
THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

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DR. DUNCAN AND THE BOOK OF MORMON.

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THE *Islington Gazette* of Aug. 18th, contains a synopsis of a lecture from which we learn that owing to the operations of "Mormon" Elders in Upper Holloway, Dr. Duncan, a gentleman of learning and ability, has undertaken to discuss the Book of Mormon as a critic would examine any new book.

That paper says:

He confined himself to an examination of 'internal evidences,' and concluded that upon all the facts, it was difficult not to believe that the 'Book of Mormon' was either a clumsy or barefaced forgery, or else—what was, perhaps more likely—a pious fraud on the part of some well-meaning men.

If considered as a "barefaced forgery" or "pious fraud," the Book of Mormon is the most wonderful work of the age. It shows its authors to have been possessed of a more thorough knowledge of Bible principles than the most learned men of their day. It shows that they must have had a better knowledge of the history of ancient America and its people, than is known even now by learned antiquarians who are studying the relics of the ancient American races, for all discoveries made since the Book of Mormon was published, tend to confirm the truth of its history. It shows that they possessed a marvelous comprehension of future events. But Dr. Duncan has not proved the Book of Mormon to be a "forgery" or a "pious fraud." His examination from a literary standpoint has more interest than his conclusions have weight from a logical one. In his zeal to prove the Book of Mormon a fraud, he has overlooked many important points which, if carefully considered in their bearing upon the position he has taken, tend to make the main arguments he has advanced reasons in favor of the divinity of the Book of Mormon, rather than reasons adverse to it. The Book of Mormon is a divine record. Men inspired of God upon the Western Continent, would naturally have a history similar in certain particulars to the history of people led by inspiration on the Eastern Continent. It would be reasonable to expect, too, that the people on the Western Continent who had the Bible as a book of instruction and reference, would show some marks of its influence upon their lives and teachings and in

their literature. While in the course of generations a race might develop into a people upon one continent characteristically different to the people upon another far remote, yet when they each possessed men who were taught of God the principles of life and salvation, those men would necessarily advance similar doctrines. The conditions, however, of one people might demand a clearer exposition of those principles than would be demanded by the conditions of the other. And when comparing the Book of Mormon in this regard with the Bible and New Testament, it should be remembered that no one has garbled the writings of the abridgment of the records given in the Book of Mormon. Those writings come to us as was intended by their authors. Of course, the English language is used in place of the ancient original language in which they were written. Modern words and phrases, which would be the best and clearest express the meaning of the original, were no doubt given in the interpretation and translation of that work. The doctor's statement that "the Book of Mormon was clearly a pale reflection of the substance of the Old Testament," is startling in view of the force, simplicity, and completeness of the teachings of the former. A number of principles that the Bible but incidentally mentions, are taught in the Book of Mormon in a clearness that commands admiration. To say, then, that the Book of Mormon in substance was but a pale reflection of the Old Testament, evinces an ignorance of one book or the other which is surprising in a speaker of Dr. Duncan's learning and ability.

But no person of intelligence will seriously claim that the Bible has come to us in an ungarbled form. The teachings and writings of the Jewish prophets are not handed down to us, even in their abbreviated form, in their original completeness. Who knows, then, but what those prophets taught just as clearly regarding the coming of the Savior, as did the prophets of the far Western land? Is Dr. Duncan prepared to say just what has been omitted from the Bible? Is he prepared to say that that which is in the Bible is given to us as complete as it should be? Can he say that the compilers of the Bible were inspired? Were the records contained in the Old Bible preserved to us in as careful a manner as the Book of Mormon has been? If these questions cannot be answered affirmatively, on what just grounds can the Book of Mormon be condemned because it refers to Christ and His coming in a more definite manner than the Bible as we have it does?

The Bible comes to us, however, with inspired truth sufficient to bear evidence of truths necessary to our welfare. It is a glorious witness for God and the Everlasting Gospel. The fact that there is a similarity in the Book of Mormon history to that of the Bible, is an evidence in favor of the divinity of the former book. An impostor putting forth a "pious fraud," would be cunning indeed who would think of so important a point and make it so perfect in his scheme.

Dr. Duncan says:

The main features of the two histories were alike. The outline was the same. Though the details were varied, there was yet a parallelism found nowhere else in any one of all our literatures. We would look in vain for any two nations having the same outline history. The thoughtful stu-

dent of the Book of Mormon could not imagine it to have been written, if the Old Testament had not been written before it. All the Divine interpositions in the affairs of the people whose 'history' is recorded in the 'Book of Mormon,' were clearly imitations of those recorded in the Old Testament.

The reason is that the same inspired truth is the essence of the writings in both books. One is a brief record of God's dealings with His children upon the Eastern, and the other a brief record of His children upon the Western Continent. The one has been before the civilized world for centuries, and tradition and popularity have given it a place in many homes; the other has come forth in this age, and has the prejudice of the people to meet. Both works are witnesses for God. The one bears evidence of the truth of the other.

Dr. Duncan says:

Another startling thought must strike the student of the Book of Mormon, namely, that the book was remarkably familiar with terms never to be found in the Old Testament, and found for the first time in the New Testament. For instance, the 'Book of Mormon' spoke of our Lord as 'Jesus Christ,' as 'the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,' as 'the Good Shepherd,' as the 'Alpha and Omega,' as 'the Lamb of God,' as the 'life and light of the world,' applying these terms to Him in connection with a record or prophecy of a date centuries prior to the advent in Palestine. Two facts arrested the attention. The one was that, although the Old Testament Scriptures were admittedly the holy oracles of God, they contained no such reference to the Lord Jesus.

Does not this fact go to prove that the men who used those terms were inspired? Considering the mission of Jesus upon the Eastern Continent, His sojourn with the people, His trial there and crucifixion, is it not natural to suppose that teachings regarding Him to a people far remote from those scenes would, when given of God by revelation, be clearly given? How came the Western prophets to know them, if they were not given of inspiration? There are so many evidences to prove the divinity of the Book of Mormon, that this objection the Doctor offers only tends to confirm their truth. His criticism would have weight were those evidences removed, or proven to be faulty.

The facts are, a people lived upon the American Continent long before its discovery by Columbus. The Book of Mormon claims to be a brief history of that people. Those who believe in it accept it as a true history. They claim that it has come forth to this generation in a marvelous manner. Dr. Duncan has not attempted to impeach the testimony of the witnesses concerning it. Their evidence cannot be impeached, for they were all firm in their testimonies, and they were men of reliable character. Dr. Duncan has not attempted to show that no such people as the ones described in the Book of Mormon ever lived upon the Western Continent. He must know, if he is at all familiar with the discoveries of American antiquities, that there is more evidence now of a collateral character in favor of the truth of the Book of Mormon history, than there was when that book was first given to the world in this century. Dr. Duncan has failed to discuss these points. He has failed to tell us how came the clear lucid and philosophical treatment of the principles of eternal life in the Book of Mormon, if the teachers of those principles were not inspired.

He has failed to give us reasons for the increase of evidence in favor of the divine authenticity of which he terms a "pious fraud." It is a curious "fraud" that presents within itself evidences of the truthfulness of its own claims, as the Book of Mormon does in some prophecies which have been fulfilled, and others which we believe will be fulfilled.

The learned Doctor has not attempted to account for the literal fulfillment, in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, of certain prophecies contained in the 29th chapter of Isaiah. He has not accounted for the "marvelous work" which has been performed in connection with the introduction to mankind of a "pious fraud." Is it reasonable that a "pious fraud" would result in the organization of a system which in form and in gifts and blessings answers to the New Testament description of the Church of Christ, and of the gifts enjoyed by the early believers? The vital points concerning that wonderful book the doctor has not touched upon. As long as the Book of Mormon is proven to be inspired, many of the objections he offers to it can be reasonably accounted for in its inspiration, and in its translation from an ancient to a modern language.

When it comes to the criticism of our Lord's actions regarding the Nephites of America and the disciples of Palestine, the doctor's arguments are similar in spirit to those used by infidels against the Bible.

Was it fair to Paul (he says) not to tell him that his doctrines, similes and phrases inspired of God, were given by inspiration ages before by the same God to other individual?

How else could God's doctrines be given to Paul? God's doctrines for the salvation of the human family must have been the same in all ages, and none knew this better than Paul himself. If the world to-day were devoid of God's doctrines for salvation, as given to the people hundreds of years ago, and they were to be made known anew, would they not be the same? Does Dr. Duncan wish to infer that God is a changeable Being, and that His doctrines for salvation vary with His different moods? Principles of truth are everlasting, and whenever made known to man in any age they are the same. If there are a people in the far north undiscovered to us now, who have been taught concerning Christ and His principles of Gospel truth, it would be reasonable to expect that the records of that people and their teachings would seem as though they were written with the Bible before the writers, for a current of similar inspired truth would pervade such a record. So it is with the Book of Mormon to-day.

Efforts against that book, however intelligent and well considered they may be, are simply a waste of mental and physical strength, for the Book of Mormon has come to stay. Things that seem difficulty to understand regarding it to-day, in the future will vanish away before the light of increased knowledge, and it will gradually gain its way into the hearts of the people. Evidence will increase upon evidence in its favor. We bear a solemn testimony that we know it is a divine record. We know, too, that it will prove a blessing to all who will accept it as a divine book, and put into practice in their lives the principles of the everlasting Gospel it teaches. We invite all men to study it carefully—study the Bible in connection with it—study the many evidences in favor of its divine authen-

ticity—study its teachings and prophecies, and with it all, earnestly, sincerely and with faith seek knowledge concerning its truth from the great Author of all good, even God the Creator of us all. J. E. C.

ANOTHER INSINUATING SLANDER.

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AN English girl, named Elizabeth Gee, who arrived in New York with a party of Mormons on board the *Wisconsin* last week, was horrified at their mode of life, and begged the authorities to prevent her being taken to Utah, where her father had lived as a Mormon fourteen years. The girl's wish was granted, and she sailed for England on Tuesday in the *Wisconsin*.

The above is going the rounds of the papers. The young girl in question was not a "Mormon," but was traveling with a company of "Mormons" to her father who had sent for her. She was free to go to Utah or to stay in this land, so far as the "Mormons" were concerned. Because her father had sent for her, through courtesy to him, she was with the company of Saints. So far as her being "horrified at their (the Saints') mode of life" is concerned, it is simply used by the press as a base, insinuating slander. It is well known by the officers of the steamers which carry "Mormon" emigrants, that the latter are as clean in their persons, respectful in their manners, and as moral in their conduct as any class of people who leave their old homes to seek new ones in other lands. The poor girl was imposed upon by the misrepresentations of idle gossipers, or the wilfull lies of ignoble persons, and now the press is lending its influence in the misrepresentation business. There is one thing sure, and an investigation by honest and competent persons would bear out the statement, that if the girl was really "horrified at their mode of life," it was because the pure moral influence of that life was not congenial to her. But then she did not go beyond New York, and what therefore does she know about the mode of life of the "Mormons?" Simply what has been told her, and the statements of slanderers evidently have made the strongest impression upon her mind. All people, male or female, who go to America to settle with the "Mormons" as "Mormons," or as Gentiles, go of their own free choice. The object of the Saints going is to keep the commandments of God, to live purer and nobler lives, and to escape the judgments predicted to overtake the nations who reject God in rejecting His Gospel. Those who do not go for these reasons are not actuated by the spirit of "Mormonism."

The case of Miss Gee shows how ready the press is to publish anything that even seems to malign God's people. The simplest incident that gives a shadow of an opportunity is sent over the civilized world. It is such base slanders that keep prejudice burning in the hearts of people against the Latter-day Saints. It is the cunning work of the adversary—the father of lies—against the people who have the courage to believe and embrace the everlasting Gospel. J. E. C.

In order to meet the wants of some of the Saints, who wishing to go to Utah this season, but cannot complete their arrangements to leave until October, we have concluded to send a company, per Guion S.S. *Wisconsin*,