



Type: Book Chapter

External Evidences (Continued)—Evidence of the Bible

Author(s): B.H. Roberts

Source: *New Witnesses for God: Volume III - The Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City; Deseret News, 1909

Pages: 93-117

CHAPTER XXXV.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCES (CONTINUED.)—EVIDENCE OF THE BIBLE.

I.

The Place of the Patriarch Joseph in Israel.—The Promises to Him and His Seed.

It is no part of my purpose to deal at length with any argument that may be based upon Bible evidences to the truth of the Book of Mormon. That field is already occupied by others. Indeed from the commencement it has been one of the chief sources drawn upon by the Elders of the Church in proof of the claims of the Book of Mormon.^a I

^aOne of the earliest writers in the Church in support of the claims of the Book of Mormon was Elder Charles Thompson. He published a work at Batavia, N. Y., in 1841 consisting of 250 pages. The title of the book was "Evidences in Proof of the Book of Mormon Being a Divinely Inspired Record, Written by the Forefathers of the Natives Whom we Call Indians." It dwells at length on the scripture proofs of the divine authenticity of the book, the nature of which may be judged from the following statement of what the author expects to prove:

"In treating on this subject, I shall observe the following order, viz: I shall first prove by the Prophets, that God will literally gather Israel, the literal seed of Jacob, from all nations, unto their own land, which God gave unto their fathers, by promise.

"Second: When he shall set his hand to bring to pass this gathering, he will first lift up an ensign on the mountains for the nations—set up his standard to the people, and set a sign among them. And then immediately he will commission officers and send them to the nations, bearing this ensign, to declare his glory among the Gentiles, and to fish out and hunt up Israel, and bring them to their own land for an offering unto the Lord.

"Third: The ensign, standard, and sign, consists of a book—a record of the tribe of Joseph, taken by the Lord and put with the Bible (that is, published to the nations as the Bible now is).

shall treat that evidence, however, in merely an incidental way, and as deriving its importance chiefly from the circumstances of its blending in with the enlarged and general scheme of things pertaining to Israel, and the work of Messiah brought to light by the Book of Mormon.

In pursuance of this treatment I call attention to the blessing of Jacob upon the head of his grand sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. It should be remembered that to Joseph, the son of Jacob, a double portion of honor was granted in Israel. While no tribe is especially called by his name, yet two tribes are his through his sons, viz., the tribe of Ephraim and the tribe of Manasseh. This came about in the following manner: Reuben, the first born of Jacob, defiled his father's wife, Bilhah. For which awful crime he lost his place as a prince in the house of Israel, which place was given indirectly to Joseph. Why I say indirectly, is because Ephraim, Joseph's younger son, was the one who received the blessing of the first born, and was placed as the first of the tribes of Israel. It is for this reason that the Lord was

"Fourth: This record of Joseph is to come out of the earth in America because Ephraim's seed dwell there.

"Fifth: America is a promised land to Joseph, and God brought a remnant of his seed here to possess it.

"Sixth: God will make use of men as instruments in bringing this book forth.

"Seventh: This generation is the time when this gathering is to take place; consequently the time when this book is to come forth.

"Eighth: The Book of Mormon is this book, and the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are the officers commissioned to bear this sign to the nations, and to declare God's glory among the gentiles and gather Israel." (Evidences in Proof of the Book of Mormon, pp. 7, 8).

The writings of Elders Parley P. Pratt (who preceded Elder Thompson in this field by three or four years), and Orson Pratt upon this subject, the first in the Voice of Warning, 1837; the second in his work on Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon, England, 1850-1, are too well known to require any summary as their works are still current.

wont to say, "I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born."^b In proof of the things here set forth I quote the following:

Now the sons of Reuben, the first born of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright. For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler, but the birthright was Joseph's."^c

That is, not after the natural birthright, but after the birthright appointment made by the patriarch Jacob to Ephraim. Ephraim, then, will take the place of Reuben—the place of the firstborn. But there was also a tribe of Manasseh in Israel, as well as of Ephraim, and thus was a double portion given unto Joseph in that from him are two tribes in Israel. And now as to further blessings conferred upon Joseph and his sons. When Jacob and his son Joseph were restored to each other in Egypt, the old patriarch rejoiced to see the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh—and now the Bible narrative:

And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand towards Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from

^bJeremiah xxxi: 9.

^cI. Chronicles v: 1, 2.

all evil, bless the lads and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father; for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it; he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.^d

Again when the patriarch Jacob gave his final blessing to his sons, of Joseph he said:

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel): Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb; the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.^e

Moses also seems to have been impressed with the idea that Joseph was to receive a portion above his brethren; for in blessing the tribes of Israel, when coming to Joseph, he said:

^dGenesis xlviii: 12-20.

^eGenesis xlix: 22-26.

Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.^f

A comparison of the blessings of the other tribes with the blessings of Joseph's will convince him who makes it how much greater are to be the blessings of Joseph than those of his brethren, especially in respect of the extent and the fruitfulness of the lands that his descendants shall occupy. Furthermore, in view of all that is said in these prophetic utterances, there can be no question but what the descendants of Joseph, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, are to be very prominent in the affairs of Israel and take an important part in God's great drama in which he will work out the restoration of his people, Israel, and the redemption of the world.

Summarizing these prophetic blessings we may say, that to the tribe of Ephraim is given the place and honor of the first born in Israel; that to him pertains the "pushing of the people together"—Ephraim's part in the gathering of Israel in the last days; that the seed of Manasseh is to become a great people, while Ephraim is to become a multitude of nations—greater than Manasseh, as is becoming to the tribe of the first born—"they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh;" that the

^fDeut. xxxiii: 13-18.

land possessed by Joseph's posterity is to be peculiarly great and fruitful, blessed with the precious things of heaven, with the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, for the chief things of the ancient mountains, for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof; that Joseph is as a fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall (i. e., his possessions extend in some way beyond the recognized boundaries of Israel's Palestine inheritance); that Joseph's arms and hands shall be made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; that the God of Israel shall help Joseph and bless him with the blessings of heaven above, of the deep, of the breasts, and of the womb (i. e., he shall be blessed in his posterity); that the blessings of Jacob had prevailed above the blessings of his progenitors, "unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills," (perhaps a greater territorial inheritance); that these blessings of Jacob which had "prevailed" above (i. e., exceeded) the blessings of his progenitors, should be realized by Joseph.

These are the promises of God to Joseph. But where are the evidences either from the Bible history or from secular history that the descendants of Joseph have ever attained to the fulfillment of these very gracious and very remarkable promises? As a matter of fact are not Joseph's tribes and descendants practically lost in Israel, so far as any knowledge is obtainable from the Bible, or other Hebrew literature, or general history? The tribe of Judah became the dominating power in the history of Israel in Palestine, and is the only tribe in Israel that has retained any distinctive existence in modern times. What, then, have the promises of God to Joseph, uttered by Jacob, in his inspired patriarchal blessings, and solemnly repeated by the great prophet Moses, failed of their fulfillment? If not, where is the evi-

dence of their fulfillment? It is not to be found unless men turn to and receive it from Joseph's record, the Book of Mormon. But the Book of Mormon once accepted—a book that is a history, in the main, of the descendants of Joseph,^g behold what a fulfilment of the prophetic blessings upon Joseph's seed is there revealed! Here in America Joseph's descendants indeed became a multitude of nations; here, indeed, they possessed a land blessed with the precious things of heaven, for through Nephite prophets was made known the mind and will of God, the coming of Messiah, and the redemption of man that should be wrought out by Him; nay, the Son of God, in person, came in his glorious resurrected state and taught them at first hand and face to face the great things concerning man's salvation; inspired apostles took up the same great theme and for centuries held a great people closely to the path of both truth and righteousness, until the harvest of souls in America exceeded such harvests among any other people whatsoever. In America Joseph's descendants indeed possessed a land noted for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills—the gold, the silver, the iron, the coal fields, the oil fields, and all things else of which the mountains and hills of America yield their rich store; a land noted for the precious things of the earth and the fullness thereof—a land embracing all the climates from earth's torrid equa-

^gI have already, at pages 167-8, and note, called attention to the fact that the colony of Lehi was made up of families from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh respectively. Orson Pratt also says, "The American Indians are partly of the children of Manasseh though many of them are of Ephraim through the two sons of Ishmael who came out of Jerusalem 600 B. C., and some of Judah through the loins of David and the kings that reigned over Jerusalem." Pratt's Works, pp. 92; see also chapter XXXIX and footnotes.

torial regions, thence shading off both toward the north and the south through temperate climates into the frigid zones; a land of wondrous wealth in fertile plains and valleys, and extensive forest tracts; a land that produces all vegetables and fruits and fibrous growths essential to the feeding and clothing of man; a land whose grandeur and very beauty holds the senses entranced with its magnificence; a land sufficient for empires surrounded by fruitful seas; a land consecrated to free institutions and to righteousness—in a word, *the land of Joseph*.

By the descendants of Joseph migrating to this land, Joseph is truly a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall; and while his descendants in this land had their varied fortunes, dark days in which sin, both individual and national, made dark their annals, still they had also remarkable periods of righteousness, during which periods there were added many names to the world's great list of warriors, statesmen and prophets, that deserve to be remembered with the world's greatest and best characters. Of warriors, such names as Alma,^h Moroni, the hero of the Nephite republicⁱ (100 B. C. 56 B. C.), Mor-

^hThe reason that Alma, born late in the second century B. C., is the first one mentioned of the Nephite warriors is not because he was the first distinguished member of that class among the Nephites, but because the secular history of the Nephites for the first four centuries of their annals was lost through the criminal carelessness of Martin Harris when he lost the 116 pages of manuscript which was the translation of the first part of Mormon's abridgment of that Nephite secular history. We have its place occupied by the translation of the Smaller Plates of Nephi which record gives prominence to spiritual things and to spiritual characters. (I. Nephi xix: 3, 4). But as "there were brave men before Aggamemnon," so also doubtless there were warriors among the Nephites before Alma, but in consequence of not having a translation of the part of the record which dealt with the affairs of government and of wars, they remain for the present, unknown to us.

ⁱNot Moroni, the son of Mormon.

mon, Helaman, Teancum; and though engaged in a bad cause, Amlici and Amalickiah, and many others among the Lamanites. Of statesmen such names as the first Nephi, King Benjamin, Mosiah II, Alma the younger, Nephihah, and Pahoran. Of the prophets, Lehi, the first Nephi, Jacob, Mosiah I, Abinadi, Ammon, the son of Mosiah, Alma the elder, also Alma the younger, Samuel, the Lamanite, Nephi, the son of Helaman (last half of the century preceding the Christian era), Nephi, the chief of Messiah's apostles, Mormon, the author of the abridged record known as the Book of Mormon, Moroni, the son of Mormon, and others.

Joseph's descendants in America established and maintained for a thousand years what may be properly called a Christian civilization; for, instructed by their prophets during the six hundred years that they occupied the land of America, preceding the coming of Messiah, they believed implicitly in the Christ that was to come, and looked forward to the redemption of the human race through his atonement, holding the reasonable view that there was as much virtue in looking forward to the atonement of Christ and accepting in their faith his redeeming power, as looking back upon it would have after it had become an accomplished fact.ⁱ For four centuries following the advent of Christ the Nephites had, of course, the evidence of his appearing among them and his personal instructions in the gospel, which affected the character of their civilization.

During the time range mentioned, kingdoms, republics and Christian ecclesiastical governments obtained. Such science and arts as might naturally develop from a colony of enlightened Hebrews migrating from Palestine to America six hundred years B. C., flourished; and the ruined monuments of civilization seen in America were reared in part

ⁱAlma xxxix: 17-19, I. Nephi xxv: 23-26, Mosiah iii: 13.

by their hands; the extent of these monuments of civilization, and the degree of civilization they represent are questions that have already been considered.^k

The Book of Mormon is also big with the promise of future events concerning the redemption and glorification of the descendants of Joseph in this promised land of America—the land of Joseph, for so it is declared to be by the Lord Jesus himself. Addressing the twelve disciples whom he had called to the ministry in the western world he said:

Ye are my disciples; and ye are a light unto this people, who are a remnant of the house of Joseph. And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; and the Father hath given it unto you.^l

The Book of Mormon makes known the fact that upon this land of Joseph is to be founded a great city called Zion, or a New Jerusalem. The risen Messiah, while still teaching the gospel in person to the Nephites, and speaking upon this subject, said:

And it shall come to pass that I will establish my people, O house of Israel. And behold, this people will I establish in this land, [referring to the continents of America], unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you.^m

Continuing his discourse he said:

For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day whosoever will not repent and come unto my beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel; and I

^kChapters xxvi and xxvii.

^lIII. Nephi xv: 12, 13.

^mIII. Nephi xx: 21, 22.

will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. But if they repent, and hearken unto my words, they shall come in unto the covenant, and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance, and they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also, as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem; and then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I will also be in their midst.²

Moroni, however, is still more explicit. He represents that the Jaredite prophet Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a new Jerusalem upon the land of America.

And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come; after it should be destroyed, it should be built up again a holy city unto the Lord, wherefore it could not be a New Jerusalem, for it had been in a time of old, but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel; and that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type; for as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph, that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph, that he should perish not; wherefore the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land of their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come, when the earth shall pass away.^o

²III.Nephi xxi: 20-25.

^oEther xiii: 5-8.

The continents of America, then, according to this passage, are the inheritance of Joseph, and here a holy city is to be built unto the Lord that shall be the capital of the western world, a New Jerusalem—Zion. This city is to be founded and glorified by the multitudinous descendants of Joseph, who will be gathered into the land, and also those who will unite with them in righteousness—in so great a work—especially the Gentile races; and together they shall be established in peaceful possession of the land to the end of the world. The exaltation and glory of this predicted future empire for the descendants of Joseph and the Gentile races—the grandeur of its civilization and the security of its righteousness; the brilliancy of its achievements; the excellence of its physical comforts and the beauty and simplicity of both its individual and community life, may not yet be apprehended, though they may be partly seen in the light of modern civilized life; sufficiently seen by aid of that light to establish confidence that realization will outrun the dreams of the ancient prophets, all glorious as they seem.

The Book of Mormon throughout is true to this Josephic idea; it is impregnated with it. Joseph is the central figure throughout. His spirit runs through the whole scheme of the book. We learn from the Book of Mormon of a great Seer that is to arise from among the descendants of this Patriarch Joseph, to bring forth the word of the Lord to them, a thing quite in keeping with the important part to be taken by Joseph and his seed in the affairs of the western world in the last days. The matter is mentioned by Lehi in connection with a blessing he was giving his own son Joseph, born to him while in the wilderness, enroute from Palestine to America:

And now, Joseph, my last born, whom I have brought out of the wilderness of mine afflictions, may the Lord bless thee

forever, for thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed. For behold, thou art the fruit of my loins; and I am a descendant of Joseph, who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord, which he made unto Joseph; wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins, the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off; nevertheless to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness unto light; yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom. For Joseph truly testified, saying: a Seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice Seer unto the fruit of my loins. Yea, Joseph truly said, Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice Seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins. And unto him will I give commandment, that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren, which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers. And I will give unto him a commandment, that he shall do none other work, save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work. And he shall be great like unto Moses, whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel. And Moses will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them. Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my convenants, saith the Lord. And out of weakness he shall be

made strong, in that day when my work shall commence among all my people, unto the restoring thee, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.

And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that Seer will the Lord bless; and they, that seek to destroy him, shall be confounded; for this promise, which I have obtained of the Lord, of the fruit of my loins, shall be fulfilled. Behold, I am sure of the fulfilling of this promise. And his name shall be called after me; and it shall be after the name of his father. And he shall be like unto me; for the things which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring forth my people unto salvation.^p

The reader will observe that this ancient prophecy is fulfilled in the person of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who, both in his name, his character and his work, meets completely the terms of the prophecy.^q

One other matter in connection with the Patriarch Joseph I would mention, insignificant perhaps in comparison of the greater things we have been considering, yet really important for that it is made up of those details so apt to be overlooked by an imposter who would attempt to palm off upon the world, as a revelation, such a work as the Book of Mormon.

It will be remembered that after Lehi's colony had journeyed some days in the wilderness, the prophet-leader sent

^pII. Nephi iii: 3-15.

I am not unmindful of the fact that the objector, with some show of reason, could say that it would be an easy matter for an imposter to set down such a prophecy as this—one that would coalesce with the facts of his own life and claim it as a fulfillment of prophecy, and hence an evidence of his calling. The shallowness of such a position is, of course, apparent, but it is not in this way that I refer to the circumstance, but to call attention to the fact that it is in harmony with this Josephic idea of the Book of Mormon, and I am not at all relying upon it in my argument as being a fulfillment of prophecy.

^qCompare I. Nephi i: 1-2. Mosiah i: 1-4. Mormon ix: 32-33.

his sons back to Jerusalem to obtain a copy of the Hebrew scriptures, and the genealogies of his fathers. This copy of the scriptures and genealogies the sons of Lehi obtained from one Laban, a man evidently of some considerable influence in Jerusalem. This record was written in Egyptian characters. And now to the point where these facts touch the Josephic idea of the Book of Mormon.

Joseph, it must be remembered, attained the position of a prince in Egypt, when that nation was doubtless the first political power of the world, and in the kingdom was made second only to the Pharaoh himself, so that he was a man of very high dignity, a fact not likely to be forgotten by his posterity. He unquestionably was deeply learned in all things Egyptian, including the written language, most likely that form of it called the hieratic,—which, as well as the old hieroglyphics, was used in the Egyptian sacerdotal style of writing. I think I am justified in the conclusion that Joseph was learned in this writing since he took to wife Asenath, daughter of the high priest of Heliopolis, or On, and thus became closely associated with, if not actually identified with, the priestly caste of Egypt. The deeply religious character of the Patriarch and of his race would also naturally interest him in the religious lore of so profoundly a religious country as Egypt. Is it not possible that these facts would be an incentive to his posterity to keep alive among them this Egyptian learning of their great ancestor?

To Joseph, be it remembered, was given the birthright in Israel, through Ephraim. Laban, of whom the sons of Lehi obtained the Egyptian records, was a descendant of Joseph,^s doubtless in line of the elder sons since he kept the

^s“And thus my father, Lehi, did discover the genealogy of his fathers; and Laban also was a descendant of Joseph, wherefore he and his fathers had kept the records.” I. Nephi v: 16.

genealogies and also this Egyptian copy of the holy writings.

Lehi was an Egyptian scholar^t and was enabled to read this version of the Hebrew scriptures and his genealogy recorded in Egyptian characters.

This Egyptian record became the foundation of Nephite sacred literature, that is, for the most part, their sacred records were engraven in Egyptian characters, modified somewhat by them and called the "reformed Egyptian."^u

Let us consider these facts in condensed and succinct form:—

(1) Joseph, son of Jacob, he becomes a prince in Egypt, marries a daughter of the prince On, doubtless becomes learned in Egyptian lore.

(2) Undoubtedly these facts would prove an incentive to his posterity to perpetuate among them the Egyptian learning of their great ancestor.

(3) To Joseph is given the birthright in Israel through his younger son, Ephraim.

(4) Laban, of whom the sons of Lehi obtained the Egyptian copy of the Hebrew scriptures and genealogies was a descendant of Joseph, doubtless in the line of the elder sons since he kept the genealogies and the Egyptian copy of the holy writings.

(5) Lehi is an Egyptian scholar and is able to read this version of the Hebrew scriptures.

(6) This Egyptian copy of the Hebrew scriptures becomes the foundation of the Nephite literature.

Thus we have a series of facts that coalesce remarkably with the claims made for the Nephite record, that it was written in "reformed," that is, changed, Egyptian character,

^tI. Nephi i:2. Mosiah i:4.

^uMormon ix:32, 33.

yet these circumstances are only mentioned in an obscure, incidental way. They would never be worked out by an imposter; and were never referred to by Joseph Smith or any of his immediate associates as being valuable evidences in support of the claims of the book. I cannot help thinking, however, that they are so, and for that reason call attention to them here.

II.

The Prophecies of Isaiah on the Coming Forth of the Book of Mormon.

In the Book of Isaiah's prophecy is found the following remarkable prediction:

Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. For the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: and the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding? Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be a

forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. For the terrible one is brought to naught, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off: that make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of naught. Therefore thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.^v

In the Book of Mormon we have a Nephite version of this prophecy taken from the writings of Isaiah which, it will be remembered, were included in those scriptures which Lehi's colony brought from Jerusalem. The first Nephi applies this prophecy to the record of his own people, the Book of Mormon, and the circumstance attendant upon its coming forth in the last days; all of which will be found in the 27th chapter of second Nephi. In the Nephite version of the prophecy it is made clear that the reasons for keeping the original book from the world is the fact that a portion of it was sealed. The opening verses of the 27th chapter of II Nephi shift the scene of this prophecy to the land inhabited by the Nephites, that is, to America, and describes the spiritual darkness both in that land and in all the nations of the earth, after which the record says:

And it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall bring forth unto you the words of a book, and they shall be the words of

^vIsaiah xxix: 9-24.

them which have slumbered. And behold the book shall be sealed: and in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the end thereof. Wherefore, because of the things which are sealed up, the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore the book shall be kept from them. But the book shall be delivered unto a man, and he shall deliver the words of the book, which are the words of those who have slumbered in the dust; and he shall deliver these words unto another; but the words which are sealed he shall not deliver, neither shall he deliver the book. For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed shall be kept in the book until the own due time of the Lord, that they may come forth; for behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof. And the day cometh that the words of the book which are sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ: and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men, and which ever will be, even unto the end of the earth.^w

Then follows the declaration that there shall be Three Special Witnesses to behold the book by the power of God, and a Few other Witnesses that shall view it according to the will of God. Following the description of the coming forth of this book is a description also of the spiritual awakening among men in much the same order and phraseology as the latter part of Isaiah's prophecy.

Of course this prophecy was fulfilled in the several events we have already noted which resulted in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the accompanying testimony of the Witnesses thereof.* That is to say, it was fulfilled in the Nephite record being brought forth, after so many ages, and becoming, to those who receive it, as the

^wII. Nephi xxvii:6-11.

*See Vol. II, chapters iv and v.

words of those who have slumbered—the speech out of the ground—the familiar voice from the dust; by Joseph Smith and Martin Harris delivering the transcript of characters from the Nephite record to Dr. Samuel Mitchell and Professor Anthon, “the words of the book that was sealed” were delivered by men to those that were learned, saying, read this, I pray you; by the answer of these learned men to the effect—mockingly, on incidentally learning that the book was sealed—that they could not read a sealed book; by the book being delivered to the one that was not learned, Joseph Smith, who marveled that one not learned should be required to translate the book; by the Lord disdainng those who draw near to him with their mouths, and with their lips honored him, while their hearts were far removed from him, and their fear toward him was taught by the precepts of men; by the Lord proceeding to do a marvelous work and a wonder, by which the wisdom of the world’s wise men became as naught; by exalting the wisdom of God above the wisdom of men; by making the deaf to hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind to see out of obscurity; by increasing the joy of the meek in the Lord, and making the poor among men to rejoice in the Holy One of Israel; by expressing his scorn for those who make a man an offender for a word—(does he have in mind those who would reject the Book of Mormon because of the imperfections of its language?); by declaring the speedy redemption of the House of Israel—by the return of the favor of the Lord to Jacob, whose face shall no more wax pale; by making those who erred in spirit come to understanding, and they that murmured to learning doctrine—all of which events have followed or are in process of developing as a sequence to the coming forth of this American volume of scripture, the record of Joseph, by which the world is being enlightened up-

on the enlarged glory of Israel, both passed and that which is yet to be.

The great difficulty concerning this prophecy being made to apply to the Nephite record and its coming forth will be in the transference of its scenes from Palestine to America. The opening verse of the chapter begins with a reference to Jerusalem:

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow.^y

“Ariel, the city where David dwelt,” too plainly designates Jerusalem to admit of any doubt; and it would seem that all that immediately follows would be related to David’s city, Jerusalem, that is, the seige—the destruction—the humiliation—the speaking low out of the dust—the terrible ones that shall become as chaff—and the destruction that shall come upon those nations that fight against “Ariel”—all this, I say, at first glance seems to relate to Jerusalem, or “Ariel,” and makes the transference of the remaining prophetic parts of the chapter to America and the coming forth of the Nephite record somewhat difficult. Still, in the second verse of the chapter there is a sudden transition from “Ariel” to another place that shall be unto the Lord “as” Ariel; and on this point the late Orson Pratt was wont to say:

The prophet [Isaiah] predicts, first, the distress that should come upon Ariel, and, secondly, predicts another event that should be unto the Lord “as Ariel.” This last event is expressed in these words, “And it shall be unto me AS Ariel.” How was it with Ariel? Her people was to be distressed and afflicted with “heaviness and sorrow.” How was it to be with the

^yIsaiah xxix: 1-2.

people or nations who should be "as Ariel," is clearly portrayed in the 3rd and 4th verses: "And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee; and thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." Now, we ask, What nation upon the earth has been visited with a distress resembling that of Ariel or Jerusalem? We answer that the Book of Mormon informs us that the nation of Nephites who were a remnant of Joseph inhabited ancient America, were brought down to the ground by their enemies. Hundreds of thousands were slaughtered in their terrible wars. Their distress truly may be said to be "as Ariel." Ariel was sorely distressed from time to time, and forts and other fortifications raised against her—similar judgments happened to the remnant of Joseph. Isaiah does not say that Ariel shall speak out of the ground, but he clearly shows that the nation which should be distressed "as Ariel," after being brought down, should speak out of the ground. The words of the prophets of Jerusalem or Ariel, never spoke from the ground, their speech was never "low out of the dust." But the words of the prophets among the remnant of Joseph have spoken from the ground, and their written "speech" has whispered out of the dust.^z

To this also may be added the further reflection that the coming forth of the Nephite record, the circumstances attendant upon that event, the results of enlarged knowledge concerning doctrine and the enlightenment of the world concerning Israel in America, and the future glory that will attend upon the restoration of that ancient people—all this blends with the remaining prophecies of Isaiah's 29th chapter, and of which, nowhere else, have we any account of their fulfillment. We must, therefore, say either that these remarkable prophecies of Isaiah have not yet been fulfilled, or that they are fulfilled in connection with the experiences

^zOrson Pratt's Works, p. 11.

of the Nephites in America, and the coming forth of their abridged scriptures, the Book of Mormon.

III.

The Prophecy of Messiah in Relation to the "Other Sheep" than Those in Palestine that Must Hear His Voice.

In St. John's gospel we have the following statement and prophecy from the lips of Messiah himself:

I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.^a

The usual explanation of the prophetic part of this passage is that Jesus here makes reference to the Gentiles as being the other sheep. One great commentary says:

He means the perishing gentiles already his "sheep" in the love of his heart and the purpose of his grace to "bring them" in due time.

Then again the phrase "they shall hear my voice" is explained to mean:

This is not the language of mere foresight that they [the Gentiles] would believe, but the expression of a purpose to draw them to himself by an inward and efficacious call, which would infallibly issue in their spontaneous accession to him.^b

^aSt. John x: 14-16.

^bCommentary, Critical and Explanatory of the Old and New Testaments, by Rev. Jamieson, Fausett and Brown, on St. John, ch. x. See also Eidersheim's Life of Jesus, Vol. II., p. 192, where substantially the same view is held.

Against this exposition, however, there stands out the fact that when Jesus was importuned by his apostles to heed the prayers of the Cananitish woman, in the coasts of Tyre, he said to them: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel."^c Therefore, when he says in John, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one fold and one shepherd," he certainly had reference to some branch of the House of Israel and not to the Gentiles. When the Messiah appeared among the Nephites who, it will be remembered, were a branch of the House of Israel, and a very great branch, too, as we have seen since they are descendants of Joseph,—Messiah declared that it was in that visit to the Nephites that the terms of his New Testament prophecy were fulfilled. The occasion of his making known this truth to the Nephites was when he chose the Twelve Disciples in the western world, and gave them their commission. The passage follows:

And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he said unto those twelve whom he had chosen, ye are my disciples; and ye are a light unto this people, who are a remnant of the house of Joseph. And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; and the Father hath given it unto you. And not at any time hath the Father given me commandment that I should tell it unto your brethren at Jerusalem; neither at any time hath the Father given me commandment, that I should tell unto them concerning the other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land. This much did the Father command me, that I should tell unto them, that other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. And now because of stiffneckedness and unbelief, they understood not my word: therefore I was commanded

^cMatt. xv: 24.

to say no more of the Father concerning this thing unto them. But, verily, I say unto you, that the Father hath commanded me, and I tell it unto you, that ye were separated from among them because of their iniquity; therefore it is because of their iniquity, that they know not of you. And verily, I say unto you again, that the other tribes hath the Father separated from them; and it is because of their [the Jews'] iniquity, that they knew not of them. And verily, I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said, other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.^d

In view of the fact already pointed out that Jesus could not have had reference to the Gentiles in this prophecy concerning "other sheep," I may say of this prophecy as I did of those in the 29th chapter of Isaiah, that either we must say that we have no knowledge of the fulfillment of this very remarkable New Testament prediction, or else we must say that it had its fulfillment as the Book of Mormon teaches, in the advent and ministry of Jesus to the branch of the House of Israel in America.

I have pursued the matter of evidence and argument from the Jewish scriptures to the truth of the Book of Mormon as far as it was my original purpose to do so, referring those who care to enter more minutely into this branch of the subject to the treatment of other Elders who have devoted their works to it.^e

^dIII. Nephi xv: 11-21.

^eFor reference to such works see footnote, pp. 93-94.