
THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1890.

A MODERN MIRACLE.

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THE following appeared in *The Scotsman* of August 25th, as a book notice:

A fifth electrotpe edition is published of the *Book of Mormon* (Liverpool: George Teasdale). What to the Gentile appears foolishness in this Testament of the Latter Day Saints, no doubt reads as inspired and sacred wisdom in the eyes of those who believe in the faith as revealed to Joseph Smith. It is almost as unnecessary to review the 'Book of Mormon,' and the claims of the words written on the 'plates taken from the plates of Nephi' to respect and acceptance, as to treat the Bible in the same fashion. It is certainly an extraordinary production. The writing of it is a kind of modern miracle, and it seems almost a greater miracle that anybody should read it. The Liverpool edition is of handy size, and is furnished with reference notes.

Upon the whole this notice of the Book of Mormon is unique. It tells more perhaps than the writer or the publisher intended. However this may be, there is much truth in the statements made. The situation of the people regarding that book could scarcely be told clearer in less language. It is a comprehensive paragraph. While the Book of Mormon appears to be foolishness to the Gentiles, it is a divinely inspired record to the Latter-day Saints. An attempt to review the Book of Mormon and its claims with a view of proving that book to be an uninspired one, would be as futile in its results as an effort against the Bible would be.

"The writing of it is a kind of modern miracle, and it seems almost a greater miracle that anybody should read it."

Yes, it does, and why? Is it because people are not curious to read a strange literary work? Is it because there is no interesting matter in the Book of Mormon? Judging by what gains popularity in the world, it seems clear to us that if the Book of Mormon claimed to be only a literary work—the production of some author's imagination, that a thousand copies would have been sold where one has been under its present claims. The author would have been looked upon as a wonderful genius, a comprehensive theological student, a philosopher of no mean school.

But he coming forth of that book is "a modern miracle," and "it seems almost a miracle that anybody should read it," not because of its inherent

want of value in interest and instruction, but because it claims to be a divine work. The minds of the people of the world are so clouded with the errors of priestcraft and tradition, that a mighty prejudice has gained a foothold with the children of men against anything that claims to be God-given in this age. In the midst of this powerful spirit of darkness and prejudice, "it is almost a miracle" to find a man who has the independence of character and strength of manhood to step aloof from the mental darkness that people are in, and read and examine for himself a work that has claims of being inspired.

It is singular, too, that this is true, but true it is. The people have the Bible, and can there read of a God of revelation, of inspired men, of apostles, prophets, and gifts of the Spirit and blessings. It seems, however, that the Bible has more of a traditionary place than a real one in the hearts of the people. It gives account of things away off in the dim past, so far away from the affairs of the present, that people seem to fail to thoroughly comprehend that the men who figured in its history were real, live human beings, fashioned after the manner human beings are to-day, with flesh and blood and bones and the various senses. That it is just as easy for God to make known His will to men to-day as it was then, seems to be beyond their comprehension. And to claim that God was able and did reveal His will to people who formerly lived upon that great and wonderful land—America—is to them so foolish and absurd that it is almost a miracle to get any one to investigate the reasons for the claim.

Truly the darkness that covers the minds of the people is terrible. Without serious reflection one cannot sense its intensity. It would seem that the reception given to the Book of Mormon would arouse the curiosity of thinking people to find out why it is not more widely read. If people are afraid of it because it claims to be a divine record, what must their condition of mind be? Do they want to know anything further concerning the Lord and His dealings with His children? Can it be that they want to limit the Lord in revelations to the children of men upon the Eastern Continent hundreds of years ago? Is it possible that they are so selfish in regard to salvation principles, that they are unwilling to believe—no matter how clear and plain the evidence may be in favor—that the Lord made known His will to any of His children save those in the far East? It is indeed a narrow conception of the power, wisdom and mercy of God, that leads to the conclusion that the Bible can be the only record of the acts and teachings of inspired men who have lived upon the earth during the generations of the past. There is a want of faith, a self-sufficiency in such a position, that are not compatible with the genius of the teachings of the Bible.

Every well informed person knows that a people were found upon the land of America when it was discovered by Columbus, and surely a God-fearing man would not say that the Lord never had any of His servants teach that people or their ancestors concerning Him and His laws. To denounce a claim that God communicated to His people upon that vast continent without giving it a thorough and honest investigation, would be a display of an assumption of knowledge usually manifested by the

arrogant who are also ignorant. But the noted feature of the denunciation of the Book of Mormon is because it claims to have come forth in a marvelous manner. Such a claim to a student of, and believer in the holy Bible, should at once attract his serious attention. It would reasonably seem a miracle for people who are Bible believers to fail to read the Book of Mormon. Even were the latter book the production of some man's brain in this century, to read it would interest and instruct a Bible student.

But there are to-day few real Bible students. People have heaped "to themselves teachers having itching ears," and they have turned unto fables, and their fear toward God is taught by the precepts of men. The words of men are of more effect upon their minds than the word of God in the Bible. If it were not popular to believe the Bible, it would be as great a miracle to find people reading the Bible, as it is now to find them reading the Book of Mormon. Unless they break away from this gross darkness, free themselves from the bondage of priestcraft and tradition, develop in their hearts the love of God instead of the love of men, repent of their sins and receive the Everlasting Gospel, they will utterly fail to comprehend the truth as contained in the Bible and Book of Mormon, and there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. J. E. C.

NOT IN A BAD WAY.

THE *Aberdeen Evening Express* of August 15th, undertakes to describe the situation of the "Mormons." The editor is laboring under incorrect information. He seems to be under the impression that their exodus from Salt Lake City and Utah Territory is taking place. He is greatly mistaken. While settlements are being made in various other places, those in Utah are not being abandoned. But among other things the *Express* says:

The Mormons are in a bad way. Since the Government of the United States gave them the choice of either abandoning the practice of the most favored article of their creed or leaving the Utah Territory, they have been to a certain extent like the Jews, a scattered and persecuted people. Finding that their exodus from Salt Lake City, where they had rested so long in peace and polygamy, was really to be made compulsory, delegates were sent from the community to spy the land and select a suitable place for future settlement. As might be supposed, divided counsels soon prevailed, but latterly the choice seemed to lie between a retired and well-watered territory in Mexico, and an equally pleasant, if not altogether more suitable and healthier, locale in North-West Canada. The latter seemed to be more favored by the general body who remained at Utah, and thither many of them at once migrated some twelve or eighteen months ago, settling in large numbers near Lees Creek.

There is a mixture of truth and error in the foregoing statements. The error, however, as is usually the case when "Mormons" receive notice in the press of the day, outweighs the truth. The "Mormons" are not in a bad way. It is true that they are the objects of persecution, and that the iron hand of tyranny, through the efforts of some unscrupulous politicians