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## External Evidences—The Hebrew Origin of the Native American Races—Hebrew Relics

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### EXTERNAL EVIDENCES—THE HEBREW ORIGIN OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN RACES—HEBREW RELICS.

I next call attention to the evidences of the Hebrew origin of the native Americans, which origin, of course, if established beyond reasonable doubt, will be one more item of evidence—one, too, of very great weight in the volume of cumulative evidence here being compiled, since the Hebrew origin of the native American races is fundamental as testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon. The Hebrew origin of those races in our book is so unequivocally stated and so emphasized that if the said American races could be proven beyond doubt to be of other than Hebrew origin, the claims of the Book of Mormon would be shattered.

The chief sources of information on this subject are the writings of Gregoria Garcia, Edward King (Lord Kingsborough), and James Adair. The first is a Spanish Dominican author, born about 1560; he died 1627. He spent some twelve years in Central American countries as a missionary among the natives, during which time he gathered his materials for his chiefest work, "Origin de los Indios." While contending for the theory that the Indians are descendants of the Ten Tribes, Garcia collected evidences on both sides of the question, though both his evidences and arguments tend to prove the theory of Hebrew origin.

Lord Kingsborough was born in 1795, and died at Dublin in 1837. His "Antiquities of Mexico," ten volumes, imperial folio, were published in London between 1830-48, consequently, since he died in 1837, some of the volumes

were issued after his death. His theory is that the Indians are descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel, and to the establishment of this view he bends all his energies. He is open to the charge of being over zealous for his theory, and doubtless has been somewhat extravagant in his assumptions of proofs—in matters of detail, at least; but, after all proper discount is made for the over-zeal of an enthusiast—fanatic, if you will,—there remains a body of evidence in his works for the Hebrew origin of native American races which has never been successfully disposed of by those who dispute his theory. Even Bancroft, who holds his theory in contempt, is forced to admit that his “enthusiasm is never offensive,” and further says of him, “There is a scholarly dignity about his work which has never been attained by those who have jeered and railed at him.”<sup>a</sup>

Adair’s work, “History of the North American Indians,” is included in the eighth volume of Kingsborough’s works. James Adair was an English trader among the North American Indians from 1735 to 1775—forty years. It was in 1775 that his work was published. His observations were confined to the North American Indians; hence these three authors may be said to cover the entire field of our investigation. I shall give extracts from all these writers, making use of Bancroft’s abridgment of their works as being at once accurate and most accessible to the reader.

## I.

### *Garcia.*

I begin with Garcia:

The opinion that the Americans are of Hebrew origin is supported by similarities in character, dress, religion, physical pe-

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<sup>a</sup>Native Races, Vol. V., p. 84.

cularities, condition, and customs. The Americans are at heart cowardly, and so are the Jews; the history of both nations proves this. The Jews did not believe in the miracles of Christ, and for their unbelief were scattered over the face of the earth, and despised of all men; in like manner the people of the New World did not readily receive the true faith as preached by Christ's Catholic disciples, and are therefore persecuted and being rapidly exterminated. Another analogy presents itself in the ingratitude of the Jews for the many blessings and special favors bestowed on them by God. \* \* \* \* \* Both Jews and Americans are noted for their want of charity and kindness to the poor, sick and unfortunate; both are naturally given to idolatry; many customs are common to both such as raising the hands to heaven when making a solemn affirmation, calling all near relatives brothers, showing great respect and humility before superiors, burying their dead on hills and high places without the city, tearing their clothing on the reception of bad tidings, giving a kiss on the cheek as a token of peace, celebrating a victory with songs and dances, casting out of the place of worship women who are barren, drowning dogs in a well, practicing crucifixion. \* \* \* \* \* The dress of the Hebrew was in many points like that of the Americans. \* \* \* \* \* The Jews preferred the flesh-pots of Egypt and a life of bondage to heavenly manna and the promised land; the Americans liked a life of freedom and a diet of roots and herbs, better than the service of the Spaniards with good food. The Jews were famous for fine work in stone, as is shown by the buildings of Jerusalem, and a similar excellence in this art is seen in the American ruins. The Mexicans have a tradition of a journey undertaken at the command of a god, and continued for a long time under the direction of certain high priests, who miraculously obtained supplies for their support, this bears a striking resemblance to the Hebrew story of the wandering in the desert.<sup>a</sup> \* \* \* \* \* Moreover, many traces of their old laws and ceremonies are to be found among them at the present day. For instance, both Jews and Americans gave their temple into the charge of priests,

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<sup>a</sup>But, it might be suggested, more closely resembles the story of Lehi's colony at its departure from Jerusalem and its journey to America.

burned incense, anointed the body, practiced circumcision, kept perpetual fires on their altars, forbade women to enter the temple immediately after giving birth, and husbands to sleep with their wives for seven days during the period of menstruation, prohibiting marriage or sexual intercourse between relatives within the second degree, made fornication with a slave punishable, slew the adulterer, made it unlawful for a man to dress like a woman, or a woman like a man, put away their brides if they prove to have lost their virginity, kept the ten commandments.

Answering the objection that the American Indians do not speak Hebrew, Garcia says :

But the reason for this is that the language has gradually changed, as has been the case with all tongues. Witness the Hebrew spoken by the Jews at the present time, which is much corrupted and very different from what is originally was. There do actually exist, besides, many Hebraic traces in the American languages.<sup>b</sup>

## II.

### *Lord Kingsborough's Views.*

The main items of Lord Kingsborough's evidences and arguments are thus summarized by Bancroft :

The religion of the Mexicans strongly resembled that of the Jews, in many minor details, as will be presently seen, and the two were practically alike, to a certain extent in their very foundation; for, as the Jews acknowledged a multitude of angels, arch-angels, principalities, thrones, dominions, and powers, as the subordinate personages of their hierarchy, so did the Mexicans acknowledge the unity of the deity in the person of Tezcatlipoca, and at the same time worship a great number of other imaginary beings. Both believed in a plurality of devils subor-

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<sup>b</sup>Bancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. V., pp. 79-83.

dinate to one head, who was called by the Mexicans Mictlante-cutli, and by the Jews Satan. \* \* \* \* \* It is probable that the Toltecs were acquainted with the sin of the first man committed at the suggestion of the woman, herself deceived by the serpent, who tempted her with the fruit of the forbidden tree, who was the origin of all our calamities, and by whom death came into the world. We have seen in this chapter that Kingsborough supposes the Messiah and his story to have been familiar to the Mexicans. There is reason to believe that the Mexicans, like the Jews, offered meat and drink offerings to stones. There are striking similarities between the Babel, flood, and creation myths of the Hebrews and the Americans. Both Jews and Mexicans were fond of appealing in their adjurations to the heaven and the earth. Both were extremely superstitious, and firm believers in prodigies. \* \* \* \* \* It is very probable that the Sabbath of the seventh day was known in some parts of America. The Mexicans applied the blood of sacrifices to the same uses as the Jews; they poured it upon the earth, they sprinkled it, they marked persons with it, and they smeared it upon walls and other inanimate things. No one but the Jewish high priest might enter the Holy of Holies. A similar custom obtained in Peru. Both Mexicans and Jews regarded certain animals as unclean and unfit for food. Some of the Americans believed with some of the Talmudists in a plurality of souls. That man was created in the image of God was a part of the Mexican belief. It was customary among the Mexicans to eat the flesh of sacrifices of atonement. There are many points of resemblance between Tezcatlipoca and Jehovah. Ablutions formed an essential part of the ceremonial law of the Jews and Mexicans. The opinions of the Mexicans with regard to the resurrection of the body, accorded with those of the Jews. The Mexican temple, like the Jewish, faced the east. "As amongst the Jews the ark was a sort of portable temple in which the deity was supposed to be continually present, and which was accordingly borne on the shoulders of the priests as a sure refuge and defense from their enemies, so amongst the Mexicans and the Indians of Michoacan and Honduras an ark was held in the highest veneration, and was considered an object too sacred to be touched by any but the priests. \* \* \* \* \* The Yucatec conception of a trinity resembles the Hebrews. It is

probable that Quetzalcohuatl, whose proper name signifies "feathered serpent," was so called after the brazen serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness, the feathers perhaps alluding to the rabbinical tradition that the fiery serpents which God sent against the Israelites were of a winged species. The Mexicans, like the Jews, saluted the four cardinal points, in their worship. There was much in connection with sacrifices that was common to Mexicans and Jews. \* \* \* \* \* In various religious rites and observances, such as circumcision, confession, and communion, there was much similarity. Salt was an article highly esteemed by the Mexicans, and the Jews always offered it in their oblations. Among the Jews, the firstling of an ass had to be redeemed with a lamb, or if unredeemed, its neck was broken. This command of Moses should be considered in reference to the custom of sacrificing children which existed in Mexico and Peru. The spectacle of a king performing a dance as an act of religion was witnessed by the Jews as well as by Mexicans. As the Israelites were conducted from Egypt by Moses and Aaron who were accompanied by their sister Miriam, so the Aztecs departed from Astlan under the guidance of Huitziton and Tecpatzin, the former of whom is named by Acosta and Herrera, Mexi, attended likewise by their sister Quilaztli, or, as she is otherwise named, Chimalman or Malinalli, both of which latter names have some resemblance to Miriam, as Mexi has to Moses. \* \* \* \* \* It is impossible, on reading what Mexican mythology records of the war in heaven and of the fall of Tzontemoc and the other rebellious spirits; of the creation of light by the word of Tonacatecutli, and of the division of the waters; of the sin of Yztlacoliuhqui, and his blindness and nakedness; of the temptation of Suchiquecal, and her disobedience in gathering roses from a tree, and the consequent misery and disgrace of herself and her posterity—not to recognize scriptural analogies. Other Hebrew analogies Lord Kingsborough finds in America, in the dress, insignia, and duties of priests; in innumerable superstitions concerning dreams, apparitions, eclipses, and other more common-place events; in certain festivals for rain; in burial and mourning ceremonies; in the diseases most common among the people; in certain regularly observed festivals; in the dress of certain nations; in established laws; in physical features; in architecture; in various

minor observances, such as offering water to a stranger that he might wash his feet, eating dust in token of humility, anointing with oil, and so forth; in the sacrifice of prisoners; in manner and style of oratory; in the stories of giants; in respect paid to God's name; in games of chance; in marriage relations; in childbirth ceremonies; in religious ideas of all sorts; in respect paid to kings; in uses of metals; in treatment of criminals, and punishment of crimes; in charitable practices; in social customs; and in a vast number of other particulars.<sup>c</sup>

### III.

#### *Adair's Evidences.*

Following is the summary of Adair's evidences and arguments:

The Israelites were divided into tribes and had chiefs over them, so the Indians divided themselves: each tribe forming a little community within the nation. And as the nation hath its particular symbol, so from nation to nation among them we shall not find one individual who doth not distinguish himself by his family name. Every town has a state house or synedrion, the same as the Jewish Sanhedrim, where almost every night the head men meet to discuss public business. The Hebrew nation were ordered to worship Jehovah the true and living God, who by the Indians is styled Yohewah. The ancient heathens, it is well known worshiped a plurality of gods: but these American Indians pay their religious devoir to Loak Ishtohollo Aba, The Great Beneficent Supreme Holy Spirit of Fire. They do not pay the least perceptible adoration to images. Their ceremonies in their religious worship accord more nearly with the Mosaic institutions, which could not be if they were of heathen descent. \* \* \* \* \* Their opinion that God chose them out of all the rest of mankind as his peculiar and beloved people, fills both the white Jew and the red American, with that steady hatred against all the world, which renders them hated and despised by all. We have abundant evidence

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<sup>c</sup>Native Races, Vol. V., pp. 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91.



of the Jews believing in the ministration of angels, during the Old Testament dispensation, their frequent appearances and their services on earth, are recorded in the oracles, which the Jews themselves receive as given by divine inspiration, and St. Paul in his epistle addressed to the Hebrews speaks of it as their general opinion that "angels are ministering spirits to the good and righteous on earth." The Indian sentiments and traditions are the same. They believe the higher regions to be inhabited by good spirits, relations to the Great Holy One, and that these spirits attend and favor the virtuous. The Indian language and dialects appear to have the very idiom and genius of the Hebrew. Their words and sentences are expressive, concise, emphatical, sonorous, and bold, and often both in letters and signification synonymous with the Hebrew language. They count time after the manner of the Hebrews, reckoning years by lunar months like the Israelites who counted by moons. The religious ceremonies of the Indian Americans are in conformity with those of the Jews, they having their prophets, high priest, and others of religious order. As the Jews had a sanctorum or most holy place, so have all the Indian nations. The dress also of their high priests is similar in character to that of the Hebrews. The festivals, feasts, and religious rites of the Indian Americans have also great resemblance to that of the Hebrews. The Indian imitates the Israelite in his religious offerings. The Hebrews had various ablutions and anointings according to the Mosaic ritual—and all the Indian nations constantly observe similar customs from religious motives. Their frequent bathing, or dipping themselves and their children in rivers, even in the severest weather, seems to be as truly Jewish as the other rites and ceremonies which have been mentioned. The Indian laws of uncleanness and purification, and also the abstaining from things deemed unclean are the same as those of the Hebrews. The Indian marriages, divorces and punishments of adultery, still retain a strong likeness to the Jewish laws and customs on these points. Many of the Indian punishments resemble those of the Jews. Whoever attentively views the features of the Indian, and his eye and reflects on his fickle, obstinate, and cruel disposition will naturally think of the Jews. The ceremonies performed by the Indians before going to war, such as purification

and fasting, are similar to those of the Hebrew nation. The Israelites were fond of wearing beads and other ornaments, even as early as the patriarchal age and in resemblance to these customs the Indian females continually wear the same, believing it to be a preventive against many evils. The Indian manner of curing the sick is very similar to that of the Jews. Like the Hebrews, they firmly believe that diseases and wounds are occasioned by divine anger, in proportion to some violation of the old beloved speech. The Hebrews carefully buried their dead, so on any accident they gathered their bones, and laid them in tombs of their forefathers; thus all the numerous nations of Indians perform the like friendly office to every deceased person of their respective tribes. The Jewish records tell us that the women mourned for the loss of their deceased husbands, and were reckoned vile by the civil law if they married in the space of at least ten months after their death. In the same manner all the Indian widows, by an established strict penal law, mourn for the loss of their deceased husbands; and among some tribes for the space of three or four years. The surviving brother by the Mosaic law, was to raise seed to a deceased brother, who left a widow childless, to perpetuate his name and family. The American law enforces the same rule. When the Israelites gave names to their children or others they chose such appellatives as suited best their circumstances and the times. This custom is a standing rule with the Indians."<sup>d</sup>

There are writers upon the subject of American Antiquities who hold, first: that not all the foregoing points of comparison between native American races and the Hebrews are clearly established; and second: that if they were all clearly established it would not necessarily prove identity of race. This much, however, can be insisted upon by those who accept the Book of Mormon as true; namely, that since no counter theory of origin for our native American races has yet been conclusively proven, (and as matters now stand, seems impossible of being proven), and as the Book of Mor-

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<sup>d</sup>Bancroft, Native Races, Vol. V., pp. 91, 92, 93 and notes.

mon makes bold to so definitely announce the Hebrew origin of the people whose history in outline it gives, so much in the foregoing summary of points of comparison between the American races and the Hebrews as may not be successfully contradicted stands as evidence of no mean order for the truth of our Nephite record.

*The Discovery of Hebrew Relics.*

In addition to these summaries of evidence on the Hebrew origin of the native American races there are several special discoveries bearing on the subject that I think should be mentioned. One is related by Ethan Smith, author of "Views of the Hebrews," a work in which he undertakes to prove that the American Indians are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. While preparing his work for a second edition, he heard of the discovery in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, of a parchment, supposed to be of native American origin, covered with Hebrew characters. Mr. Smith went to Pittsfield to investigate the matter, and found the facts to be as follows, the information being given by the man who found the parchment:

I.

*The Pittsfield Hebrew Parchment.*

This [the discoverer of the parchment] was Joseph Merrick, Esq., a highly respectable character in the church of Pittsfield, and in the county, as the minister of the place informed [me]. Mr. Merrick gave the following account; that in 1815, he was leveling some ground under and near an old wood shed standing on a place of his, situated on Indian Hill, (a place in Pittsfield, so called, and lying, as the writer was afterward informed, at some distance from the middle of the town where Mr. Merrick is now [about 1825] living). He ploughed and conveyed away

old chips and earth, to some depth, as the surface of the earth appeared uneven. After the work was done, walking over the place, he discovered, near where the earth had been dug the deepest, a kind of black strap, about six inches in length, and one and a half in breadth, and something thicker than a draw leather [tug] of a harness. He perceived it had at each end a loop of some hard substance, probably for the purpose of carrying it. He conveyed it into his house, and threw it in an old tool box. He afterward found it thrown out of doors, and again conveyed it to the box. He attempted to cut it open, and found it was formed of pieces of thick raw hide, sewed and made water tight with the sinews of some animal; and in the fold it contained four folded leaves of old parchment. These leaves were of a dark yellow, and contained some kind of writing. Some of the neighbors saw and examined them. One of these parchments they tore in pieces; the other three he saved, and delivered them to Mr. Sylvester Larned, a graduate then in town, who took them to Cambridge, and had them examined. They were written in Hebrew with a pen, in plain and intelligible writing. The following is an extract of a letter sent to Mr. Merrick by Mr. Larned, upon this subject:

Sir:—I have examined the parchment manuscript, which you had the goodness to give me. After some time and with much difficulty and assistance I have ascertained their meaning, which is as follows: (I have numbered the manuscripts.)

No. 1, is translated by Duet. vi: 4-9 verses inclusive.

No. 2, by Deut, xi: 13-21 verses inclusive.

No. 3, Exod. xiii: 11-16 verses inclusive.

I am, etc. [Signed] SYLVESTER LARNED.<sup>a</sup>

## II.

### *The Newark Hebrew Tablet.*

Another discovery of Hebrew writing—the Ten Commandments engraved on a stone tablet—was made in Ohio;

<sup>a</sup>View of the Hebrews; or the Tribes of Israel in America, pp. 219, 220. The above account is also quoted by Josiah Priest, American Antiquities, pp. 68, 69. Also by Bancroft, Native Races, Vol. V., pp. 93, 94.

and was seen by Mr. A. A. Bancroft, the father of H. H. Bancroft, author of "Native Races." The latter relates the circumstance of finding this relic as follows:

About eight miles southeast of Newark there was formerly a large mound composed of masses of free stone, which had been brought from some distance and thrown into a heap without much placing or care. In early days, stone being scarce in that region, the settlers carried away the mound piece by piece to use for building purposes, so that in a few years there was little more than a large flattened heap of rubbish remaining. Some fifteen years ago, the county surveyor (I have forgotten his name), who had for some time been searching ancient works, turned his attention to this particular pile. He employed a number of men and proceeded at once to open it. Before long he was rewarded by finding in the centre and near the surface a bed of the tough clay generally known as pipe-clay, which must have been brought from a distance of some twelve miles. Imbedded in the clay was a coffin, dug out of a burr-oak log, and in a pretty good state of preservation. In the coffin was a skeleton, with quite a number of stone ornaments and emblems, and some open brass rings, suitable for bracelets or anklets. These being removed, they dug down deeper, and soon discovered a stone dressed to an oblong shape, about eighteen inches long and twelve wide, which proved to be a casket, neatly fitted and completely water-tight, containing a slab of stone of hard and fine quality, and an inch and a half thick, eight inches long, four inches wide at one end, and tapering to three inches at the other. Upon the face of the slab was the figure of a man, apparently a priest with a long flowing beard, and a robe reaching to his feet. Over his head was a curved line of characters, and upon the edges and back of the stone closely and neatly carved letters. The slab, which I saw myself, was shown to the Episcopalian clergyman of Newark, and he pronounced the writings to be the Ten Commandments in ancient Hebrew.<sup>b</sup>

Mr. Bancroft, referring to these circumstances, says

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<sup>b</sup>Bancroft, Native Races, Vol. V., pp. 94, 95.

that in neither of them "is it certain or even probable that the relic existed in America before the conquest," though he gives no reason for the rather dogmatic statement. For my own part, and especially in the latter case, I see no reason to doubt the existence of these relics in America before the advent of the Spaniards. According to the Book of Mormon the ancient inhabitants of America, the Nephites, had the writings of Moses. The Ten Commandments were regarded as the summing up, the crystalization of the law of God<sup>c</sup> to the people, pending the advent of Messiah with the more perfect law of the gospel. What could be more natural than that they should multiply copies of these scriptures, or parts of them, especially such parts as related to particular promises or warnings to Israelites, as do the passages on the parchment found in Pittsfield, Massachusetts? Or such summaries of the law of Moses as the Ten Commandments constitute? That the Nephites did multiply copies of the scriptures they had in their possession (and doubtless also copies of striking passages of those scriptures) is evident from what is said upon the subject by Mormon when giving an account of the transfer of the Nephite records from one Shiblón to Helaman, the son of Helaman: "Now, behold, all those engravings which were in the possession of Helaman, were written and sent forth among the children of men throughout all the land, save it were those parts which had been commanded by Alma should not go forth."<sup>d</sup>

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<sup>c</sup>See especially the teachings of the prophet Abinadi in Mosiah, chapter xii and xiii, where the Ten Commandments are expounded as the sum of the law of Moses, and its relation to the whole plan of God for the salvation of men defined.

<sup>d</sup>Alma lxiii: 12. Orson Pratt in a foot note on the passage suggests: "Those innumerable copies of sacred books were undoubtedly transcribed directly from or compared with, the records on the original metallic plates."

The part here prohibited transcription and circulation related to the oaths and constitutions of the secret societies from the record of the Jaredites;<sup>e</sup> but for the rest, there was perfect liberty to multiply copies of the scriptures, and that it was done is further evidenced from the fact that missionaries from the Nephites to the Lamanites are found to be in possession of copies of the scriptures which Lehi's colony brought with them from Jerusalem, and from which they read for the instruction of their hearers.<sup>f</sup> It is not difficult to believe, in the light of these facts, that noted personages among native Americans should have engraved on stone or parchment in Hebrew or in other characters passages of the holy scriptures; nor is it incredible that these should be buried with them—since to bury one's personal effects with him was a custom of the natives—and that afterwards the relics should be discovered as in the two instances cited. The fact of the discoveries is beyond question: the nature of them is strong incidental proof of the claims of the Book of Mormon.

Of this Newark discovery, the late Orson Pratt, who examined the engraved stone in the city of New York, and which at the time was in possession of the "Ethnological Society" of that city, makes the following very valuable and convincing statement and argument respecting the find. It should also be remembered that Elder Pratt's knowledge of the Hebrew language makes his comments all the more conclusive; while the fact that he points out in his statement that there is in this Newark Tablet none of the modern "points" and "characters" that have been introduced into the Hebrew "during the last two thousand four hundred

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<sup>e</sup>See Alma xxxvii.

<sup>f</sup>Alma xii: 12-15; xxiii: 4-5; xxxiii: 12-15.

years," proves conclusively that the Newark Tablet is an ancient, not a modern production.

Thirty years after the Book of Mormon was put in print, giving the history of the settlement of this country, one of the great mounds south of the great lakes near Newark, in Ohio, was opened. What was found in it? A great many curiosities, among which were some copper pieces, supposed to be money. After digging down many feet, and carrying off many thousand loads of stone, they at length found a coffin in the midst of a hard kind of fire clay. Underneath this they found a large stone that appeared to be hollow; something seemed to rattle inside of it. The stone was cemented together in the middle, but with some little exertion they broke it open, when another stone was found inside of it, of a different nature entirely from its covering. On the stone taken from the inside was carved the figure of a man with a priestly robe flowing from his shoulders; and over the head of this man were the Hebrew characters for "Moshe," the ancient name of Moses; while on each side of this likeness, and on different sides of the stone, above, beneath, and around about were the Ten Commandments that were received on Mount Sinai, written in the ancient Hebrew characters. Now recollect that the Book of Mormon had been in print thirty years before this discovery. And what does this discovery prove? It proves that the builders of these mounds, south of the great lakes in the great Mississippi Valley in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New York, etc., must have understood the Hebrew characters; and not only that, but they must also have understood the law of Moses. Otherwise how happened it that they should write on this stone the Ten Commandments

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*g*It may be objected that this Newark Tablet with the Ten Commandments written upon it in ancient Hebrew, can be of no value as evidence for the Book of Mormon, since that book was engraved in characters called "reformed Egyptian." That is to say, it was written in Egyptian characters somewhat altered by the Nephites in the course of time—such changes take place in all written languages. But the Nephites also wrote, to a limited extent, at least (and it would most probably be in such cases as making a transcript of the Ten Commandments), in Hebrew (See Mormon ix, 32, 33). Hence the importance of the Newark Tablet as an ancient Nephite relic.



almost verbatim as they are now contained in King James's translation of the Bible. It proves that the builders of these mounds were Israelites, and that their illustrious dead, buried in these mounds, had these commandments buried with them in accordance with the custom of many of the ancient nations, especially the Egyptians, who were in the habit of consigning their written sacred papyrus to their great tombs. In Egypt many of these ancient manuscripts have been exhumed and, in many instances, pretended to be translated. So the Israelites followed the customs of these Eastern nations, and buried that which they considered most sacred, namely, the Ten Commandments, thundered by the voice of the Almighty in the midst of flaming fire on Mount Sinai in the ears of all the congregation of Israel.

I have seen that sacred stone. It is not a hatched up story. I heard tell of it [the stone] as being in the Antiquarian Society, or rather, as it is now called, the Ethnological Society, in the City of New York. I went to the Secretary of that Society, and he kindly showed me this stone, of which I have been speaking, and being acquainted with modern Hebrew, I could form some kind of an estimate of the ancient Hebrew, for some of the modern Hebrew characters do not vary much in form from the ancient Hebrew. At any rate we have enough of ancient Hebrew, that has been dug up in Palestine and taken from among the ruins of the Israelites east of the Mediterranean Sea, to form some kind of an estimate of the characters, and comparing them, I could see and understand the nature of the writings upon these records. They were also taken to the most learned men of our country, who, as soon as they looked at them, were able to pronounce them to be not only ancient Hebrew, but they were also able to translate them and pronounced them to be the Ten Commandments. This, then, is external proof, independent of the Scriptural proofs to which I have alluded, in testimony of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

Now, our modern Hebrew has many points; it has also many additional characters that have been made since these colonies left Jerusalem. Do you find on these ancient writings any of these modern characters that have been introduced during the last two thousand four hundred years? Not one. Do you find any Hebrew points representing vowels? Not one; and all the new consonants that have been introduced during the last two

thousand four hundred years were not found upon this stone to which I have referred, showing plainly that it must have been of very ancient date.<sup>g</sup>

In connection with his comments on this Newark Tablet Elder Pratt also makes the following statement:

“HAVE MERCY ON ME A NEPHITE.”

Five years after the discovery of this remarkable memento of the ancient Israelites on the American continent, [the Newark Tablet], and thirty-five years after the Book of Mormon was in print, several other mounds in the same vicinity of Newark were opened, in several of which Hebrew characters were found. Among them was this beautiful expression, buried with one of their ancient dead, “May the Lord have mercy on me a Nephite.” It was translated a little differently, viz., “Nephel.” Now we well know that Nephi, who came out of Jerusalem six hundred years before Christ, was the leader of the first Jewish [Israelitish—Lehi’s colony was made up of families from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. See Vol. I., pages 167-8.] colony across to this land, and the people, ever afterwards, were called “Nephites,” after their inspired prophet and leader. The Nephites were a righteous people and had many prophets among them; and when they were burying one of their brethren in these ancient mounds, they introduced the Hebrew characters signifying “May the Lord have mercy on me, a Nephite.” This is another direct evidence of the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon, which was brought forth and translated by inspiration some thirty-five years before this inscription was found.<sup>h</sup>

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<sup>g</sup>Journal of Discourses, Vol. XIII., p. 131, the discourse was delivered April 10th, 1870, Salt Lake City.

<sup>h</sup>Journal of Discourses, Vol. XIII., p. 131.