BOOK OF MORMON FACTS.

Interesting Personal Experiences.

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It is claimed that facts are stubborn things. Those which relate to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon are not only of that class, but are also marvelously interesting, relating, as they do, to the past, present and future of the human race. Some of these facts have been and others are still being questioned which are destined to revolutionize both the faith and condition of our race.

My purpose in this article is to notice some facts which certainly have claim upon the faith of the Christian world, and to urge those claims upon their attention.

A little more than half a century ago an honest farmer's boy made the startling announcement that he had been visited by an angel of light who made known to him where there was concealed—hid in the earth—records of a large portion of the race of man who had lived upon this and other lands, and told him precisely where he would find them. This communication to him was *a fact*, a truthful disclosure, made by a truthful and trusty messenger. This farmer's boy, now a believer in spiritual manifestations, accompanied the angel, who led him to the spot and showed to him the plates containing this long lost record, which was the history of a great and wonderful people, and of God's dealings with them; for they were believers in God and in His Son Jesus Christ.

These plates having the appearance of gold were actually obtained by the new Prophet Joseph, and a cry was heard throughout the land, proclaiming the tidings of the find as "Joe Smith's golden Bible."

The fact that Joseph attached divine inference and inspiration to his discovery and message aroused the indignation, scorn and contempt of the universal Christian world. They had so long cherished and lived in the tradition of their fathers, that there was no longer more revelation, no more Prophets, no more interruption of their repose in faith—that the idea of another sacred record coming to light was counted as most preposterous, an innovation not to be tolerated.

Joseph had, however, the plates in his possession. The record engraved upon them was written in characters of which he had no knowledge. He was unskilled in any other than his own simple English, and how was he to make known to the world their contents. This question might have given him some anxiety at first, while it gave occasion to the scoffer to laugh and mock at his pretensions. But his deficiency in the youth's skill in such emergency had been provided for long before. Interpreters had been provided, and he with the plates which were to be the means of revealing their sacred contents. This fact can only be considered as unmistakable evidence that the wisdom of God was displayed by His marvelous foresight of providing for all that might be required in the bringing forth of His work in the far off generation to come.

These interpreters called "Urim and Thummim" were instruments of light. They had been touched by the fingers of God, and dedicated for and to that special purpose of translating the records with which they were deposited by that faithful and efficient recorder, Moroni—the same personage who came and revealed their hiding place to Joseph. Provided with all that was necessary for his task, in the midst of doubting friends and scoffing enemies, he employed a clerk to write for him, and engaged in the work of translation, which could only be accomplished by unshaken faith in God. This the angel, Moroni, assured him he must have, to be able to use the interpreters and be successful in his work.

True to their trust, as the needle to the pole, when he traced those unknown characters with the interpreters, he could read in heaven language, and by his word, the wonders it revealed, still more wonderful, and evidence of more than human device, when a word appeared in the interpreters, it would remain there until correctly written by the scribe, and then pass away. Thus it was as impossible for the scribe to commit an error in his record as the interpreters in the translation.

The translator and the scribe then, and all the world now, have these facts before them as evidences that the Book of Mormon has come to the children of men by the "gift and power of God," is a sacred and divine record, brought to light for divine purposes, with God and angels as Authors in the work.

Not a word in that translation appears there without the approval of God and angels, endorsed by the action of the Urim and Thummim, which demanded that every word should be as correctly written as by the power of God it was correctly translated from those ancient characters engraved upon the plates, which were by the angel delivered to Joseph, and to whom they were returned after the translation was made.

Thus far I have only told of what relates to the manner of the find of the Book of Mormon, nothing of the importance or interest of its contents.

Asked, as I often have been, when meeting these facts, what most since I have of the truth of their by answer has been, and is, that I have been personally acquainted with the men who performed this work of translating and writing the Book of Mormon; I have seen, heard and lived with them and know that they were men of truth and veracity.

With the scribe Oliver I have lived in the same house, have eaten, drank and slept with him, and sat and listened many an hour to his eloquent and soul-inspiring tales of their familiarity with the angels who ministered to them of things as the work of translation progressed. How, as their faith increased while fervently engaged in the work committed to them, they were administered to by those who held the keys and authority of God in former dispensations; how, as they learned by the translation that it was necessary for all men to be baptized for the remission of their sins, and they had strong desires to be of that number, John the Baptist, as forerunner of God's authority, holding the keys of outward ordinances, came and laid his hands upon them and ordained them to the same ministry and calling, by virtue of which they must go down into the water and were each baptized as the same John baptized Jesus in Jordan some than 1800 years ago. Now that Peter, James and John, apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, who were in life Him in His ministry when on earth, and to whom He committed the keys and authority to build up His kingdom and administer in spiritual things, came and laid their hands upon Joseph and Oliver, and authorized them to administer in the ministry to the children of men, with authority to build up a like kingdom of righteousness among men in this day of men's need and God's power, conviction seized upon my soul in transport of delight! I witnessed the same hands that wrote the Book of Mormon, there with pen and ink testimonials that can never be obliterated, of these holy manifestations, and the message of salvation brought to earth from heaven, that these men had seen and heard both the Father and the Son, and were living witnesses of the fact that He who was put to death by wicked hands does live and is the Savior and Redeemer of men. And these men have borne testimony, I do most sincerely bear testimony of them, that I may share with them there the glory of the future, as I have here the unspeakable joys of the present.

With these evidences and testimonies before me, which only relate to the manner of the coming forth of the book, say nothing of the purity of the doctrines it inculcates, I am free to say and most confidently assert there is not another book on earth known to the Christian world that is entitled to the same faith, worthy of the same confidence, and so purely the Word of God, as the Book of Mormon. Every word of it has been written as it has come to us by the "gift and power of God," by His direct divine interposition and for a holy purpose.

This declaration, these facts, should be enough to awaken an interest in every mind to learn what are its contents and what relation it sustains to the present and future welfare of mankind, or any portion of them. To read carefully its pages would be a direct way to satisfy that interest, but as many have not access to it, and many who do care less about it than some who do not, I shall briefly refer to some of its marvelous predictions and some of its historical revelations which are solving problems of scientific and religious controversy.

The many interesting incidents attending the coming forth and translation of this sacred and historical record, as related by those men in my hearing, would fill a volume, but they are not all pertinent to the object of this communication, which is to awaken a more lively interest in these things among the youth of Zion, who must bear and carry the responsibilities of ministry but should possess the knowledge requisite to meet intelligently those antiquarian developments which have been, and are continually coming to light to the astonishment of all who are ignorant of the contents of that book.

It is a key to the many mysteries of this land from the day that Jared and his brother with their families landed upon the shores from the tower of Babel; or from the days when our Father Adam offered sacrifice for himself and his children which it was the garden of the whole earth; a land upon which mighty nations have lived and died, leaving behind them imperishable monuments of their day and race, their faith and civilization, which have been reserved for the admiration of their children, of whom it was long since decreed they should come to a knowledge of their fathers.

The discovery of ancient cities, wonderful for their architectural grandeur and durability, in Central America, Mexico, and to the land northward, the artificial mounds throughout the land which have been found to be the burial places of a race that has perished without our knowledge, the inscribed stone caves in the centre of our land, which was the centre of their civilization; and where lie embalmed thousands of human skeletons of conquerively giant size, and away in the far north where sacred altars still remain so perfect, and so superior to our present knowledge of the craft of masonry as to ascribe the work to a "prehistoric race," with hieroglyphics, and chiseled crescents and amphitheatres, which proclaim them the remains of a great people, "who must have communed with gods of high art, and enjoyed a civilization equal, if not superior, to our own"—all these, and much more, are no mystery to the careful student of the Book of Mormon.

That record not only links the past to the present, but penetrates the future with all the certainty of prophetic inspiration gives to man.

Nor are these material evidences alone corroborative of the book. Inspiration and prophecy blend their voices in harmony, demanding its coming forth as it has, the redeeming pledge of sacred promises.

It is an event that can be recognized as the fulfillment of David's prophecy, "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven." Psalm 85, 11. A righteous angel revealed the hiding place of truth in the earth, and that which had long been hid came forth to the understanding of men.

Enoch in his days uttered a like prophecy, and declared that the "truth should come forth out of the earth," and it should bear testimony of the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus said He had other sheep that were not of the Jewish fold, "and they shall hear my voice," John 10, 16.

After His resurrection and ascension He visited the Nephites on this land as recorded by them in the Book of Mormon, organized His church and gave them the law of His Gospel.

Many other prophets have also spoken to the effect that the richer blessings were in store for the seed of Joseph through the loins of Ephraim, of whom the Nephites claimed to be literal descendants.

Our journey and the Jaredites that their language should not be confounded, that He would lead them to a land choice above all others, and that no nation should be greater than that of their seed. We may, therefore, reasonably expect as grand developments from the land of the Jaredites, as from the land of the Pazarahs.

But notwithstanding all the evidence of sacred and other testimonies, unbelief has counted dominion over the minds of men until many Bible truths are as openly discarded by professed Christians as are those of the Book of Mormon.

When we come to examine the contents of the book we find it is no abridgement of the records kept by the people who were the descendants of Nephi, who with his family and kindred left Jerusalem and came to this land about six hundred years before Christ, and also an abridgement of the records of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven.

The Nephite records also furnish an abridged history of that part of the Nephite race, called Lamanites, who dissented from the faith and practice of their fathers, were cursed by a darkness of skin, and are now known as the American Indians.

For historical information of a large portion of this hemisphere, there is no other book on record that can compare with it. It accounts for the many wonderful discoveries which characterize and make famous the American continent, demonstrating the highest degree of civilization and culture in the arts and sciences, as displayed in ruined cities, magnificent temples and mummified skeletons of the dead.

The book of Mormon is the most ancient and reliable history of America that is now extant. It treats of the peoples and their character, who lived and prospered in antiquity to the land for many hundreds of years, so long as they observed the precepts and lived in the faith of their Unity, who appeared to them in person after His resurrection, taught them the plan of salvation and organized His Church among them with Prophets and Apostles, as He has done among the Jews at Jerusalem.

For sacred history and doctrinal disquisition