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Book of Mormon and Napoleon III

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Abstract: John Taylor, Curtis E. Bolton, and John Pack presented a French edition of the Book of Mormon to Emperor Napoleon, who suffered great losses by ignoring the sacred record.

CORRESPONDENCE.

BAPTISMS IN BRISTOL CONFERENCE.

Downhead, Somerset,
Sept. 24th, 1880.

President Wm. Budge.

Dear Brother,—Elder Beazer and myself have been traveling in the counties of Somerset and Dorsetshire the past four weeks and have been blessed in our labors. We have baptized twelve persons and, by the blessing of the Lord, will baptize three more this evening, at this place. There are also good prospects for more in the near future. We find some opposition but, through the goodness of our Father in heaven, we have been

the means of removing obstacles to the spread of the work. Some old members, who have been lying dormant some fifteen to twenty years, have come forward and renewed their covenants, manifesting a humble desire to be faithful.

Since we were reinforced by Elders Beazer, Gardiner and Shepherd, the work in this part has loomed up, as we have been able to concentrate our labors where we could do the most good. I have distributed many tracts, which are doing a good work in some places.

Your Brother in the Gospel,
JOHN LEE JONES.

BOOK OF MORMON AND NAPOLEON III.

BY ELDER GEO. C. FERGUSON.

The Book of Mormon is a divine record that was hid up in the earth, by God's command, expressly to be brought forth as a blessing to the people of the last days. The believer who is thoroughly versed in its contents has, in many things, an advantage over those who slight, misrepresent or fight against it. There is much to be gained by its study. It contains the fullness of the Gospel of Christ, it gives keys by which we may understand the general purposes of God, as touching the last days, and reveals some special institutions of heaven that are important even in a temporal point of view. The plan of salvation, with its doctrines, ordinances and priesthood, was but little known in the latter times before the publication of this book, and many who now oppose will, ere long, prize it as one of God's best gifts to man. Not only the commonality, but scientists, ministers of state, kings and emperors would do well to read and ponder its revelations. It would bring them joy and profit, while the neglect of this message from God will entail humiliation and ruin.

I will glance at the history of the third Emperor Napoleon, and try to show wherein he suffered loss by

ignoring this sacred record and slighting the labors of God's servants, who were sent specially to counsel him and the French nation, and warn them of God's purposes. Leaving the Emperor's early life, I shall deal with the stirring events of his riper years. He escaped from his prison, in the fortress of Ham, in May, 1846, and was an exile till the revolution of 1848 gave him an opportunity of returning to France. By offering his services to his country and swearing fidelity to the republic, he was elected President. Very soon after he had to quell an insurrection in Paris, and did it after the manner of his uncle, whose maxim was that every man in this world had to conquer a position, and, said he, "I have conquered mine as the cannon ball does; so much the worse for those who stood in my way." Having stamped out insurrection at home, the Executive of the French Republic sent an army to crush the republic at Rome and reinstate the Pope, which, being duly performed, Napoleon found the French National Assembly quite refractory, and dissolved it on the 2nd of Dec., 1852, assuming the position of Dictator. The next step was to get elected President of the French Republic for

ten years, and he entered the Tuilleries in this capacity on New Year's Day, 1852. A new constitution for France was the next move, and as a cannon ball does its work rapidly, we are not surprised to find the empire established in November of the same year, with Napoleon at its head. Being now an Emperor, he became friendly with other monarchies, and, in 1854, formed an alliance with England and Turkey, to sustain the latter in its war with Russia about the Holy Places. Russia was beaten, and Napoleon came out of the struggle with considerable *eclat*. He also escaped the assassins Orsini and Pierri, who shortly afterwards attempted his life. His next achievement was to whip Austria, for which he received Savoy and Nice.

Napoleon's boast used to be that France was the only nation that would go to war for an idea. What may have been the idea that impelled him, in 1861, to interfere in Mexican affairs, I know not. Probably as his uncle had been a king-maker, he thought he would follow suit; but France had not previously been happy in Mexican squabbles. She blockaded Vera Cruz in 1838, and was driven off by Santa Anna. Be this as it may, the Emperor in this thing made a big blunder. He had made up his mind to place Maximilian, Grand Duke of Austria, on the throne of Montezuma, and sent an army to Mexico for that purpose. That army encountered the Mexicans at Fort Guadalupe, May 5th, 1862, and got beaten. It was again defeated by the Mexicans at Orizaba, May 18th.

What was the matter? From the days of the *coup d'etat*, when the drunken soldiery are said to have shot down citizens on the boulevards of Paris for mere sport, right down through the battles of the Crimea at Alma, Balaklava, Inkerman, Tchernaya Kars, etc., and the battles of the Austrian campaign in Italy—Montebello, Palaestro, Magenta and Solferino, and even at this same time, in Cochin China, the French army had been uniformly successful. How came it to pass that the "holy bayonettes" of France were powerless? How came the Imperial tricolor to be trailed in

the mud by a handful of Mexicans—a prostrate yet restless race, who had not been able to set up a stable government for many years; nearly a million of whose fathers had been massacred, and the whole of Mexico plundered, ravished and enslaved by Cortez and a few hundred Spanish adventurers from Cuba? Ah! "There is a providence that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we may." The only way to make sure that providence will not thwart our designs, or blast our work, is to make sure that the work is in harmony with the designs of providence. If we are threatened or opposed by some inferior power, courage and hard fighting may be of use, but if providence be our foe or on the side of our foes, then O, how pitiful are our best efforts. Had Napoleon been even superficially acquainted with the Book of Mormon—which was taken to him and the French people by the messengers of God, but which he was too great a man to respect or attend to—he would have known that Mexico was not a place wherein to set up kings. That Book speaks of the American continent as the land of Zion, and in the second book of Nephi, 7th chap., 2nd verse, page 73, French edition, or 77th page English edition, it says: "And this land shall be a land of liberty to the Gentiles, and there shall be no king upon the land who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations, and he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God; for he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their king," etc.

Very likely the Emperor had no idea that he was running in the teeth of providence in this affair, but that was his fault. Elders John Taylor, Curtis E. Bolton and John Pack, traveled seven thousand miles to enlighten him on the general purposes of God, as contained in the Book of Mormon, translated it into French, and published it in Paris in 1852. But their labors were treated with contempt, and finally they were absolutely prohibited from either meeting, speaking or writing on the subject of "Mormonism."

But, to resume the history, a battle was fought June 14th, at Cerro de Borgo, the Mexicans losing, and, on May 17th, 1863, the French took Vera Cruz. They also captured Pueblo. A council of nobles was held July 10th, and Maximilian was accepted as Emperor, but the liberals would have none of him. This brought on a civil war. The Imperialist party being assisted by the French, several encounters took place, with varying success, till, on the 15th of May, 1867, the Imperial army surrendered at Queretaro. Maximilian and Miramon were both captured, and shot on the 19th of June following. In Sept. of the same year Juarez was re-elected President. The execution of her husband deprived Carlotta, Maximilian's wife, of her reason, and thus ended Napoleon's effort at king-making in Mexico. But not so did his troubles end. The sentence, "ye shall perish," was now written on the pages of his future, and though the French Empire was still a mighty power in Europe, the end was drawing nigh.

It might here be objected, that England still holds Canada, and that Brazil has an Emperor. I would say, in reply, that Canada, although an English colony, has its own government and House of Representatives, and cannot be called a monarchy. As to Brazil, John VI of Portugal founded its monarchy in 1815, and returned to Portugal in 1820, leaving his son Don Pedro constitutional Emperor. No elders or messengers were sent warning either England or Portugal of this institution, for the Book of Mormon was not translated by divine power until 1829, consequently there was no raising up of kings in either case against the Lord, for he had not yet spoken.

To bring this article to a close we skip nearly three years, and come down to 1870, when Spain offered its crown to Prince Leopold of Prussia. Napoleon made this a basis for war with the latter nation, and declared war on July 19th. He took command himself and beat the Prussians at Saarbrucken, Aug. 2nd. That was the last Bonapartist victory. The other battles of this war, followed in rapid succession, the French being

defeated every time. Woerth and Foerbach, Aug. 6th; Courcellas, 14th; Vionville, 16th; Gravelotte, 18th; Siege of Metz began the 19th; Bazaine surrendered, Oct. 29; Battle of Sedan, Sept. 1st. The Emperor surrendered to William next day and was sent a prisoner to Germany. The Empress escaped from Paris, Sept. 7th. Paris having revolted, proclaimed a republic and founded a provisional government. Paris was invested by the Germans on Sept. 21, Strasburg surrendered to the Germans, Sept. 27. But it is needless to pursue this subject further. All the world stood aghast at the disgrace and humiliation that swept over France like a thunder-cloud. Napoleon died an exile in England, and his poor son, who, according to the Emperor's telegram to Eugene after the affair at Saarbrucken, had there received his baptism of fire, was slain by the Zulus, in South Africa, a short time ago. Thus utterly perished from the earth a man whose fate would have been far otherwise had he not treated with contempt a message sent for his guidance by the God of heaven. There are general laws of heaven which men break and the punishment, though sure, sometimes follows slowly. There are also special institutions, the breach or non-observance of which brings punishment at once.

I will now conclude with an anecdote. A "Mormon" missionary, laboring in Mexico, baptized a young man who had been brought up a Catholic. His father was extremely annoyed at him for changing his religion, and undertook to show that "Mormonism" was all nonsense. This led to a discussion, which lasted between them three days. The young man being pretty well informed, still held his own at the close of the debate. The father sat very thoughtfully some minutes and then said to his son: "I will tell you something, There is a very ancient tradition among our people that says a white race would come to Mexico, and murder a great many of our race, devastate and plunder the country and enslave the remaining inhabitants; and that, after a long time, we would overcome these whites and assert our independence, and finally, that another white race would

come and bring to us a knowledge of the God and worship of our forefathers. Now we know the first tradition was fulfilled when Cortez came with his Spaniards, and I believe the second came to pass when we broke up the nunneries and shot Maximilian; and who knows but these "Mormons" may be the other white race that is to bring back our ancient religion." They are even that very race.

POETICAL HISTORY.

BY ELDER THOMAS C. GRIGGS.

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A distinguished writer has said, "Show me the songs of a nation and I will read you their history." In like manner, by a careful perusal of the Latter-day Saints' hymn-book, may be traced the progress of God's great work in this dispensation.

In the year 1840, ten years after the organization of the Church, the first European edition of the hymn-book was compiled, principally, by Elder Parley P. Pratt; printed at Manchester, England, and issued under the signatures of Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor. Previous to this time, from all the information I have been able to obtain, recourse was had to such spiritual songs and hymns as were then composed, and some of which appeared in the columns of the periodicals published by the Church at that early date, while others used were still in manuscript, and a still further source of supply were selections from the hymn-books of other denominations.

A few months after the organization of the Church, the Lord, through the Prophet Joseph, said to Emma Smith, "And it shall be given thee, also, to make a selection of sacred hymns, as it shall be given thee, which is pleasing unto me, to be had in my Church; for my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads."

Up to the year 1871, the English speaking Saints were supplied wholly by the MILLENNIAL STAR Office. In that year the fourteenth edition was issued by Elder George Q. Cannon, from the *Deseret News* Office, Salt Lake City, being printed almost entirely of home manufactured materials. The Scandinavian, Welsh and other nationalities, have been provided with

hymn-books in their own languages.

By an examination of the work under consideration we find, as contributors, the familiar names of P. P. Pratt and E. R. Snow, pre-eminently the poets of Zion; also those of John Taylor, W. W. Phelps, John Lyon, Wm. Clayton, C. W. Penrose, W. W. Willes, H. W. Naisbitt, E. L. Sloan, J. Jacques, and a number of others less known. Prominently in the collection stands the inspiring, prophetic and Gospel-breathing hymns of Watts, Wesley and other worthies, long since dead, but whose yearnings for the true faith are found in such sentiment as—

Come, Holy Ghost; for, moved by thee,
The Prophets wrote and spoke.

Again—

"Repent, and be baptized," he saith,
"For the remission of your sins;"
And thus our sense assists our faith,
And shows us what the Gospel means.

Coming down to our own poets, we find descriptive of the coming forth of the Gospel—

An angel from on high,
The long, long silence broke.

How tersely the first principles of the plan of salvation are shown by the hymns on pages 177 and 162—

We now repent of all our sin,
And come with broken hearts,
And to thy cov'nant enter in,
And choose the better part.

We'll now be buried in the stream,
In Jesus' blessed name,
And rise, while light shall on us beam—
The Spirit's heavenly flame.

The obligation resting upon the elders to proclaim that Gospel unto every nation, kindred, tongue and people, is shown by the hymn commencing—

Go, ye messengers of glory.