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The Book of Mormon as a Mirror of the East

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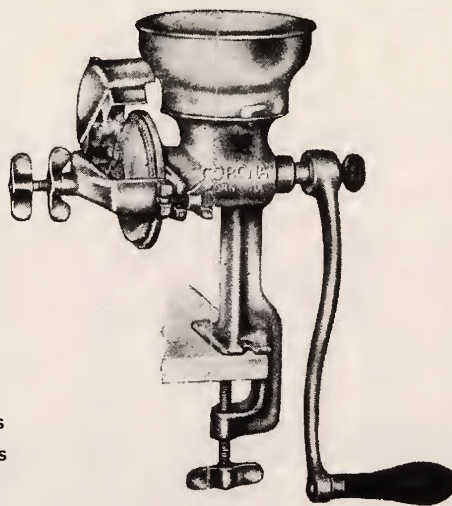
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ments of God." (Mosiah 29:11.)

We are not told where Mosiah got the idea, but the eagerness and ease with which the people adopted the system imply that they were familiar with it. (See Mosiah 29:37-41.) This is definitely indicated by the account of one Korihor, who was able to gain a great following in the land by charging "the high priest, and also the chief judge over the land" with reviving "ordinances and performances which are laid down by ancient priests, to usurp power and authority" over the country. (Al. 30:21-24.) That there was a real danger of reviving an ancient priest-rule is apparent from the fact that the new system had no sooner been established than a certain Nehor, in the first case to be tried by the new chief judge, is charged with being "first to introduce priestcraft among this people." The chief judge on this occasion observes that such priestcraft if allowed by the people "would prove their entire destruction." (Al. 1:12.) So we are told that priestcraft had not been practiced in the New World, but that a tradition of priestcraft was vividly remembered; its origin must therefore be sought in the Old World, if we would believe the Book of Mormon.

The Old World

From the eleventh dynasty on, the history of Egypt is largely concerned with the efforts of the priests of Amon, with the chief priest of Amon at their head, to gain control of the country. About 1085 B.C. the chief priest of Amon actually seized the throne of the south, and from that time on "the high priest of Amon . . . could and constantly did reduce the king to a position of subservience."¹ The name of the great priest who crowned himself in Thebes was Herihor or Kherihor.² The cornerstone of the priestly rule was a new system of popular law

courts, in which the priests of Amon were the judges, and which at first competed with and then supplanted the regular courts everywhere.³ The separatist tendency, which remains characteristic of the priestly history, may have been foreshadowed in the uniting of all the south countries as a single administrative unit under Nehi, the great governor of the eighteenth dynasty, as well as in the appearance, beginning with Count Nehri, of a separate ruling family at Thebes, under the patronage of Amon.⁴ Nehri's successor, by taking the name *Sam Tawi*, "uniter of the lands," serves notice of a new dynasty.⁵

Whether or not *Nehi* and *Nehri* are in any way related to the name *Nephi* (there are other Egyptian names that come nearer)⁶ remains to be investigated. But no philologist will refuse to acknowledge the possible identity of the Book of Mormon *Korihor* with the Egyptian *Kherihor*, and none may deny, philologist or not, a close resemblance between *Sam* and *Sam* (the brother of *Nephi*).

Book of Mormon

The so-called "people of Amon," a community noted for its piety, took *Korihor* before their

leader, Ammon, "who was high priest over that people." Thence he was "carried before the high priest, and also the chief judge of the land." This higher court in turn "sent him to the land of Zarahemla . . . to Alma, the chief judge, who was governor over all the land," as well as head of the church. (Al. 30:19-20; 29ff.)

The Old World

The chief governor of Egypt was "the high priest of Amon" (or Ammon),⁷ his title being in Egyptian *neter hem tep*—"chief servant (*Hem*) of the God."⁸ *Hem* is an element in Egyptian proper names⁹

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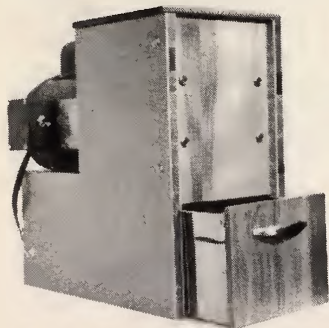
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and means the same as the extremely common *Abdi* element in western Asiatic names of the time (cf. the modern Arabic *Abdullah*, "servant of God"). It is most interesting that the brother of Ammon in the Book of Mormon actually bears the name of *Hem*. (Mosiah 7:6.) As for *Amon* (or *Ammon*), it is the commonest proper name in the Book of Mormon, and also the commonest and most revered name in the Egyptian Empire.¹⁰ Here it is time to point out that the Egyptian Empire at all times during the later period (after 930 B.C.) pretends to embrace Palestine and regard Jerusalem as a dependent.¹¹ The reverence shown the name of *Amon* in no way indicates the slightest concession to paganism on the part of the Jews, since *Amon* is no less than the Egyptian version of their own universal, one, creator-God, the Great Spirit, who is never conceived to be in animal form nor represented by any image.¹² He first appears about 2140 B.C. in southern Egypt, at Thebes, where he seems to have been an importation from western Asia.¹³ Can he be the God of Abraham? It is significant that the name first rises to prominence in the years following the time of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt, and at a place where the most famous Jewish colony in Egypt was settled. This colony at Elephantine may have been very ancient, since according to Egyptian records it had been the custom of the people of Palestine and Syria from time immemorial to seek refuge in Egypt and settle in such communities. It is conceded, at any rate, that the colony is a good deal older than the Hebrew records which came from it in the fifth century B.C.; possibly it dates from the middle of the seventh century.¹⁴ This would make it old in the time of Lehi and furnish a possible explanation for the strange tendency of Book of Mormon names to be

concentrated in Upper Egypt.

A reflection of the Egyptian picture may be detected in the coast cities of Palestine, regularly under Egyptian influence, where government was also by priests and judges, who occasionally usurped the office of king. This happened both at Sidon and Tyre; in the latter city two priestly usurpers bore the name of *Maitena* or *Mattena*—a name which has a number of variants and strongly suggests the Book of Mormon *Mathoni*.¹⁵

Book of Mormon

The experiment with government by priestly judges collapsed, largely due to a rivalry for the chief judgeship among three candidates, all sons of the great chief judge, *Pahoran*. Their names are *Pahoran*, *Paanchi* and *Pacumeni*. (Hel. 1:1ff.)

The Old World

Such family rivalry for the office of high priest is characteristic of the Egyptian system, in which the office seems to have been hereditary not by law but by usage.¹⁶

The name of *Pahoran* reflects the eastern *Pahura*, which is "reformed" Egyptian, i.e., a true Egyptian title, but altered in such a way as to adapt it to the Hebrew-Canaanite speech.¹⁷ *Pahuia* (also written *Puhuru*) was in Amarna times an Egyptian governor (*rabu*) of Syria.¹⁸ The same man, or another man with the same name, was placed by Pharaoh as governor of the Ube district, with his headquarters at *Kumedi*¹⁹ (cf. the element *Kumen* in the Book of Mormon place names).²⁰

Paanchi is simply the well-known Egyptian *Paiankh* (also rendered *Pianchi*, *Paankh*, etc.).²¹ The first important man to bear the name was none other than the son of the above-mentioned *Kherihor*. He did not succeed his father on the throne, being content with the all-powerful office of chief high priest of Amon,

but his son, *Panezem*, did become king.²² In the middle of the eighth century another *Pianhki*, a king of Nubia, conquered virtually all of Egypt, and claimed for himself the office of high priest of Amon at Thebes as well as the title of Pharaoh.²³ His successor, when the Assyrians invaded Egypt, in the days of Lehi, fled to a fortified city, as yet unlocated, which bore the name of *Kipkip* or *Kibkib*,²⁴ a name that strongly suggests the Book of Mormon city-name Gidgiddoni (cf. also *Gimgim-no*). (3 Ne. 9:8.)

Pacumeni, the name of the third son, resembles that borne by some of the last priest governors of Egypt, whose names are rendered *Pa-menech*, *Pa-mnkh*, *Pamenches*, etc.²⁵ The Greeks (who often furnish the key to the correct reading of Egyptian names) put the guttural before the nasal, as in the Book of Mormon form, *Pachomios*.²⁶ The most famous man of the name commanded all the forces of the south, and was also high priest of Horus. At least one other governor-general of Egypt bore the name.²⁷

A striking coincidence is the predominance among both Egyptian and Nephite judge names of the prefix *Pa-*. In late Egyptian this is extremely common, and has simply the force of the definite article. For the Egyptian chief priests *Panezem*, *Pakebis*, and *Panas*²⁸ we have no Book of Mormon parallel, but from the Nephite list we must not omit the name of *Pachus*, since, though I have not found it in the limited documents at my disposal, it is perfectly good Egyptian (meaning "he—Amon—is praised"), both elements occurring frequently in Egyptian proper names.²⁹ Another Book of Mormon judge, *Cezoram*, has a name that suggests that of an Egyptian governor of a Syrian city: *Chi-zi-ri* (*Knudtson, Am. Taf.* 41, 2). It should be noted that the above *Panezem*, upon becoming king, took the name of *Meriamon*,

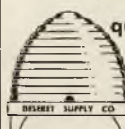
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which has a Book of Mormon ring, even if we don't read it *Moriamon*—a perfectly possible variant.

Sidon was the official port through which the Jews traded with Egypt. Since Lehi and his people were in the mercantile business, it is not surprising that Sidon is the only Palestinian city besides Jerusalem whose name figures prominently in Book of Mormon geography. Moreover, since Sidon was the common meeting ground between Hebrew and Egyptian, and since names in both languages occur in the Book of Mormon, one would expect the name of this most popular place to appear in its Egyptian as well as in its Hebrew form. The Egyptian form (Albright's list XXII, B, 4) is *Dji-dw-na*, which is remarkably close to the Book of Mormon personal name *Giddonah*.

For easier comparison we get the following tentative lists by placing the Old World (OW) words with the New World (NW) or Book of Mormon (BM) words:

Amon (*Ammon*), (OW), the commonest name in the latter Empire; originally from south Egypt

Ammon, (BM), the commonest name in the Book of Mormon

Amanathabi, (OW), chief of a Canaanite city under Egyptian domination. The name is "reformed" Egyptian.

Aminadab, (BM), Nephite missionary in the time of judges

Chiziri, (OW), Egyptian governor of a Syrian city

Cezoram, (BM), Nephite chief judge

Dji-du-na, (OW), Egyptian name for Sidon

Giddonah, (BM), i. high priest who judged Korihor

ii. father of Amulek

Hem, (OW), "servant," specifically, of Amon

Hem, (BM), brother of Ammon

Hes, *Khesi*, (OW), "praised," an Egyptian proper name

Pa-chus, (BM), leader of the

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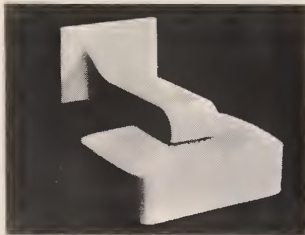
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faction that drove Pahoran from
the judgment seat

Kherihor, (also written *Khurhor*,
etc.) (OW), great high priest of
Amon, who made himself king in
South Egypt

Korihor, (BM), a political agita-
tor who charged the judges with
priestcraft, and was seized by the
people of Ammon

Kipkip, *Kibkib*, (OW), a city in
the extreme south of Egypt

Gingim-no, (BM), a Nephite
city

Manti, (OW), Semitic form of
an Egyptian proper name, e.g.,
Manti-mankhi, a prince in Upper
Egypt about 650 B.C. Derived
from Egyptian *Mntw*—*Month* of
Hermonthis

Manti, (BM), the name of a
Nephite soldier, a land, a city, and
a hill

Nehi (OW), great administrator
who "united all the south under his
direction"

Nehri, (OW), Count of Thebes
who claimed independent dominion
in the south of Egypt

Nephi, (BM), founder of the
Nephite nation

Pahura, (OW), ambassador of
Egypt in Palestine

Pahoran, (BM), i. great chief
judge

ii. son of same

Paanchi, (OW), i. son of Keri-
hor, the chief high priest

ii. ruler of the south who con-
quered all of Egypt; he was high
priest of Amon at Thebes

Paanchi, (BM), son of Pahoran,
Sr., and pretender to the chief
judgeship

Pamanches (*Gk. Pachomios*), (O
W), commander of the south and
high priest of Horus

Pacumeni, (BM), son of Pahoran,
Sr., and rival pretender to the
chief judgeship

Maitena, *Mattenos*, etc., (OW),
two judges of Tyre, who at dif-
ferent times made themselves king,

possibly under the Egyptian aus-
pices

Mathoni, (BM), a Nephite dis-
ciple

Sam Tawi, (OW), successor to
Nehri, who took the name *Sam*
(uniter) upon becoming king in the
South

Sam, (BM), brother of Nephi

Sidon, (OW), the port through
which all Jewish trade with Egypt
had to pass

Sidon, (BM), the only city name
of the Holy Land, beside Jerusalem,
which is a prominent Book of Mor-
mon name

It requires no great effort of the
imagination to detect a sort of
parallelism between the two short
listings. But aren't we using un-
justified violence when we simply
take the names at random and place
them side by side? That is just
what is most remarkable; we *did*
pick names at random, and we had
the whole Near East to draw on,
with Egyptian names by no means
predominating numerically in the
lists before us. Yet the *only* Old
World names that match those in
our Book of Mormon episode all
come from Egypt, nay, from one
particular section of Egypt, in the
far south, where from an indefinite
date, but at least as early as the
mid-seventh century, a Jewish col-
ony flourished. What is more, all
these names belong to the later
dynasties, after the decline.

The Book of Mormon tells us
that Lehi was a rich merchant, who,
though he "dwelt in Jerusalem all
his days," enjoyed an Egyptian
education and culture, which he en-
deavored to transmit to his children.
The book continually refers to the
double culture of the people of
Lehi: Hebrew to the core, but
proud of their Egyptian heritage.
"Egyptian civilization was one to
be admired and aped," writes H. R.
Hall, speaking of Lehi's own land
and time. The only non-Hebraic

names to enjoy prominence among the Nephites *should*, by the Book of Mormon's own account, be Egyptian, and such is found to be the case.

It will be noted that the names compared are never *exactly* alike, except in the case of the monosyllables *Sam* and *Hem*. This, strangely enough, is strong confirmation of their common origin, since names are bound to undergo some change with time and distance, whereas if the resemblance were perfect we should be forced to attribute it, however fantastic it might seem, to mere coincidence. There *must* be differences; and what is more, those differences should not be haphazard but display definite tendencies. This brings us to a most impressive aspect of Book of Mormon names.

Let us take for example the case of *Ammon*. Being so very popular a name, one would expect it to occur in compounds as well as alone, and sure enough, it is the commonest element in compound names, in the West as in Egypt. But in compound names *Amon* or *Amun* changes form following a general rule. Gardiner, in his *Egyptian Grammar* (page 431), states:

"A very important class of personal names is that containing names known as theophorous, i.e., compound names in which one element is the name of a deity. Now in Graeco-Roman transcriptions it is the rule that when such a divine name is stated at the *beginning* of a compound [the italics are Gardiner's] it is less heavily vocalized than when it stands independently or at the end of a compound."

The author then goes on to show that in such cases *Amon* or *Amun* regularly becomes *Amen*, while in some cases the vowel may disappear entirely. One need only consider the Book of Mormon *Aminidab*, *Aminadi*, *Amnihu*, *Amnor*, etc.,

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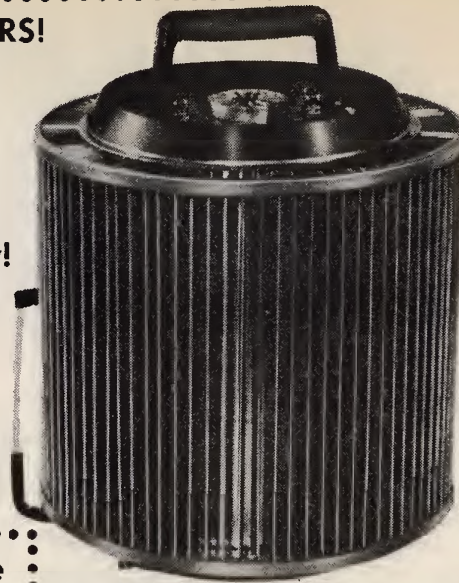
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to see how neatly the rule applies in the West. In the name *Helaman*, on the other hand, the strong vocalization remains, since the "divine name" is not stated at the *beginning* of the compound. Since the Semitic "l" must always be rendered as "r" in Egyptian (which has no "l"), *Helaman* would, in "unreformed" Egyptian, necessarily appear as the typically Egyptian *Heramon*.

To return to our question: What did Joseph Smith, translator of the Book of Mormon, know about the Old World? So much seems certain, that he knew:

(1) A number of typically Egyptian names, queer-sounding words in no way resembling Hebrew or any other language known to the world of Joseph Smith's time.

(2) He knew the sort of plot and setting in which those names would figure in the Old World and seems quite at home on the Egyptian scene.

(3) He gives a clear and correct picture of cultural relationships between Egypt and Israel, with due emphasis on its essentially commercial nature, in the remarkably convincing picture of Lehi—a typical merchant prince of the seventh century B.C. The picture of life in the ancient east which the Book of Mormon allows us to reconstruct is the more wonderful in the light of those fantastic conceptions of the gorgeous East which bedizened the heads of even the best scholars at the time the book came forth.

The whole field of Book of Mormon names still awaits the careful study it deserves—the purpose of the present sketch being merely to indicate that such a study will prove anything but a blind alley. As a parting example of the validity of this claim, we cite a principle stated by Albright (Vol. 10, p. 12): "The loss of the ending *on* is quite common in Palestinian place-names."

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In Egyptian or "reformed" Egyptian such an ending would be preserved, and so we have Book of Mormon place-names *Emron, Heshlon, Jashon, Moron, Morianton*, etc.

It is no small feat, as was demonstrated in the article "Original Words of the Book of Mormon,"³⁰ simply to have picked a lot of strange and original names out of the air. But what shall we say of the man who was able to pick the right ones? ○

FOOTNOTES

¹ H. R. Hall, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 3, p. 268.

² A Moret, *Histoire de l'Orient* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1941), Vol. 2, p. 591, renders the name *Herihor*, the "h" being hard "kh." The vowels are largely guesswork; thus E. A. W. Budge, *The Mummy* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 103; *Herihor, Hurhor* (*Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 20, 1882, Suppl. pl. ii); *Her-Heru.* (E. Budge, *The Nile*, 1912, p. 50); *Her-Hor*, A Wiedemann, "Beitrag zur aegyptischen Geschichte," *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 23 (1885), p. 83; Breasted, like H. R. Hall, prefers *Hrihor*. In this study we have chosen to follow Moret, whose recent and thorough study largely supersedes the others.

³ Moret, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 569.

⁴ H. E. Winlock, "The Eleventh Egyptian Dynasty," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (University of Chicago Press), Vol. 2 (1943), p. 256.

⁵ Winlock, p. 266.

⁶ E. g., the early *Neheb* (or *Nehep*), xiii Dyn. Nehsi, and great numbers of names beginning with the element *Nehep*. It is just possible, since the name is written *Nephi* instead of *Nefi* in the Book of Mormon, that the "ph" represents, as in the Greek of the same period, an unstable "h"—"p-h." In that case Book of Mormon *Nehep* would be equivalent to the Hebrew version of Amenophis IV, who in Palestine is called *Naphuria*, and *Lehi* would stand for *Lephi*, an Egyptian equivalent of Hebrew *Levi*. This, however, is pure speculation.

⁷ A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, 1927), p. 429.

⁸ Moret, *op. cit.*, p. 518; Hall, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 3, p. 268; *Hem-nuter-tepi*.

⁹ E. g., the famous priest *Hem-isi* of Dynasty xxiii, Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

¹⁰ Though the name of *Nephi* occurs oftener, *Ammon* in various forms seems to turn up as an element in proper name compounds far oftener than any other in the Book of Mormon. This is entirely in keeping with the behavior of the name of *Amon* in the East. Compare the *Amarna* names *Amandi, Amanappa, Amanathabi*, etc., with Book of Mormon *Aminadi, Aminadab*; also *Ammuni-ra* has the same relationship to Book of Mormon *Ammoni-hah* as the derived *Amarna* name *Khamuni-ra* has to Book of Mormon *Camenti-hah*. For *Amarna* names, J. A. Knudtson, *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Leipzig, 1915), Vol. 2, p. 1557. For the various vocalizations of *Amon*, as *Amen-Amun*—etc., Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, p. 431. Compare also Book of Mormon *Helaman* with Egyptian *Heramon* (Egyptian always writes "p" for Semitic "h").

¹¹ Moret, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 658, and *passim*, is very insistent on this point; Hall, *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. 3, p. 280; Egypt (in the seventh century) "never ceased to claim the west lands as an ancient dominion" regarding Hittites and Assyrians as mere interlopers.

¹² Moret, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 437-39, 567ff; W. Wolf, "Vorlaeufer der Reformation Echnatons," *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 59 (1924), pp. 109-19; Hans Bonnet, "Zum Verstaendnis des Synkretismus," *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 75 (1939), pp. 45f.

¹³ Winlock, *JNES*, Vol. 2, p. 250; Moret, pp. 209, 436.

¹⁴ Breasted, *Ancient Records*, Vol. 3, p. 27; cf. Hall, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 294.

¹⁵ Moret, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 610ff; 3 Ne. 19:4.

¹⁶ A striking parallel to the Book of Mormon account is that given by Hall, Vol. 3, p. 254; Moret, p. 590.

¹⁷ W. F. Albright, *The Vocalization of Egyptian Syllabic Orthography* (New Haven, Am. Or. Soc., 1934), deals with the problem of "reformed" Egyptian. The author suggests, pp. 10ff, that a "new orthography was devised in the 'foreign office' of the Egyptian chancery during the twentieth century" specifically for dealing with Palestine and Syria, since the scribes "found it necessary to devise an orthography which would enable them to read their own records." From this time on the new idiom underwent progressive and constant deterioration until, by the seventh century B. C. among other things "an almost complete shift in the quality of Egyptian vowels" had taken place.

¹⁸ Knudtson, *Amarna-Tafeln*, 117, 123, 132, 156f.

¹⁹ *Id.* 1222. The name seems to have been both a personal proper name and the designation of an office (cf. *Hem* above), Knudtson, 1566ff.

²⁰ Thus Kishkumen (3 Ne. 9:10), cf. Kumen, Kumen-onhi; Albright, *op. cit.*, pp. 44, 58.

²¹ See accompanying cut, which may be

found in Budge, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 108, and in W. M. F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt* (London, 1905), Vol. 3, pp. 202, 290, the latter giving phonetic values "Piankh" and "Pankhy" respectively. Paanchi is settled as the correct reading, however, by the principle stated in Gardiner, e. g., *Gram.*, p. 521: the "i" as here occurring "is always final consonant."

²² Lists of priest-kings in the original form may be found in *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 20 (1882), Taf. ii, V (7a); Budge, *Mummy*, p. 103.

²³ Hall, *CAH*, Vol. 3, p. 273.

²⁴ The Assyrian Text (British Museum Cyl. No. 12168 is given in L. W. King, *First Steps in Assyrian*, pp. 78ff.

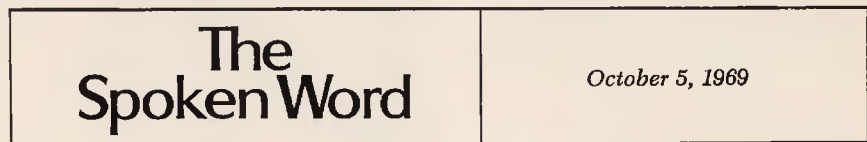
²⁵ The name in its various form is discussed in W. Spiegelberg, "Der Stratege Pamenches," *Aeg. Ztschr.*, Vol. 57 (1922), pp. 88-92. An even closer parallel is provided by *Amarna Pa-kha-am-na-ta*, given with variants in Knudtson, *Am. Taf.* II, 1566, he was governor of Amurru under Egypt.

²⁶ *Id.*, p. 89, note 2.

²⁷ Nos. 7 and 9 in Spiegelberg's list, p. 91.

²⁸ Spiegelberg, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

²⁹ Winlock, *JNES*, p. 275, finds Egyptian commoners at Thebes with names *Hesem, Hesi*.
³⁰ Harold Lundstrom, *Era*, February 1948, p. 85.



Take time for your children

By Richard L. Evans

We "shall not pass again this way"—and in these swift-passing scenes and seasons there seems to come—insistently, almost above all else—this compelling cry: Take time for your children. More and more, professional people are telling us that children are shaped and molded at a very early age—so early that it is a sobering fact to face. Home, parents, early impressions set the pattern for the future—and the evidence is overwhelming that nothing in this world is ever going to take the place of wholesome, happy homes. And there is more to this than food, shelter, and physical sustenance. There is the shaping of attitudes, of minds, of morals; opening avenues of interest and activity; instilling honesty, respect, reverence; prayers at a mother's knee; correction with fairness and firmness, "showing forth afterwards an increase of love"¹ and kindness. All this we cannot be, all this we cannot do, by not being there, by living separate lives, by an over-absorption in outside interests. Take time for your children. They are so soon grown, so soon gone. "Is mother home?" "Where is mother?" are the questions asked when they come home from anywhere. Oh, let them have the blessing of your being there. Take time for open arms; for talking, for reading, for family prayer: for home evenings and hours. As one discerning poet put it: "Richer than I you can never be—I had a mother who read to me."² Take time for making memories; for fixing sure foundations that will last long after less essential things are far forgotten. Mothers need to be home. A mother, a father waiting is a source of safety and assurance. Parents need to give their children wholeness and wholeness by the very lives they live. Oh, the blessedness of coming home and finding mother there, with love and kindness and encouragement. Life goes quickly. Don't brush them off and turn them over to others. Take time for your children—before they're grown, before they're gone. Oh, take time for your children.

¹D&C 121:43.

²Strickland Gillilan, *The Reading Mother*.