failed to rise for seven years in succession about 1700 years before the Christian Era, and how that a long and terrible famine was the consequence. Now, B. C. 1700 is the date recognized as the beginning of the "seven lean years," suffered by the land of Pharaoh after the king had dreamt of them, and Joseph had expounded his dream. Nothing is so astonishing and so calculated to establish our faith, as the confirmation, bit by bit, of the Sacred

Scriptures through the enterprise of explorers and excavators, and the perseverance of our scholars.

It is part of the belief of the Latter-day Saints, as I view it, that it is necessary for God's children to put forth every effort to help themselves before they return to him empty-handed. We know that, as fathers and mothers, we sometimes place slight obstacles in the way of our children, or give them somewhat difficult lessons in order to draw out their capabilities, and thus give opportunities for instruction. When the lesson has been learnt, the burden is removed, and a free gift of that which has been earnestly sought for, often follows. As the heavenly is a pattern of the earthly, we may draw the conclusion that when our Father in heaven finds us willing to follow his lead, he gives us all that we ask for, and frequently something more.

May it not be our duty to seek for the "Lost Records, or Scriptures" of the forefathers of the native races of this country, the Jaredites, the Nephites, and the Lamanites? Dr. Le Plongeon tells us they will be found "carefully hidden by the learned philosophers and the wise priests," and that they will be recovered from the "ruins of numerous antique cities, majestic temples, stately palaces, now heaps of debris, crumbling under the inexorable tooth of time." This offers a tempting field to the believer in the Book of Mormon. Further investigation will, in the good time of the Father, disclose the dwelling place of the Ten Tribes in Arsa-reth and put us in possession of the additional scriptures which have been given to them, during their sojourn there, apart and separated from their brethren. The vision showing the conditions connected with their future return should be of interest to the Saints: "Then dwelt they there until the latter time; and now when they shall begin to come, the Highest shall stay the springs of the stream again, that they may go through; therefore sawest thou the multitude with peace. But those that be left behind of thy people are they that are found within my borders. Now when he destroyeth the multitude of the nations that are gathered together, he shall defend his people that remain. And then shall he show them great wonders." *

* II Esdras 13: 46-50.

The records of the past, I believe, are within our grasp, perhaps within our very view, if we had but the eye of faith. When we have diligently done all that we can, and lived in full practice of the scriptures we already have, and the "times and seasons" of the Father are fulfilled, then further records will doubtless be forthcoming—miraculously, perhaps, as in the case of the Book of Mormon—for the confounding of his enemies and the advancement of his work. Until the Father directs our course of action, let us all strive to so educate our minds and bodies that we may fit ourselves for the toil and labor incident to the great work connected with the opening up of these treasures when God shall "show great wonders."

A concluding paper on this subject will be entitled "A Third Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians," as found in the Armenian Bible.

Provo, Utah.

THE STORM GOD.

(For the Improvement Era.)

There cometh with lowering brow,
 Out from the gates of the west,
 The awful god of storms
 Filled with a great unrest.

When he roars his stern commands,
 The echo shakes the hills;
 When he hurls his javelins of fire,
 Man's heart with terror thrills.

Beneath his "Juggernaut car,"
 The forest kings bow down,
 He lays in waste the fields,
 He leaves in ruin the town.

He laughs at the might of men,
 And scorns their puny power,
 And the patient work of years,
 He levels in an hour.

He driveth his steeds—the winds,
 O'er mountain, valley and sea,
 Then turns to his home in the skies,
 And earth from his reign is free.

Salt Lake City, Utah.

MAUD BAGGARLEY.