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Old America - Conclusion

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Abstract: Series of articles dealing with archaeological, anthropological, geographical, societal, religious, and historical aspects of ancient America and their connections to the Book of Mormon, which is the key to understanding “old American” studies.

Old America.

BY G. M. O.

CONCLUSION.

TRADITIONS, historical records, and physical facts fully attest that mighty and vast changes have taken place in America during the ages past; and although apparently meagre and obscure in details and data, upon investigation a vast field is spread before the student. The vista opens wide and extensive, and presents daily accumulating facts and evidences of a civilized race of mankind, who antedate the present Indian, and who had probably reached their "golden age" two thousand years ago.

In the foregoing articles relating to Old America we have taken but a rapid and imperfect survey, merely indicating the abundance of matter and material open for research, and well worthy the study of the antiquarian, archaeologist, ethnologist and theologian. To the last named, especially, this study should be not only one of love but of duty before God and to man. Lying aside the antagonism generated between religious and scientific opinion, he should enter the field with an honest determination to present the facts plainly and truthfully, aiming to restore that union and harmony so much needed by the so-called Christian world.

Modern investigation of the religion of the ancient Americans has developed certain facts that have proved to be serious stumbling blocks in the way of the religious doctrines generally advanced; and either to avoid or explain them away authors have speculated and drifted into irrelevant and various theories, not from design always, certainly not through ignorance, but by simply ignoring the only key that gives a reasonable explanation of the mystery. This key we have endeavored to show is undoubtedly the Book of Mormon. Without following the many minor facts, or tracing out and analyzing the numerous circumstantial evidences comparing so harmoniously between the writers of the Book of Mormon and the old historical records and traditions of America, we have aimed (and we hope successfully) to establish the following great points of indisputable evidence:

First, that the deluge as described by Moses, the greatest and oldest writer we possess, is entertained on record or in a traditional belief, by nearly every tribe or nation of old America. The Aztecs, who received their religion from the Toltecs, expressly declare in conjunction with the Bible that Tetzpi (Noah) and the different races of land animals were preserved in the same ark or vessel; and it would be impossible to conceive how nations or peoples so remote from each other could agree in and testify to an event unless they have proceeded from those individuals who escaped the deluge under the guidance of the patriarch Noah, and when released from the ark, as a common starting point, dispersed themselves all over the world.

Second, that although the Quiche records do not give us a clear record of Jared's settlement in the country, we may reasonably infer from the account given of Votan that such an event had taken place. In fact the Votan of American tradition may have been the Jared of Mormon; but we are inclined to the belief that Votan was Mulek, who left Jerusalem 589 years before the coming of Christ, during the reign of Zedekiah, or about the time that king was taken a captive to Babylon. It was one of the sons of Zedekiah who commanded this

colony, and they eventually landed somewhere north of the Isthmus of Darien, and journeyed southward into the country now called the United States of Colombia. There they built their capital city Zarahemla, near the Magdalena river, called by them the river of Sidon. Jared's people landed on the coast of Mexico. They named the country (North America) the "land of Moron." They flourished on this continent for at least 1800 years, and at a moderate rate of increase the population must have in that time reached a very large figure. Their general tendency of colonization seems to have been northward forming the settlements in the great valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio. Ruins of their cities are now referred to as the "works of the Mound Builders." When Votan (Mulek) landed in America he found, says the Quiche manuscripts, the country already inhabited by a people having the same religion, rites, laws, erudition, and common blood with the people whom he took there himself. A few years previous to the landing of Mulek a colony under Lehi left Jerusalem (during the first year of Zedekiah's reign). They crossed the Pacific and landed on the western coast of South America, somewhere, we infer, near the present city of Lima in Peru. Lehi's people possibly built the great city and temple of Pachacamac, and after a time crossed the Andes, settling in Bolivia in the vicinity and on the shores of Lake Titicaca. Others went north into New Granada, and in time united with the descendants of Mulek's people. The traditions of the Peruvians, as recorded by Montesinos, correspond precisely with the Book of Mormon in regard to the organization of this colony after landing on the American continent. In time these colonies became disunited and through the calamities of war, famine and pestilence their descendants were reduced to their present condition of savages.

Third, the prophets of the Book of Mormon told the people that when Jesus should be crucified terrible earthquakes and convulsions would occur on this continent. That these judgments came as predicted, the whole face of the continent geologically attests, and the "Old Books" of the Quiches assert it. In fact, in the old Central American books there is a constant tradition of an immense catastrophe of that character, a recollection of which was preserved in some of their festivals, especially in one celebrated in the month Izealli, which commemorated this frightful destruction of land and people. The tradition indicates that the destruction was accomplished by a succession of convulsions; three are constantly mentioned. "The land was shaken by frightful earthquakes, and the waves of the sea combined with volcanic fires to overwhelm and engulf it." Each convulsion caused many portions of the land to disappear, forming a line of coast much as it is now. Most of the inhabitants were overtaken while at their regular employments, and were destroyed. Some escaped in ships, some found safety on high mountains or on portions of the land, which for the time escaped immediate destruction.

Fourth, while a number of people were assembled together around a certain temple in the northern part of South America (a temple preserved by the Lord) talking and wondering about the great cataclysm that had taken place, they heard a voice coming out of the heavens saying "Behold my beloved son," and they saw Jesus descend and he stood in their midst, saying "I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Afterwards He related to them how He had been crucified, and, in time, He organized the church on this continent. But in less than three generations the principles he had taught were disregarded, and the whole people dwindled in unbelief and wickedness.

We find, however, that the visit of our Savior has not been forgotten. Not only was a remembrance of baptism administered,

but the worship and traditions of a supreme ruler was kept up after a manner, by the various nations until the advent of the Europeans. "Quetzacoatl," of the Aztecs; "Kukulcan," of the Quiches; "Bochica," of the Muyscas, and the "Manco Capac, of the Peruvians, are, without doubt, one and the same person—our Lord and Savior.

Not even was the symbol of His church forgotten. The cross was not only found, as stated by Garcilazo, at Cozumel, by Grijalva, but Clavigero (Hist. of Mexico, II, 14 note) says: "The crosses the most celebrated are those of Yucatan, of Mizteca, Queretaro, Tepique and Tianquiztopez." Gomara says "it could not be known how these Indians came to have so much devotion towards the holy cross, there being no footsteps of the gospel having been preached at Cozumel or in any other part of the Indies" (America.)

It has indeed been a curious question, and one only properly explained by the Book of Mormon, how the nations of America obtained their vague and shadowy ideas of Christianity. Some few writers have vainly endeavored to trace the origin of the symbol of the cross in America to an Egyptian symbol known by the name of *crux ansata*, or cross with a ring, represented by that ancient people on walls of temples, obelisks and monuments. Others attribute it to the Phœnicians, whose goddess, Astarte, is commonly represented on the Sidonian coins with a long cross in her arms. Of course these theories are mere conjecture, from which can be formed no reasonable conclusions.

With the hope that our readers have been entertained and instructed by our brief historical descriptions, we will conclude by urging all to continue their investigations and researches in all that relates to "Old America."

ENTOMOLOGY.

BY W. D. JOHNSON, JUN.

Most insects, after arriving at the adult state, eat but little and do not increase in size, and, after laying their eggs, die. Some insects, as the May flies, live only for a few hours, others a few weeks or months, and some a year or two. Insects that live through the year generally pass the winter in a state of torpor. Ants retire to the bottom of their nests when cold weather comes, and remain there, sleepy and sluggish, till the warm air of spring revives them.

Insects that pass through three distinct stages are said to have passed through a complete transformation; while others, like the grasshopper, pass through only a partial transformation.

From the egg the grasshopper is hatched as a wingless insect with six legs; it grows and casts its skin repeatedly, until wings appear on its back; and all the while it hops about and eats. Each time its skin is cast the wings and legs are proportionately larger, until it sheds for the last time and comes forth an adult grasshopper. The larva and pupa of insects of this class are always active and eat continually, and have the same number of legs as the perfect insect. The larvae of those that pass through a complete transformation have no legs, as maggots. Caterpillars have six true legs, a pair to each of the three first segments of the body, and a number of fleshy, undeveloped legs, varying in number from ten to fourteen; These are beneath the abdominal segments.

The two sexes of insects differ much in size and appearance; the female is always the larger, and the colors appear duller; they also seem to have one ring less than the male, but the

ninth segment helps to form the ovipositor, the organ by which the eggs are deposited.

Most insects lay their eggs in the hottest time of the year, and, although the mother insect has never felt the cold blasts of winter, God has given her the instinct to protect them from the coming frost and snow. The eggs are generally laid during the summer, and hatched the ensuing spring. Some insects glue their eggs to twigs and branches of trees, and cover them with a substance that answers the purpose of water-proof varnish. A certain class of moths cover their eggs with down taken from their own bodies. The cochineal insect lays her eggs under her, glues herself down, and then dies thus, covering them with her own body.

In studying the habits of insects, it is very important that we should remember their scientific names, and the terms used to describe them, so that in reading any book on entomology we will be able to understand the descriptions of those we are not acquainted with.

Most of the little pests of the garden are insects belonging to the order of *lepidoptera*. The agrotis moths, or rustic moths, the larvae of which are known as "cut worms," are very common in the field and garden, and they are well named, as every farmer knows who has had his wheat, corn, beans, and melon and cabbage plants eaten off by these little depredators. They cut the plants off just below the surface, and sometimes they become so numerous as to destroy whole fields of wheat and corn.

These moths are nocturnal, so called because they mostly fly at night. There are five kinds that infest our gardens; they are of a brownish gray color, and vary in length from three-quarters to one and a half inches. Their wings are nearly horizontal when closed, the thorax is slightly convex, but generally smooth; the antennæ of the males are pectinated, that is, there is a little row of short points like fine teeth of a comb on the under side; the fore legs are also quite spiny. The caterpillars of the agrotidians are smooth, shining, naked and dark colored, with longitudinal pale and blackish stripes, and a few black dots on each ring. Some of them have a shining black spot on top of the first segment of the body. They are of a cylindrical form, tapering a little at each end, and are provided with sixteen legs. Before changing into the pupa state they make earthen cocoons. They do the most damage in May and June. The moth appears from May until the middle of August, according to the climate, then lay their eggs in autumn to be hatched out in the following May.

The best method of checking their ravages is to kill the moths wherever you find them, generally around the lamp or candle in the evening. When very numerous, large bonfires destroy immense numbers, as they fly into the flames and perish. The worm can be found in the morning by digging around the plants they are cutting off, always within four inches of them. Kill all you can find, and by doing so you not only save your present plants, but probably thousands in future years.

Let those who are appointed to judge of the characters of others bear in mind their own imperfections, and rather strive by sympathy to soften the pang arising from a conviction of guilt, than by misrepresentation to increase it.

Beware of confiding in distant prospects of happiness, lest they be suddenly intercepted by the most trivial present vexation. A leaf in the foreground is large enough to conceal a forest on the far horizon.