

valley of Lemuel, with power, being filled with the Spirit, until their frames did shake before him. And he did confound them, that they did not utter against him; wherefore they did as he commanded them." I Nephi, ii: 14.

Lehi's literary acquirements embraced, in addition to the "learning of the Jews," a knowledge of the "language of the Egyptians." The language here referred to meant, undoubtedly, the *written* language of the Egyptians, for it was probably the Hebrew, the common language among the Jews, that was spoken and used in ordinary intercourse by the Lehi colonists. But both the Egyptian and the Hebrew languages had been altered by the Nephites at the time that Mormon made his record. Moroni says:

"And now behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge in the characters, which are called among us reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large, we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record." Mor. ix: 32, 33.

These alterations were so important that the writer adds, ver. 34:

"But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof."

The "means" referred to were the Urim and Thummim used by Joseph the Seer, in the translation of the records.

One of the notable incidents connected with the advent of Lehi, was the introduction of the greater part of the Old Testament record into America. This record was engraved upon plates of brass; and the characters used were those of the Egyptian language, and of the styles embraced in their system of hieroglyphics.

The following extract shows the importance of these records, as well as the language in which they were written.

"And he (King Benjamin) also taught them concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, saying, My sons, I would that ye should remember, that were it not for these plates, which contain these records and these commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.

"For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he

having been taught in the language of the Egyptians, therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children." Mos. i: 3, 4.

These plates of brass contained:

"The five books of Moses, which gave an account of the creation of the world, and also of Adam and Eve, who were our first parents.

"And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah;

"And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah; and also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah." I Nephi, v: 11, 12, 13; also see I Nephi, xix: 21-24; Alma xxxvii: 3-12.

These extracts are particularly valuable, as they show how the knowledge of the true God, and of His dealings with His chosen people, with the doctrines of faith in the promised Messiah, were introduced and perpetuated among the native races of the continent.

Egypt, the land of mystery and colossal enigmas; also the cradle of the useful and beneficent arts, and arts diabolical; and of the occult speculations, called sciences, relating to alchemy, magic, necromancy, and astrology, was, further, the source and fountain of a strange and peculiar language. The written form of this language, called hieroglyphical, is considered to be the most ancient form of all written languages. These hieroglyphics or "sacred sculptures" as the name signifies, were an elaborate system of picture writing; ideas and sounds being expressed by animate and inanimate objects, as birds, animals, vases, parts of buildings, and so forth; just as the Assyrians expressed leading classes of thought, by means of wedges, disposed in various groups called cuneiforms; and as the more modern languages use letters and syllables. This system of writing was discovered, or invented, subsequent to the loss of the primitive language, by the strange event which occurred at the Tower of Babel. It was, undoubtedly, the work of the Pagan priesthood. The Egyptians attributed the invention to their god Thoth; the "Logos or scribe of the gods."

Hieroglyphics were used, at first, exclusively by the sacerdotal class; the common people and foreign nations knew nothing of their meaning. Besides this original style, or hieroglyphics proper, there were two other modes of writing used by the Egyptians, called hieratic, and demotic. These were modifications of

the original; briefer, not so cumbersome, and better adapted to the ordinary affairs of the public. The hierotic and demotic styles stood in a similar relation to hieroglyphics that hand-writing does to printing, or type. Hieroglyphics were employed chiefly for official inscriptions on monuments, public or private tombs, religious formulas, invocations, etc. The other styles were less artistic, and were introduced into the Egyptian graphic system about the commencement of the twenty-sixth dynasty or the sixth century B. C., and continued in use until the third century A. D. This was the last native form of cursive writing in Egypt. The early Christians introduced the Greek alphabet, joined with a few characters from the demotic. See Chambers' Encyclopedia, 1883.

The demotic form of writing was employed by copyists, merchants, and the common people of Egypt generally; hence also called *enchoric*, meaning popular, domestic. As this new mode of writing was in use in Lehi's day, it is probable that it was the style used by him in his writings, and the system he taught to his family. Also that it was the style of characters upon the brass plates, and the hand-writing of all the scribes and public registrars; it is also likely that this popular graphic system was what is referred to as "reformed Egyptian," and the characters translated by the Prophet Joseph Smith, from the ancient plates. This was, essentially, the mode of writing brought from the east by Lehi and introduced into America.

The remark of Moroni that the characters had been changed by the Nephite writers is quite consistent; for, as Prof. Pratt observes, (Book of Mormon, page 570, note 2 c.): "A thousand years make great changes in languages not printed or preserved by books."

A copy of a portion of the characters upon the plates was taken to Prof. Anthon, of Columbia College, N. Y., and was pronounced by him to be Egyptian, showing that whatever changes the language might have undergone, its distinctive national nativity was recognized by the professor.

The eventful life of the Patriarch Lehi closed in peace; and, without a cloud to diminish his well-earned guerdon of honor and self-respect, he passed on to his seat among the nobles of the earth.

[To be continued.]

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