

CHAPTER IX.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

With reference to its construction the Book of Mormon separates into three divisions:

1. The small plates of Nephi, a record kept upon gold plates made by the first Nephi, upon which he purposed to record and have recorded more especially the work of the holy ministry among the Nephites, the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah in the flesh, and the exhortations to righteousness by the prophets who should arise among His people. As compared with his plates on which he designed to have recorded the secular history of his people, they were small, and doubtless comparatively few in number, hence their name—"The Smaller Plates of Nephi." The historical data contained in these small plates of Nephi extends over a period of about four hundred years, or from the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem to the reign of King Benjamin, the second king of the Nephite-Zarahemla nation. But chiefly these plates were filled with prophecies and exhortations to righteousness, and many transcriptions from the writings of Isaiah, and other prophets, while historical data—though sufficient to give a general idea of the movement of Lehi's colony, and the subsequent march of events among the peoples that sprang from that colony—are meager.

The translation of these small plates, in current editions, occupies the first one hundred and fifty-seven" pages of the Book of Mormon. The books of this first division of the Book of Mormon are six in number, viz: I. Nephi, II. Nephi,

^aOne Hundred and fifty-one in the first edition.

Book of Jacob, Book of Enos, Book of Jarom, Book of Omni. Though there are but six books in this division, there are nine writers, as follows:

The first Nephi, who writes one hundred and twenty-seven and a half pages^b of the one hundred and fifty-seven in this division.

Jacob, brother of Nephi, twenty-one and a half pages.

Zenos, son of the above Jacob, two and one-half pages.

Jarom, son of the above Zenos, two pages.

In the Book of Omni there are but three and one-half pages, but there are five writers, each of whom records merely a few lines:

Omni, son of the above Jarom;

Amaron, son of the above Omni;

Chemish, brother of the above Amaron;

Abinadom, son of Chemish;

Amaleki, son of the above Abinadom.

Amaleki writes about two and a half pages out of the three pages and a half comprising the Book of Omni, and gives the important information concerning the second hegira of the righteous Nephites, their union with the people of Zarahemla and the formation of the Nephite-Zarahemla nation.

Although there are nine writers in this division of the Book of Mormon, the writing is chiefly done by the first two, Nephi and Jacob, of which the first writes 127½ pages; and the second 21½ pages, leaving but eight pages to be written by the other seven writers.

2. Mormon's abridgment of the Large Plates of Nephi comprises the second division of the Book of Mormon. This is a condensed record made from the various books

^bThat is of the current editions of the book. The references in the analysis throughout are to current editions.

written or engraved upon the Large Plates of Nephi, which plates, it will be remembered, were made by the first Nephi, as well as the Smaller Plates of Nephi, that upon them might be recorded the secular history of the people, their wars and contentions, their affairs of government and the migrations of their people. This part of the Book of Mormon is the work of one man, Mormon, from whom this whole record of the Nephites takes its name, and yet the abridgment of Mormon occupies but $390\frac{1}{2}$ out of the 623 pages; his own book, bearing his own name, makes $15\frac{1}{2}$ pages—making in all 406 out of the 623 pages which comprise the whole book.

The style of Mormon's abridgment is very complicated. It consists mainly of his condensation of the various books which he found engraven upon the Larger Plates of Nephi—the Book of Mosiah, Book of Alma, Helaman, III. Nephi, IV. Nephi, etc. Because Mormon retained the names of these respective books to his condensation or abridgment of them, many readers of the Book of Mormon have been led to suppose that there was a separate writer for each, overlooking the fact that these books, so-called in the Book of Mormon, are but brief abridgments of the original books bearing those names. Occasionally, however, Mormon came upon passages in the original annals that pleased him so well that he transcribed them verbatim in the record he was writing. An example of this is to be found beginning at page 163 (current edition), in the second line of the ninth paragraph, and ending with page 169—the words of King Benjamin to his people.

The modern method of writing would be, of course, to make the abridgement of Mormon the regular text of the book, put the verbatim quotations from the old Nephite books that were being abridged within quotation marks, and throw the occasional remarks or comments of the abridger

into foot notes. But these devices in literary work were not known, apparently, among the Nephites.

After completing his abridgment of the books written upon the Larger Plates of Nephi, down to this own day, Mormon made a record of the things which came under his own observation, and engraved them upon the Larger Plates of Nephi, and called that the Book of Mormon; but upon the plates on which he had engraven his abridgment of all the books found in the Larger Plates of Nephi, and which he had made with his own hands, he recorded but a brief account of the things which he had witnessed among his people, and that, too, he called the Book of Mormon.^d It occupies fourteen and a half pages; which, with the other three hundred and ninety and one half pages, as above stated, makes four hundred and five pages of the Book of Mormon written by the hand of Mormon.

3. The third division of the Book of Mormon is made up of writings of Moroni, the son of Mormon. He finishes the record of his father, Mormon, in which he occupies seven and a half pages. After that he abridges the history of the people of Jared, who were led from the Tower of Babel to the north continent of the western hemisphere, and whose record was found by a branch of the Nephite people.^e This abridged history of the Jaredites occupies thirty-eight pages, and in character of composition is much like the complex style of Mormon's abridgment of the Nephite records. It was modeled doubtless after that work.

Then follows his own book, the Book of Moroni, which occupies fifteen and a half pages, making in all sixty-one pages written by Moroni.

^dMormon was born about the year 311 A. D., and was killed by the Lamanites after delivering his writings to his son Moroni, about 385 A. D.

^eSee p. 142.

The following is a summary of the three divisions:

I. Direct translation from the Small Plates of Nephi, nine writers, (of whom two write 149 of the 157 pages)	157	pages
II. Mormon's abridgment of the various books written upon the Large Plates of Nephi.....	390½	"
III. Mormon's personal account of events that occurred in his own day	14½	"
IV. Moroni's writings—completion of his father's record, abridgment of the Jaredite History, his own book, called the Book of Moroni	61	"
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Total	623	"

The total number of writers in the Book of Mormon is eleven, of whom four do the principal part of the writing, these are the First Nephi, Jacob, Mormon and Moroni.

Of these four, Mormon does the major part. For purposes of refernce I make the following summary:

Mormon writes	405	pages
Moroni	61	"
Nephi	127½	"
Jacob	21½	"
The other seven writers	8	"
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Total	623	"

Such is the Book of Mormon as to its construction—the number of its writers, and the style employed in the parts that are abridgments from the larger records of the Nephites and Jaredites. All this may now seem unimportant to the reader, but he will find when I come to the argument for the truth of the Book of Mormon, and the consideration of the objections urged against it, this analysis will become an important factor in that work.