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

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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.

discontents began to manifest themselves and create trouble.

Henry himself was very much given to the spending of money and in order to meet his wants Wolsey taxed the people heavily, which did not tend to increase their love for him, and many were anxiously looking for his downfall.

This event soon occurred. Henry, who after eighteen years of wedded life with his deceased brother's widow, Catherine, desired a divorce so that he might marry Anne Boleyn with whom he had become enamored. And as the church at that time had the control of such matters Wolsey was entrusted with his master's case and urged to fulfill his desires. But not fully approving of the matter, the pope's legate did not enter with his whole heart into the scheme, the result of which was that the pope refused to accede to the wishes of Henry. This so enraged the king that he dismissed his minister and turned him away from his court. This act is the one which our artist has represented in the accompanying engraving.

Being prosecuted for having acted as the pope's legate in England, which a statute forbade any Englishman to do, Wolsey threw himself upon the mercy of the king, gave up his immense wealth and went into retirement. But even then he was not allowed to rest. He was charged with treason and while being conveyed to London for trial became ill and died at the monastery of Leicester, in November, 1530.

On his death-bed he realized the folly of his life in seeking for worldly honor and glory and mournfully uttered his last words: "If I had served God as diligently as I have served the king, He would not have given me over in my gray hairs."

A SACRED HISTORY.

External Evidences of the Truth of the Book of Mormon.

BY THOMAS A. SHREEVE.

Chapter XI.

A COMPARISON of the natural history of the Book of Mormon with the proved ancient natural history of this land furnishes an interesting study.

In many cases I am not able at present to furnish as complete identification as I would like, but I furnish several citations from standard authors, so that as the subject develops further the young people who are interested in this matter may have some ground-work upon which to base a better research than I have been able to make. On one or two points I might be able to give further information than I shall here attempt, but I regret to say that the notes which I had on the subject have been mislaid, and I do not choose to trust to my memory in a matter of such importance.

And it came to pass that we did find upon the land of promise, as we journeyed in the wilderness, that there were beasts in the forests of every kind, both the cow and the ox, and the ass and the horse, and the goat and the wild goat, and all manner of wild animals, which were for the use of man. (*I. Nephi, etc., 25.*)

Having all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kind of animals which were useful for the food of man.

And they also had horses and asses, and there were elephants and curelons and cumoms; all of which were useful

unto man, and more especially the elephants, and curelons, and cumoms. (*Ether ix. 18, 19.*)

HORSES.

The opponents of this work who have chosen to dispute the natural history of the Book of Mormon have chiefly directed their attention to the horse. Many of them have claimed, with a persistency which might have been better directed—especially since it was founded on a falsehood clearly apparent—that horses were unknown to the ancient inhabitants of this continent, being brought here by the Spanish invaders when they came to conquer the native races.

I shall therefore supply a few proofs upon this point:

In Vol. I. of the Encyclopædia Britannica, under the head of America, and sub-head of Zoology, appears this assertion:

One remarkable feature is the abundance of horses, which is such that North America may be regarded as the land of horses during the pliocene and post-pliocene periods.

Ignatius Donnelly, in Atlantis, declares that recent discoveries in the fossil beds of the bad lands of Nebraska prove that the horse originated in America. "Professor Marsh, of Yale College, has identified the several preceding forms from which the horse was developed, rising, in the course of ages, from a creature not larger than a fox, until, by successive steps, it developed into the true horse."

In June, 1881, a group of the ruined cities of Yucatan, theretofore almost entirely unknown, was visited by the United States Consul, Mr. Louis H. Ayme, his wife and Mr. Porter C. Bliss, assistant editor of Johnson's Cyclopædia. Of this visit Ober says:

Mr. Ayme is an enthusiastic explorer who is indefatigable in his search after objects of interest to the antiquarians of America. Owing to his exertions there was brought to light an object that had escaped the attention of all previous explorers. It was a rude painting of a man mounted on horseback. This important discovery was made by Mr. Ayme on June 16, 1881. * * * At a later period Mr. Ayme again visited Kabah (the particular city where he discovered the ancient drawing) this time in company with the distinguished archaeologist M. Desiree Charuay, who immediately pronounced it a wonderful discovery, and praised his companion highly.

Charuay declared that this figure was intended to represent a Spanish horseman, and therefore must have been a piece of modern architecture; but Dr. Le Plongeon, whose view is certainly entitled to as much weight, asserts that the picture "is a portrait of an ancient worthy named Can," who flourished very many centuries ago. In fact the view of Dr. Le Plongeon is probably the one which should be unhesitatingly accepted, unless further positive evidence can be adduced to the contrary; since so careful an observer and writer as Ober says:

Readers of the North American Review for the past few years cannot fail to have noticed that M. Charuay started on his explorations in Central America with preconceived notions as to the age and builders of these cities; and he has ingeniously twisted every discovery into a proof in favor of his pet theory; which unfortunate manner of working vitiates all the labor heretofore done.

THE ELEPHANT AND ITS KINDRED.

In Atlantis, Donnelly says upon the subject of the elephant:

We find in America numerous representations of the elephant. We are forced to one of two conclusions: either the monuments date back to the time of the mammoth in North America, or these people held intercourse at some time in the past with races who possessed the elephant, and from whom they obtained pictures of that singular animal. Plato tells us that the Atlanteans possessed great numbers of elephants.

There are in Wisconsin a number of mounds of earth representing different animals—men, birds and quadrupeds. Among the latter is a mound representing an elephant "so perfect in its proportions, and complete in its representation of an elephant, that its builders must have been well acquainted with all the physical characteristics of the animal which they delineated."

On a farm in Louisa County, Iowa, a pipe was ploughed up which also represents the elephant. We are indebted to the valuable work of John T. Short ("the North Americans of Antiquity," page 530) for a picture of this singular object. It was found in a section where the ancient mounds were very abundant and rich in relics. The pipe is of sandstone, of the ordinary mound-builder's type, and has every appearance of age and usage. There can be no doubt of its genuineness. The finder had no conception of its archaeological value.

In the ruined city of Palenque we find, in one of the palaces, a stucco bass-relief of a priest. His elaborate head-dress or helmet represents very faithfully the head of an elephant.

The decoration known as 'elephant-trunks' is found in many parts of the ancient ruins of Central America, projecting from above the doorways of the buildings.

In Tylor's "Researches into the Early History of Mankind," page 313, I find a remarkable representation of an elephant, taken from an ancient Mexican transcript.

Ober describes a carved elephant trunk, which he styles, "another peculiarity of the sculptor's art," upon one of the ruins of Uxmal. Stephens had also noticed this same sculpture and had wondered where the early architects obtained their pattern, "since the elephant is not indigenous to America."

In the Smithsonian report of 1872 is the following description of Big Elephant mound in Grant County, Wisconsin:

This mound has been known here as the "Elephant Mound." It is situated on the high sandy bottom lands of the Mississippi, on the east side, about eight miles below the mouth of the Wisconsin River. There are on each side of the mound, some fifteen to twenty rods distant, sandy, grassy ridges, some fifteen feet higher than the land about the mound; the mound is, therefore, in a shallow valley, sloping gently to the Mississippi River, and only about eight feet above high water. Its total length is 135 feet; from hind feet to back, 60 feet; from fore feet to back, 66 feet; width across fore legs, 21 feet; across hind legs, 24 feet; from end of proboscis or snout to neck or throat, 31 feet; space between fore and hind legs, 51 feet; from end of proboscis to fore legs, 39 feet; across the body, 36 feet; general height of body above surrounding ground, 5 feet. The head is large, and the proportions of the whole so symmetrical that the mound well deserves the name of the "Big Elephant mound."

In a foot-note to Mayer's "Mexico," I find the following:

Latrobe, at page 144, of his Rambles in Mexico, relates that some workmen, in excavating for a canal at Chapingo, (a hacienda near Tezucoco) reached, at the distance of four feet below the surface, an ancient causeway, of the existence of which there had not been the remotest suspicion. The cedar piles by which the sides were supported were still sound at heart; and three feet below the edge of this ancient work they struck upon the entire skeleton of a mastodon imbedded in blue clay. The diameter of the tusk was eighteen inches. Wherever extensive excavations have been made on the table land and in the valley, of late years, remains of this animal have almost always been met with. In the foundation of the church of Guadalupe—on the estate of Saint Nicholas, four leagues to the south, and in Quadalaxara, portions of the skeleton have been discovered. Had the ancients some means of taming these beasts into laborers for their gigantic architecture?

MISCELLANEOUS.

I have no present means of ascertaining what animals were possessed by the ancient inhabitants of this continent under the name of camelons and eumoms. Were they camels, alpacas, llamas? This question cannot be answered now, so far as I know, but I will give such further information from

secular sources as I have in my possession, in the hope they at some time may be useful.

In 1841 Monsieur Dumanoir, who was in command of a French corvette, the "Ceres," made some explorations in the island of Sacrificious. In the middle of the island he found tombs in which the bones were admirably preserved. There were vases of clay and very many *teeth of dogs and tigers*.

Donnelly says that the fossil remains of the camel are found in South America, and in Kansas; and that the existing alpacas and llamas of South America are but varieties of the camel family.

Remains of oxen, sheep, horses and swine have been found in the ruins of Tula.

And now I will close this chapter by quoting from Editorial Thoughts, in the JUVENILE INSTRUCTOR of October 15th, 1886:

Apropos to the subject of the Book of Mormon, concerning which we wrote in our Editorial Thoughts in our last number, we were much amused by reading some remarks made by a scientific gentleman in the east, respecting a visit he had had from a Mr. Lamb, who professed to be a minister of the gospel in this city. This gentleman had never heard of Mr. Lamb, but he (Mr. Lamb) had heard of this gentleman's researches in ancient American history and civilization, and he sought him out to obtain information with which to combat the Book of Mormon. But we do not think that the Rev. Mr. Lamb will be in a hurry to quote his conversation as argument against the Book of Mormon.

He introduced himself by stating that he was heading a crusade against the "Mormon" church. The effect of this announcement produced the very opposite effect to that he anticipated.

In this gentleman's opinion crusades and crusaders are entirely out of place in the nineteenth century; but he did not interrupt his diatribe against the Book of Mormon whilst he only opposed the Bible to it. In fact, he was rather amused, for it was to him quite an interesting psychological study. But when he condemned the book in a very contemptuous manner for asserting *the absurdity* that anciently, in America, cattle, horses, sheep and the pig flourished, then he thought it was time for him to point out to Mr. Lamb in a polite manner, that he was not quite up to the altitude of his subject, and to his own ignorance of the zoological discoveries made on this continent. The gentleman informed him that Professor C. L. Marsh of Yale College had discovered the fossil bones of seventeen different specimens of horses in the region of the Rocky Mountains, alone. Then he pointed to him that the buffalo (a kind of cattle,) the Rocky Mountain sheep, that the peccary (the wild American pig) still exist; and he concluded by advising him to consult Professor Marsh on the subject, before condemning, on that score, the Book of Mormon.

The gentleman thought that Mr. Lamb's confidence in his ability to attack the zoology of the Book of Mormon was not so great when he left him as when he entered his house. Upon retiring, Mr. Lamb left for the gentleman's edification a copy of his book, containing four lectures against the Book of Mormon. He perused this book of Mr. Lamb's out of curiosity. He was surprised, he said, that such trash could be listened to and approved by men who call themselves intelligent. He did not consider it worth the paper on which it was printed.

In conclusion he remarked:

That people should flock to hear such rhapsodies only shows to what extent prejudice and bigotry may pervert human reason.

IN the meditation of Divine mysteries, keep thy heart humble and thy thoughts holy; let philosophy not be ashamed to be confuted, nor logic blush to be confounded: what thou canst not prove, approve: what thou canst not comprehend, believe; and what thou canst believe, admire: so shall thy ignorance be satisfied in thy faith, and thy doubts swallowed up with wonders. The best way to see daylight is to put out thy candle.