REMARKS ON THE BOOK OF MORMON.

BY WM. GIBSON.

As our faith in the Book of Mormon as a record of the ancient inhabitants of America, written by commandment of God, revealed by the ministration of an angel, and translated by the gift and power of God, is looked upon by this generation as a proof of the extreme folly and ignorance of the Latter-day Saints in general, I shall give a few reasons for believing that the coming forth of such a record is perfectly consistent with reason, scripture, and the character of God.

I shall commence by quoting the testimony of the apostle Paul. Acts xvii. 24, "God who made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needeth any thing; seeing He giveth to all life and breath and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." From this passage we learn that wherever we find men upon the face of the earth, that they are all of one blood, (the offspring of God, see verse 29), and if one man should come into the world in an age of darkness and ignorance, and another in an age of light and intelligence, it was God who determined the times before appointed, and thus the particular time when we should dwell on the earth has been determined before by God, and not only this, but the particular part of the earth where we should dwell, thus, if one part of mankind are born in Britain, another in Hindostan, another in Turkey, and another in the wilds of America, it was God who appointed the bounds of their habitation.

I shall next take the testimony of Peter concerning the character of God. Acts x. 34—"Then Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." See also Paul's testimony. 1 Timothy, 2nd. chap. 3 and 4 verses—"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." But I would here ask, can a man fear God who has never heard of Him? Can a man work righteousness without a knowledge of His will? Again, if God wants all men to be saved, can a man be saved without faith in Jesus Christ? If not, how can a man believe in him of whom he hath never heard? How can he hear without a preacher? and how can he preach except he be sent? See Romans, x. 14. If, as Paul says, God wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, we find that knowledge cannot be obtained without revelation. Hear what Jesus Christ says on this subject. John xvii. 3—"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the
only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." Then if it is eternal life to come to the knowledge of this truth, how is this knowledge to be obtained. See Luke x. 22. Jesus says, "All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." So then we find that men cannot be saved without revelation. They cannot hear without a preacher, and they cannot preach unless God sends them.

Has God then ever given revelation, and sent inspired men to preach to any portion of mankind? O, yes, we are told that He sent them in ancient days to Asia, to Africa, and to Europe; but these things are all done away now, and none but the foolish Mormons believe that God ever gave any revelation or had any inspired preachers in America; and why not my Christian friends; could the red men be saved without revelation? No, or Christ speaks falsely; are they not of one blood with us? Yes, or Paul speaks falsely; and was it not God who appointed to the red man the bounds of his habitations? Prove to me then that God gave revelation and sent inspired men to Asia, to Africa, and to Europe, and gave none to America, and you prove God to be a respecter of persons, Peter a liar, and the Bible a fable, so then my Christian friends you can take your choice.

If, then, it be reasonable to believe that God gave revelation to the ancient inhabitants of America, is it unreasonable to expect that He would enable them to record those revelations, and thus hand them down to posterity, seeing they would be the words of God as much as any contained in the Bible?

But it may be asked, if they once had revelation, why did they lose it? I answer, because of transgression. Were the writings of the Old Testament never lost? Let those who think so read the 2nd Book of Kings, chap. xxii. from the 10th verse, and the xxiii. chap., 1st to 4th verse, and find their error; and even yet how many books are still wanting. I shall enumerate a few, Book of the Wars of the Lord, Numbers, xx. 14. Book of Jasher, Joshua x. 13. Book of the Statutes of the Kings of Israel, 1 Samuel, x. 25. Book of Enoc, Jude xiv. Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel, 1 Kings xiv. 19. Book of Nathan the Prophet, and the Book of Gad the Seer, 1 Chron. xxix. 29. Book of Ahijah the Prophet, and the Book of Iddo the Seer, 2 Chron. ix. 20. Book of Shemeiah the Prophet, 2 Chron. xii. 15. Book of Jehu, 2 Chron. xx. 34. Book of the Sayings of the Seers, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. Book of the Story of the Kings, 2 Chron. xxiv. 27. Were not these books as good scripture as the rest of the Old Testament, and if they should ever be found, are we not bound to receive them as such as well as the rest? No, we are told, unless we have better proof of their authenticity than any we have for the truth of the Book of Mormon.

Then tell me what proof you have that the part of the Old Testament that was lost, and found by Hilkiah, was the law of God. Read the quotation I have given above, and you will find that you have only the word of a man and a woman, Hilkiah and Huldah. And were the writings of the New Testament never lost; no man of common sense will say they have not; and have they all been found; if any one thinks so let him read the following passages, 1 Corinthians, v. 9. Ephesians, iii. 3. Colossians, iv. 16. Luke, i. 1. And should they be found, how will you prove their authenticity, or I might rather ask how will you prove the authenticity of those you have which compose what is called the New Testament. Had those men who voted that the books we now have are authentic any better guide in doing so than their own opinion? if not, where is the proof of their authenticity. Who ever saw the originals? and even if any one could see them, how could he know them to be so without revelation, and without the originals how can you prove which of all the various translations of the scriptures is correct?

Whereas for the truth of the Book of Mormon we have had, and still have on the earth, living men who have seen and handled the original thereof, and some of them bear witness that it was shown them by an Angel of God; while thousands of living men have received testimony of its truth, and of the truth of the testimony of the first witnesses thereunto by the voice of the Almighty, the ministration of Angels, visions, and the witness of the Spirit of truth.

But we are often told if you have got the original plates of the Book of Mormon
why not show them openly; and what better would the world be if they saw them without revelation to know what they contained; and unless God gave every man a revelation for himself, the world would still have only the testimony of those who had received this for the truth of the translation.

Paul, says Hebrews xi. 1., that faith is the evidence of things not seen, and that it cometh by hearing the word of God, Romans x. 17; he also who bears witness to the word of God must be sent by God, for how can we hear without a preacher and how can he preach except he be sent, see Romans x. 14; thus we find in every age of the world, men's faith in God and the things of God was founded on the testimony of a few of their fellow-men whom God called and sent to them; for instance, the world in the days of Noah had only his testimony that God had given him, a revelation concerning a coming flood; and the world now (except the Latter-day Saints) have only what is said to be the testimony of Moses concerning that event, the creation of the world—the fall of man, &c., &c.

The Children of Israel, after Moses's day, believed that the Holy of Holies contained the Ark, and that the Ark contained the tables of the law which Moses put there, with the Pot of Manna, Aaron's Rod, that budded, &c., &c., and that the Glory of the Lord appeared over the Mercy Seat, and what testimony had they for this, were they shown to all the people as the wise men of this day want us to do with the Plates of the Book of Mormon; no, they had only the word of the High Priest for it, and he only went in there once a year.

Again, the Christian world believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Has He shown himself to you, my Christian friends? did any of your parsons ever see Him? I think in consistency you ought to make the same demand of Him that you do of the Latter-day Saints, that is to show himself to all the people if He wants them to believe in His Resurrection; and what proof have you got that He rose from the dead at all; did He show himself to all the people when that event is said to have taken place, see Acts x. 40. Did not the Holy men of that day, the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Pharisees declare that His body was stolen from the tomb, and did not the Roman soldiers who watched the tomb declare that they fell asleep, and while they slept, the body was stolen, and did not the Jews believe them, and do you not think that under these circumstances they were, at least, as much entitled as you to demand that He would show himself to all the people if He wanted them to believe in His resurrection? Did He ever do so? Did any but His own followers ever see Him after He rose from the dead, and who were they? why, the poor fishermen and their companions, men who were charged with stealing His body, men who were as much despised and discredited in their day as ever the Latter-day Saints can be by this generation; and these were the men to whom Jesus said, Mark xvi. 15, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, (of course the resurrection formed an essential part of it), to every creature, he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; and had the world no way of proving their testimony, certainly they had, men could prove their testimony by the very same means by which men can now prove the testimony of those who bear witness to the truth of the Book of Mormon, for when Jesus sent them into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature, they were commanded not only to promise men salvation in the world to come, through faith and obedience to the testimony, but they were commanded to promise to those who believed that in the name of Jesus, they (the believers) should cast out devils, speak in new tongues, take up serpents, heal the sick by the laying on of their hands, &c., see Mark xvi. 17, so that men could prove whether they spoke truth or not; and by the same means can the people now prove those who bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon; for God has sent us to bear testimony of its truth to all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature, declaring that he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, and these signs shall follow them that believe in the name of Jesus, they shall cast out devils, speak in new tongues, take up serpents, if they drink any deadly thing (unknowingly) it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover, so then, my Christian friends, reject the Book of Mormon and our testimony of its truth, and for the same reasons to be consistent you must reject the Bible, but the Latter-
day Saint believes them both, because he has proven the testimony of Peter and Joseph Smith both to be true, as these signs do follow them that believe.

Having now shown (I hope) that the coming forth of such a record is perfectly consistent with reason, the character of God and His dealings with the human family, I will next proceed to show its harmony with scripture.

(To be Continued.)

NOVEL READING.

(From the Western Watchman.)

**Why do you read novels?** "To gain a knowledge of history, because many novels are founded on it" replies one. Suppose a naturalist should form of clay the figure of a new and unheard-of animal, and then deck a part of it with the wool of the sheep, another with the fur of a beaver, another with the feathers of an ostrich, and another with the quills of a porcupine, and thus by culling parts from certain real animals, should at length finish his ideal animal, would you make this uncouth combination of parts a subject of study in order to gain a knowledge of natural history? How does this new animal differ from a novel? The former is but an impersonation of the latter. The writer of fiction produces a new and unheard-of book. Heulls scraps of veritable history from here and there, and skillfully entwines them to suit his fancy. Examine carefully the historical novels of that prince of writers, Scott, and you will find, in comparing them with veritable history, that he has used facts only to give an air of truth to his works: in many cases, he has awfully distorted even these, in order to adapt them. It is the province of the historian to tell the truth; of the novel writer, to tell what he pleases. The one gives you a transcript of real events, the other daguerreotypes the floating images of his excited fancy; and yet you go to the novel writer to gain a knowledge of history!

**Why do you read novels?** "To gain a knowledge of human nature," replies another. Alas! for poor, erring humanity, if novel writers are its expositors. Our fallen nature is yet groaning under the curse of Eden. There is enough in the actual affairs of life to make a good man exclaim, "My whole head is sick, and my whole heart is faint;" but the real condition has far more symmetry, harmony, and order, than these ideal caricatures of novel writers. The very nature of their vocation impels them to go beyond the boundaries of truth, and to present to their readers not what is true, but what is new. Examine cautiously any of their works, and you will find that, with comparatively few exceptions, the characters with which you are so much delighted have not their likeness in heaven, on the earth, or under the earth. They are chimeras in the brain of your author, and yet you study these in order to gain a knowledge of human nature.

**Why do you read novels?** "To make myself conversant with the best styles of writing," replies another. This is a specious plea, and is often urged. But it is false. The individual who makes this a motive for reading several thousand pages of fiction, is self-deceived. There is nothing but the artificial interest that they create, which gives them the preference, and there is hardly a single novel written in a style worthy of being employed in writing a veritable book. One of the silliest objects in the world is an individual melted to tears while reading a novel: weeping over the phantasms which an author has made to flit before the mind. Wherein consists the utility of subjecting our finer feelings to such airy tritles? God never intended them to be exercised thus. But suppose that you could acquire the best style by reading novels, are you ignorant of that well established fact in mental science, that the mind becomes assimilated to that which it habitually contemplates? Now, although you may be able to speak with the tongues of kings, and princes, lords and knights, and be familiar with tournaments and scepters and crowns, and understand fully the sickly nomenclature of royal gallantry, what benefit does all this confer on you? * * * * The very objects with which you ought to be familiar, have no attractions for you now; because your natural relish has been perverted.