

# THE BOOK of MORMON ATTACKED BY "M."

On Sunday, Nov. 22, the Salt Lake Tribune contained an article signed "M." in which the writer assumed that Elder B. H. Roberts had challenged the world to prove the Book of Mormon to be other than that which it purports to be. "M." proceeded to present some statements and arguments, accompanied by much sarcasm and extraneous language, to show that the book is a fraud and the author was an impostor. The Tribune offered space for Elder Roberts to reply, and on Sunday, Nov. 29, he responded and squarely met the attack made by "M." We here reproduce both articles, and the intelligent reader cannot fail to see wherein lies the strength of the argument. We also present a fac simile of the page in the Book of Mormon which formed the subject of Elder Roberts' discourse on the Sunday that preceded "M." attack.

Editor Tribune—According to the newspaper reports, Elder B. H. Roberts, in his Tabernacle address Sunday, November 8, threw out a sweeping challenge to the world to show that the Book of Mormon is not of divine origin and authority.

Since Elder Roberts, on the occasion above referred to, confined his attention mainly to the writings of the alleged prophet Nephi, we will do the same. Now the following are some of the difficulties Elder Roberts will have to explain before he can make any headway toward setting aside the intelligent belief of the American people generally that the Book of Mormon in general and the books of Nephi in particular are fictitious books.

## THE "PROPHET" NEPHI.

1. The alleged prophet Nephi claims to have lived and written between 600 and 600 B. C. For he tells us in chapters I and II of the first book that his father was living in Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, King of Judah, which reign began not far from 600 B. C. This professed prophet Nephi pretends to give a summary of the records made by his father Lehi, about that date, and also "an account of my proceedings in my days." Now the first difficulty for Elder Roberts to remove is this: How could a writer, claiming to live at that time, make repeated quotations from the writings of Christ's Apostles, who were not born until nearly 600 years after the time when Nephi wrote? Yet this pretended prophet Nephi quotes passage after passage from the writings of Christ's Apostles Matthew and John and Paul, and also from the writings of the evangelist Luke, and from the words of the Apostle Peter, which Christian writers were born about the beginning of the Christian era. Just take two or three examples of Nephi's quotations, made at least 600 years before the writers were born from whom he quotes: In I Nephi, 18:7, we read these words, so familiar to English Bible readers: "Yea, even he should go forth and cry in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; for there standeth one among you whom ye know not; and he is mightier than I, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." This is a direct quotation from the Gospel of John 1:26-27, and also from Matthew 3:1.

On the same page in Nephi, are several quotations from the writings of Paul, in the 11th of Romans, about the olive tree, and the "branches broken off," with others, "grafted in." In I Nephi, 3:29 we find the expression, "which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets," since the world began." These are the words of Peter as recorded by Luke in Acts 3:21. The above is an illustration of the way in which this alleged Prophet Nephi quotes from the writers of the New Testament. This is fraud No. 1, exposing the false claims of Nephi, who pretends to write between 600 and 600 B. C. and yet quotes from the New Testament writers who were not born until over 600 years later. The Old Testament prophecies were genuine. They did, by the help of God, foretell many

important future events. But none of them pretended to be able, either by the help of God, or their own ability, to quote passages after passages from writings that did not exist, and from authors that had not been born. It remained for the favorite prophet of Elder Roberts, the robust and agile Nephi to perform this feat, under the reach of God's genuine prophecies.

## QUOTES FROM SHAKESPEARE.

2. This alleged prophet Nephi, pretending to write between 600 and 600 B. C., actually quotes from Shakespeare! This beats the genuine prophets of the Old Testament even worse than before, and shows that, on a prophetic long jump, this elastic Nephi could easily take the cake. In I Nephi, 1:14, he is writing down the words of his father Lehi, and represents him as saying, "Hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave, from whence no traveler can return."

Every reader of Shakespeare will recognize the last phrase as taken, in substance, from a sentence in Hamlet's soliloquy. This great prophet Nephi (writing, he it remembered, between 600 and 600 B. C.) had probably loaned his copy of Shakespeare to a neighbor and attempted to quote from memory, getting about as near the original as the average "Mormon" prophet generally does, for example, when attempting to quote the Scriptures from memory. Here is fraud No. 2 perpetrated by this pretended prophet Nephi, from which Elder Roberts must vindicate his pet, or else leave us to conclude, as facts seem to show, that the writer of these books of Nephi was quite a modern deceiver.

## ANOTHER DIFFICULTY.

3.—This brings us to another serious difficulty which we ask Elder Roberts to elucidate before we can accept his theory that Nephi was a prophet of God, and that the Book of Mormon is a divine revelation. This alleged Prophet Nephi, professing to write between 600 and 600 B. C., quotes many long passages from a book which did not

come into existence until the seventeenth century of the Christian era. We refer to the English version of the Bible, which was first published in 1611. A. D. Now, perhaps Elder Roberts can tell us how this fellow Nephi, pretending to write in the sixth century before Christ, could quote hundreds of passages about 2000 years before Christ, and whole chapters from our English version of the Bible, which did not come into existence for more than 2,000 years after he wrote!

This stuffed prophet Nephi gives himself completely away in the very first chapter, and shows that he is a very modern writer by using such well-known expressions as these from our English Bible: "Pillared with the spirit," Eph. 2:19; "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God Almighty," Rev. 15:3. These hundreds of passages, and these whole chapters in the Bible, and elsewhere, from our English Bible, be it observed, are quoted not from the original, which would not help the matter, for the original of the Bible did not exist, but they are quoted from the English translation of 1611, mistakes and all, even to the filling in of the peculiar gaps in the text suggested by the English translators. Now, these hundreds of verbatim quotations, and these whole chapters from our English Bible, which claim to be quoted over 2,000 years before it was written, should make it quite clear, even to the average mind, that this pretended Nephi instead of being an ancient prophet was a very modern impostor, a deceiver and falsifier, living about 1829 of our era. But, perhaps, Elder Roberts can explain it all, and show us how this modern deceiver in the nineteenth century was an ancient prophet of God 600 B. C.

## GIVES HIMSELF AWAY.

4.—This alleged prophet Nephi gives himself away even worse in the 31st chapter of the second book by forgetting that he was pretending to write in the sixth century before Christ as actual history, which it really was. He not only refers to the past tense, but actually indulges in a regular campaigning exhortation to the "brethren," exhorting them, in accordance with the revised style of 1838, to "follow their Lord and Savior down into the water," promising that after that they shall have "the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost."

This is deception No. 4, and shows that Sidney Rigdon Nephi, in 1828, forgetting that he was an ancient prophet living six centuries before Christ, broke loose in his regular old camp-meeting style, and just "whooped up" the brethren, without his deceiver's mask, Nephi a divinely inspired prophet of God! Holy Moses, preserve us! If Nephi, with the above record, or the godlike fellow who personated him, deserves honor as to prophet, then great injustice was done to Boss Tweed in not electing him president of the American Bible society. For clearly he had more religion than this alleged prophet Nephi with his conscienceless deception in connection with sacred things.

Come, Brother Roberts, if you can't back up that other alleged prophet, Joseph Smith, with something more substantial, something less imaginary and fictitious than these pretended prophetic writings of Nephi, from which we have been quoting, then you better drop Nephi as a prophet and fall back on Coriantumr, Shiz and Robinson Crusoe.

## WHAT IS NEW IN IT?

5.—If the Book of Mormon, as Elder Roberts claims, is a revelation from God, what moral or religious truth does it reveal which we did not know before? Not one item. If Elder Roberts will point me to one solitary item of moral or spiritual truth in the whole Book of Mormon which it did not take directly or indirectly, from the Bible, I will present him with a \$5 Stetson hat. I know it cannot be done, for it has been attempted in vain again and again. What is there in calling the Book of Mormon a revelation from God, when it took from the Bible the only moral truth it contains, and is shown on 182 face to be a counterfeit book?

## THE PRETENDED PROPHECIES.

Now, a few words about the pretended prophecies of the wonderful Nephi, which Elder Roberts claims have been fulfilled. Here is the way in which prophecies are made and fulfilled in the Book of Mormon: It either takes the historic record in the New Testament, using the very words of Scripture, tries to push this history back hundreds of years and then falsely claims it to be prophetic; or else it deliberately appropriates the genuine prophecies of the Old Testament. Then, after mutilating these prophecies more or less, with its peculiar Sidney Rigdon phraseology and most abominable grammar, it attempts to palm off these prophecies as original! The prophecy about the restoration of the Jews to their own land, which Elder Roberts quotes from second Nephi, and thinks so wonderful, is simply a case of downright plagiarism. The conversion of the Jews and their restoration to their own land is repeatedly foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament, in passages as Jeremiah 30:3; Ezekiel, 37:21; Amos 9:15, and others. Yet the writer of this book of Nephi does not hesitate to take these prophecies from the Bible, modify their language, and then try to palm them off as his own.

As for the two pretended prophecies referred to by Mr. Roberts, in I Nephi 3:3, that "they shall be a blessing to the world," and "they shall be a blessing to the world," which are written, and that "they shall carry them forth to the remnant of our seed," the first is not a prophecy at all, but the simple statement of a well-known historical fact, yet perverted by the attempt to make it bolster up this modern book. In saying that it is the statement of a historical fact, we mean that the Book of Mormon, as shown above, is made up of hundreds upon hundreds of Bible phrases and verses, and many whole chapters taken from our English Bible. As a matter of course, these Bible quotations which form such a large part of the Book of Mormon, are accepted and believed by the 400 millions who make up Christendom. The other passage Mr. Roberts misreads and misinterprets by making "the remnant of our seed" refer to the Lamanites. Then he assumes, without one item of proof, that the Lamanites are the same as our Indians. According to Nephi, the Lamanites were the descendants of his brother Laman, and were consequently descended from a Jew. Now Rigdon, the American historian, in the second paragraph of his history of the United States, sums up the evidence concerning the connection between the Indians and the Jews in this one sentence: "The notion that the Indian are descendants of the Israelites is absurd."

## JUMBLES HISTORY.

Furthermore, the writer of the book of Nephi lumbles up his own history and contradicts himself in appearing to make "the remnant of our seed" refer to the Lamanites, as in Nephi 3:6, Nephi writes as a Jew, and his seed or "the remnant of it" will inevitably be Jews and not Indians, and not Lamanites. The latter descended from Laman and not from Nephi, and hence could not be the "remnant" of Nephi. But what is the use of talking seriously about the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, when such people ever existed in this country except in the place of fictitious stuff, out of which this Book of Mormon was manufactured. The Nephtites and Lamanites never had one whit more reality than the phantom inhabitants of the famous phyl was a prophet of God and the Book

of Mormon is a revelation from God, he states that he is not a sincere man, or else that his peculiar training prevents him from distinguishing between true reasoning and false, between facts and fiction, between honesty and fraud, between true revelation and that which is counterfeit. Because the facts in Mr. Tucker's book, confirmed by scores of witnesses of worthy character, have been amply sufficient to convince the reading, thinking, truth-loving millions of the American people generally that the Book of Mormon is fiction, in pretending that a part of it was written 2,400 and the rest 1,500 years ago, when the proof that it is a modern book is shown on almost every page. The facts in Mr. Tucker's book have also convinced the American people generally that the alleged prophet was not a prophet.

The above has been written with entire good will, in the interests of truth and historic facts. And when Mr. Roberts squarely meets the above difficulties, contradictions and absurdities in the Book of Mormon, not by wordy evasion, but by facts, we will be glad to accept his challenge.

We are sorry to see a man of Mr. Roberts' ability fogging away his time and thought in the useless attempt to bolster up as a divine revelation a book which the intelligent reading millions of the American people are persuaded is a fabrication. If the fact that 200,000 people, more or less, believe in the Book of Mormon, proves that a false book is a true one, then Mr. Elder's book for our ranks the Book of Mormon in merit, for her book has a million supporters. But Mr. Roberts is correct in one statement, namely, that if the Book of Mormon is a false book then it would follow that "the great prophet of the Latter-day movement is a fraud." Well, if there is anyone fact which is generally accepted and believed by the reading, thinking millions of this country, without regard to party or creed, it is that Joseph Smith was not a prophet. And they believe this because of the abundant and varied evidence in regard to his life and conduct.

If Mr. Roberts is really in earnest in desiring to know the actual origin of the book of Mormon, the character of the man who manufactured it and the kind of pretenses they were, socially and morally, let him read the first 11 chapters of the "Origin and Progress of Mormonism," by that well informed and reliable historian, Pomroy Tucker of Palmyra, N. Y. He was well acquainted with Martin H. Smith, the Covenanter and other Mormon leaders of that early time, and was for a dozen years near neighbor to the founder of Mormonism and all his family. Mr. Tucker was the editor and proprietor of the Wayne Sentinel, on whose press the first edition of the Book of Mormon was printed. Mr. Tucker himself correcting the proof sheets. His book was published by D. Appleton & Co., New York, in 1857. Mr. Tucker sets forth the character of the false prophet and those associated with the latter at that time from personal acquaintance and knowledge, and his book has been generally accepted as thoroughly honest and reliable.

## THE DILEMMA.

Now if Mr. Roberts can read the facts as set forth in Mr. Tucker's book, which have been confirmed by scores of reliable witnesses and printed so that the facts, and still stand up in public and declare it to be his belief that Ne-

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The above has been written with entire good will, in the interests of truth and historic facts. And when Mr. Roberts squarely meets the above difficulties, contradictions and absurdities in the Book of Mormon, not by wordy eva-

sion and logical hair-splitting, however ingenious, but in a way that shall be satisfactory not only to his own mind but also to intelligent, reasoning, truth-loving minds generally, then perhaps he will be entitled to issue another sweeping challenge in behalf of a book which the American people generally, without regard to party or creed, believe to be a fabrication.

Salt Lake City, Nov. 18, 1903.

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