



Type: Magazine Article

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## "The Fifth Gospel"

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Source: *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, Vol. 67, No. 5 (2 Feb. 1905),  
pp. 75-78

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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**Abstract:** Concludes addressing the claims against 3 Nephi of “a sectarian minister of high standing” by discussing the Savior’s teachings of John 10:16 on “other sheep” and how that teaching is fulfilled by His ministry to the Nephites and the lost tribes. He states that “the truths of the fifth or Nephite gospel are as precious and important as are those of the other four gospels.”

## "THE FIFTH GOSPEL."

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BY ELDER B. H. ROBERTS.

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*(Concluded from page 55.)*

THERE is a singular passage of Scripture in John, the 10th chapter and 16th verse, which rather puzzles expounders of the Scripture.

"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."

Ask the Christian ministers to explain this passage and they always answer that Jesus had in mind the Gentiles. If so, how do you harmonize this fact, which I now point out to you, with that statement, namely: Jesus was once passing up a crowded street and a woman came running to Him. She was a woman of Canaan, of a race upon whom the displeasure of God had fallen in very ancient times. Perhaps their spirits warranted just the conditions that they came into this world to meet. She came to Jesus asking that He would heal her child, but He heeded her not. Her importuning attracted unpleasant attention, and so the Apostles said to Him, "Master, send her away; for she troubleth us." He said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Therefore, when He said, "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," He had reference to some branch of the house of Israel, and not to the Gentiles; for as He explains, I think in this fifth gospel, the Gentiles should receive the gospel through the ministrations of the Holy Spirit in His servants, and not by His personal ministry to them. His personal ministry was confined to the house of Israel. In this fifth gospel we learn that Jesus told the Nephites that they were the people He had in mind when He uttered this singular Scripture we are considering; but His disciples in Judea understood Him not; and because of stiffneckedness and unbelief Jesus was commanded of the Father to say no more to them upon the subject. Do not these facts throw some light upon our knowledge of Christian truth?

Moreover, in this same connection, Jesus informed these Nephites that not only would He minister to them, but as soon as He was through with His ministrations to them, behold, He would go to the lost tribes of the house of Israel and minister to them also. He spoke as follows:

"And verily, verily, I say unto you, that I have other sheep, which are not of this land; neither of the land of Jerusalem; neither in any part of that land round about, whither I have been to minister. For they of whom I speak are they who have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them. But I have received a commandment of the Father, that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold, and one shepherd; therefore I go to show myself unto them. And I command you that ye shall write these sayings, after I am gone, that if it so be that my people at Jerusalem, they who have seen me, and been with me in my ministry, do not ask the Father in my name, that they may receive a knowledge of you by the Holy Ghost, and also of the other tribes whom they know not

of, that these sayings which ye shall write, shall be kept, and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth, because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer. And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel."

Again, in His discourse on this occasion Jesus takes up the matter of the Gentiles, who in time should come to this land and take possession of it, for the falling away of the Nephites was predicted, and the fact of the coming of the Gentile races to this land was made known to the Nephite people. The Lord Jesus took occasion to say that the Gentiles should be greatly blessed upon this land, and should be fortified against all other nations; and if they would not reject the Gospel that should be brought forth amongst them, great would be the blessings of the Lord upon the Gentiles; that they should be numbered with the house of Israel, and should assist in building up the New Jerusalem upon this continent. I quote these several important passages:

"And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witnesses unto them, of me and of the Father, . . . . But if the Gentiles will repent, and return unto me, saith the Lord, behold they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel; . . . . And behold, the people [descendants of the Nephites addressed] will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the power of heaven shall be in the midst of this people, yea, even I will be in the midst of you. Behold, I am he of whom Moses spake, saying, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet, and shall not repent and come unto my beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel; and I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard. But if they will repent, and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and 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 also will be in the midst."

All this is contained in the fifth gospel. It contains, you will see, these promises of deep and mighty blessings to the Gentile races, together with the additional races, a promise that they might become as fathers and mothers to the house of Israel, and great should be the reward and blessings, and they should be completely identified with the Israel of God upon this land, and join in building up Zion—that Zion from which Isaiah declared the law should

go forth in the last days, while the word of the Lord should go forth from Jerusalem; indicating the two capitals on the earth, one in the eastern and one in the western hemisphere. But if, on the other hand, the Gentiles should reject the Gospel of Christ and no longer honor the God of this land, which is Jesus Christ, then the hand of God would be upon them, and that in judgment; and that, proud, great and strong as they are, yet should they be humbled.

So that this fifth gospel deals not only with the past, but it deals with the present and with the future, and sounds this note of warning to the Gentile nations upon the promised land of America. Notwithstanding the strength and pride and power of these nations in these days of their glory, the fifth gospel warns them that they hold their proud stations upon the condition of their faithfulness to God and their receiving the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is worthy of God to reveal the conditions upon which the nations of the western world may hold their stations among the nations of the earth; and it is a matter worthy the consideration of these nations to give heed to such a warning. Let no nation think itself beyond the power of God; for it is not. Imperial Rome was as confident of her ability to perpetuate her power as any nation of the western world is to-day; and he who would have dared to suggest that Rome could be humbled, and pass away as a dream of the night, would doubtless have been thought wanting in patriotism; yet Rome was humbled. The half naked hordes from the woods and plains of Germany reveled in the palaces of the Cæsars. Romans in their pride were wont to say of the Coliseum in which Christians have suffered martyrdom at the hands of brute men and brute beasts, merely to grace a Roman holiday: "While stands the Coliseum Rome stands, when falls the Coliseum Rome falls; when Rome, the world!" The Coliseum stands in ruins. Rome is only a name held in memory by history. But the world fell not when Rome fell; and as it has been in the past, so, too, may it be in the future, if God's conditions are not complied with, then as a potsherd will He break that nation that rises in proud rebellion against Him. This is God's earth. It is His by right of proprietorship; and by various means He and not man is guiding its destinies. Those who hold power and authority in it hold it in trust from Him, and only in trust; and the nation that is unfaithful to that trust must account to God for it. Hence I conclude that this warning that comes from the fifth gospel is important; it announces a mighty, solemn truth, an awful warning, to which ministers of any faith, and the nations addressed, will do well to take heed.

Now, a word in conclusion about the gold test, that our friend proposes to apply to the fifth gospel. I think the gentleman puts that forth for a special reason, and that in doing so he exhibits a weakness on his part. He says: "The question is, not where do men say they get it, but, is it gold." Well, it is important to know where men got it, and we can establish that so far beyond all question, and can sustain it by testimony that has not only not been impeached, but is unimpeachable. The question: "Where do men say they got it," is important. The "how" and the "where" men got it is a part of the evidence of its truth, which the gentleman dodges by saying that it does not matter where the fifth gospel came from. Having just hinted at the

importance of this matter of where and how it came, I will set all that aside and declare my willingness as one of the believers in the Book of Mormon to see it submitted—as perforce it must be—to the “assay test.” Is it gold? Are these important truths we have been considering, wherein the the welfare of half the world is concerned, gold or dross? Is the light which it throws upon the word of God contained in the four gospels, of importance? Is the fact that Jesus visited this western world and announced the saving power of His Gospel in such a manner that millions would come to the knowledge of salvation a golden truth? Is the solemn warning to the Gentile nations inhabiting the western world worth while considering? May it not be golden, especially if heeded? I shall leave you to answer that. But I want to suggest an improvement on the gentleman’s simile—this “assay test.” Although he praises it so highly himself in the synopsis he gave to the papers of his discourse, I think it could be improved. The question is not so much as to whether in the four gospels or in the fifth, all is gold, but is there gold in them. I do not think the four gospels are without alloy. In other words, I do not think the four gospels are perfect. I believe there are imperfections in them, in forms of expression and in the fact that they do not convey all that Jesus both taught and did; at best they are fragmentary. St. John informs us in his gospel that if all the things that Jesus had done and taught were written the world itself would hardly contain the books. We have not the full reports of Messiah’s discourses. The full and absolute pure word of God just as it fell from the lips of the Savior is not in the four gospels. For the most part we have but the recollections of the evangelists of what Jesus said and did. Only those who have read the Greek—and unfortunately they are very few—may read even the four gospels in the language in which the apostles wrote them. But we have translations of these records, and each time they are translated a dilution takes place: The force and power of what is said becomes less in the translation, as all know who are acquainted with translations as compared with the original language of the speaker or writer. So with the book of Nephi. That comes to us in an abridged form. It is not the original book of Nephi; it is Mormon’s abridgment of that book. He has condensed it, and in doing so has doubtless given us less perfect accounts of Christ’s mission to the Nephites. That is to say, we have not all the surrounding circumstances or all the utterances of the Savior, or of the men it represents as speaking. Then we have not Mormon’s original abridgment of Nephi’s book—the real fifth gospel; but the Prophet Joseph’s translation of Mormon’s abridgment, and that, it is admitted, in his imperfect English. So that the whole five gospels are fragmentary and tainted with imperfections and limitations as all things are that pass through human hands; but containing nevertheless God’s precious truths; and some of these are found in the fifth gospel as well as in the four Hebrew gospels; and to me the truths of the fifth or Nephite gospel are as precious and important as are those of the other four gospels.

THE END.

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THOUGH we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.