



Type: Magazine Article

A Sacred History: External Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon, Chapter V, Continued

Author(s): Thomas A. Shreeve

Source: *Juvenile Instructor*, Vol. 22, No. 10 (15 May 1887), pp. 157–158

Published by: George Q. Cannon & Sons

Abstract: Uses historical, linguistic, and archaeological evidence to prove the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Basing his facts on research done by noted linguists and archaeologists of the time, the author writes concerning the god Quetzalcoatl, religious customs and ruins of advanced civilizations, comparisons between the Hebrew and Mayan languages, and the Egyptian hieroglyphic writings. Shreeve also tells of similarities in biblical beliefs between early people of both the western and eastern hemispheres and explains why Joseph Smith was incapable of writing the Book of Mormon without divine aid.

he so wronged. So let it be, "curses, like chickens, come home to roost."

Shortly after first meeting "ye editor" he invited me to accompany him to Beaver City. He had been informed that a Gentile school teacher was needed at the government post there, and as I was somewhat experienced in the business of teaching, the opportunity, he thought, was not to be slighted. He suggested also that I might assist him on the paper he purposed to publish, and thus increase my revenues. I remained undecided, however, until our arrival in Ogden City. My new friends and apparently everybody else on our train had so much to say on the "Mormon" question, and about the "Mormon" people, that I gladly held my peace and asked few questions lest my ignorance might be made too conspicuous. At the risk of being considered a "Mormon" sympathizer, I told no tales of blood-curdling horror respecting them, though many of my fellow-passengers seemed to vie with each other in relating the most terrible tales of "Mormon" depravity and worse than bestial brutality. One related how a certain reverend had escaped miraculously from the interior settlements, a Supreme power alone preserving him from lurking "Mormon" assassins.

Another told of many murders which he claimed had been committed by the express orders, or tolerance of Brigham Young, and I was confidentially informed that my life would pay the forfeit if I attempted to traverse Utah Territory as a Gentile school teacher seeking a situation. These are but samples of the lying tales which passed current on the train which rapidly bore me towards the land of the Saints, or sinners as I then regarded them.

(To be Continued.)

A SACRED HISTORY.

External Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon.

BY THOMAS A. SHREEVE.

Chapter V. (Continued from page 143.)

BUT probably the most startling similarity of all exists between the Mosaic account of the flood and of the building of the tower, and the Toltec legend of the flood as recited by the native historian Ixtilxochitl:

"It is found in the histories of the Toltecs that this age and first world, as they call it, lasted 21716 years; that men were destroyed by tremendous rains and lightning from the sky, and even all the land, without the exception of anything, and the highest mountains, were covered up and submerged in water fifteen cubits (*caxtolmolatli*); and here they added other fables of how men came to multiply from the few who escaped from this destruction in a *toplipetlocali*; that this word nearly signifies a close chest; and how, after men had multiplied, they erected a very high *zacualli*, which is to-day a tower of great height, in order to take refuge in it should the second world (age) be destroyed. Presently their languages were confused, and, not being able to understand each other, they went to different parts of the earth."

To silence any objection which may be raised to the authenticity of Ixtilxochitl's account, I quote these words from Ignatius Donnelly on this point:

"It will of course be said that this account, in those particulars where it agrees with the Bible, was derived from the teachings of the Spanish priests; but it must be remembered

that Ixtilxochitl was an Indian, a native of Tezcuco, a son of the queen, and that his *Relaciones* were drawn from the archives of his family and the ancient writings of his nation; he had no motive to falsify documents that were probably in the hands of hundreds at that time."

In Vol. V. Bancroft's *native races*, we find:

"Signenza and sister Agnes De La Cruz conjectured that the Americans were descended from Naphruhim, the son of Mizraim and grandson of Ham, whose descendants left Egypt for America shortly after the confusion of tongues. Pineda thinks the same. Clavigero considers it proven by the native flood-myths and traditions of foreign origin that the Americans are descendants of Noah. He quotes the tradition of Votan, who is declared to have been closely connected with the Babel-builders, the originator of that enterprise being his uncle."

Lord Kingsborough says:

"The Peruvians were acquainted with the deluge and believed that the rainbow was a sign that the earth would not again be destroyed by water. This is plain, from the speech of Manco Copac, the reputed founder of the Peruvian Empire, addressed to his companions on beholding the rainbow rising from a hill; which is thus recorded by Balboa in the ninth chapter of the third part of his 'Miscellanea Entarctica.' They traveled on until a mountain, at present named Guanacauri, presented itself to their view, when on a certain morning, they beheld the rainbow rising above the mountain, with one extremity resting upon it, when Manco Copac exclaimed to his companions, 'This is a propitious sign that the earth will not again be destroyed by water.' * * * Proof having been afforded in the passage quoted from the history of Balboa, that the Peruvians were acquainted with the history of the rainbow, as given in the ninth chapter of Genesis. It may be interesting to add, that according to the account of an anonymous writer, they believed the rainbow was not only a passive sign that the earth would not be destroyed by a second deluge, but an active instrument to prevent the recurrence of such a catastrophe: the latter curious notion proceeded upon the assumption that as the water of the sea (which, like the Jews, they believed to encircle the whole earth,) would have a tendency to rise after excessive falls of rain, so the pressure of the extremities of the rainbow upon its surface would prevent its exceeding its proper level.'"

Bancroft refers to Kingsborough's views: and then says:

"Many of these flood-myths are supplemented with an account of an attempt to provide against a second deluge, by building a tower of refuge, resembling more or less closely the Biblical legend of the tower of Babel. Thus a Chuluitec relates that all the giants who inhabited the country, save seven, were destroyed by a great flood, and adds that when the waters were assuaged, one of these seven began to build an artificial mountain. But the anger of the gods was aroused, and they slew many of the builders, so the work was stopped. In like manner, in the Papago legend to which I have referred, Montezuma, after he and the coyote had been saved from the flood, so incensed the Great Spirit by his ingratitude and presumption, that an insect was sent flying to the East to bring the Spaniards, who, when they came, utterly destroyed Montezuma. After the deluge spoken of in the lake Taboo Myth, the few who escaped built up a great tower, the strong making the weak do the work. This, it is distinctly stated, they did that they might have a place of refuge in case of another flood. But the Great Spirit was filled with anger at their presumption, and amidst thunderings and lightnings, and showers of molten metal, he seized the oppressors and cast them into a cavern.

"These myths have led many writers to believe that the Americans had a knowledge of the tower of Babel, while some think that they are the direct descendants of certain of the builders of that tower, who, after the confusion of tongues, wandered over the earth until they reached America."

Quoting one of the legends, Bancroft says:

"Votan, another mysterious personage, closely resembling Quetzalcoatl in many points, was the supposed founder of the Maya civilization. He is said to have been a descendant of Noah and to have assisted at the building of the tower of

Babel. After the confusion of tongues he led a portion of the dispersed people to America. There he established the kingdom of Xibalba and built the city of Palenque."

Two picture histories of the Aztecs exist in the Boturini collection. One of these sketches shows a land bearing a tower of comparatively prodigious size and height. Leaving this land by a waste of water, is a man in a little boat. These things are what are seen in but one section of the picture—the other parts I do not attempt to explain. But this particular section of the picture, it seems to me, can have reference to no other thing than to the leaving of the tower by Jared, his brother, and their friends.

This mighty aggregation of proofs leaves no room for question that the ancient inhabitants of this land knew by tradition of the flood, and of the building of the tower. They knew of the confusion of tongues and of the dispersion which took place after the curse of God came upon the builders for their idolatry; and they knew that the founder of an ancient nation in this hemisphere came directly from that tower. The manner in which the races found here by the modern discoverers of America had gained a knowledge of the Jaredites is very clear: The Jaredites left their cities and undoubtedly many of their records and inscriptions when they fled northward, to meet their destruction around the hill Cumorah. Subsequent races who came into possession of these remains of civilization, would soon grow to incorporate them in their own legendary history. Besides all this, we know that Coriantumr (who was the last of the Jaredites, unless we except Ether) was found by the people of Zarahemla; and he dwelt with them for the space of nine moons. During this time he must have related to them all that he knew of the origin of his unfortunate people. And further than this, in the first chapter of the book of Omni, 20th, 21st and 22nd verses, we find:

"And it came to pass in the days of Mosiah, there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did interpret the engravings, by the gift and power of God.

"And they gave an account of one Coriantumr, and the slain of his people. * * *

"It also spake a few words concerning his fathers. And his first parents came out from the tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people; and the severity of the Lord fell upon them according to His judgments, which are just; and their bones lay scattered in the land northward."

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

BY THE EDITOR.

OCCASIONALLY a man is found who, though an enemy to the Latter-day Saints, will acknowledge the truth concerning them.

An illustration of this is given in the report of a recent lecture by a minister by the name of M. T. Lamb, which is published in a Baltimore paper. He estimates that nearly two millions of dollars have been spent in Utah by four sects in twenty years in efforts to convert the "Mormons." Probably he does not make too high an estimate. I am of the opinion that a far larger amount has been spent for this purpose—an amount so large that, in view of the small results which have been accomplished, it would, if it were told, look like money wasted.

Mr. Lamb acknowledges that but few converts have been secured, and these were only infidels and apostates. "Devout

Mormons" are, he admits, beyond the reach of sectarian missionaries. The class upon which he and his fellow missionaries had worked, he said, was the young people whom education had made infidels. He asserted that one-third of our children are infidels.

He gives our people credit for believing the Bible. He says they believe every line of it, and the prophet Joseph's revelations in addition; and then, he says, they claim to have direct testimony from God of the truth of "Mormonism." These are the reasons which he assigns for their being beyond the reach of such ministers as he.

Is it any wonder? If our people believe all the Bible, they believe, to begin with, more than all the sectarian ministers, and then what have these ministers to teach? Having the Bible, the Book of Mormon and the book of Doctrine and Covenants, and then a direct testimony from God as well, it is no wonder the Saints are beyond the reach of men who have such a modicum of truth as Mr. Lamb. All that he and his fellows know is completely circumscribed and enveloped by the knowledge of God and godliness which the Latter-day Saints possess.

It is a frank admission, however, to make, that with all their efforts and the spending of so much money, they have only been able to convert a few apostates and infidels. This is as it should be. It is such a result as might be expected from labors of this kind among a people who make the professions we do.

But what about the large number of infidels—one-third—which he is reported as saying there are among our children? My opportunities of obtaining personal knowledge upon this point have not been so good of late; but I cannot accept his testimony as true. That there may be much indifference, and in some cases unbelief, may, perhaps, be true. Information, however, which we get from various directions in the mountains, is to the effect that there is uncommon interest manifested by the young people in the religious meetings which are held. Persecution is having a more marked effect upon the young than the old. The young are more readily impressed by the wrongs and outrages which they witness and hear about. Indifference and carelessness in religious matters are disappearing, and interest and devotion appear to be taking their place. This is the information we receive, and I do not question its correctness.

There is but little comfort, then, to be obtained by Mr. Lamb and his fellow-missionaries from the prospects before them. Infidels and apostates, whether young or old, are not very desirable acquisitions even to sectarian churches—at least, he does not seem to be proud of them. They are the refuse of our society; and while it would be more pleasing to have them repent and turn from evil, yet if they will not, we are relieved when they are separated from us.

It is this Mr. Lamb who has a scheme afoot that he is trying to persuade the people in the East to join him in, for the purpose of upsetting our religion. He has written and published a book in which he attacks the Book of Mormon. He proposes to his eastern sympathizers that they pay him for the entire edition of this work and he will distribute it free to our people. This, he says, will destroy all faith in the Book of Mormon.

Self-interest and self-conceit are admirably blended in this scheme. The simpletons who pay their money contribute to his self-interest, and by their confidence in his plan gratify his self-conceit.