

LATTER DAY SAINTS'

MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE.

VOL. III. No. 4.] KIRTLAND, OHIO, JANUARY, 1837. Whole No. [28.

EVIDENCES OF the Book of Mormon.

*"O fools, and slow of heart to believe
all that the prophets have spoken."*

JESUS.

It will readily be discovered, by every correct theologian, who has made himself in any good degree acquainted with the mission and proceedings of his divine Master while travelling on earth to proclaim that gospel for which he was made a hiss and a by-word among the bigoted and unbelieving of that generation, as delineated and set forth by the inspired penmen; that, although the above declaration was made some eighteen hundred years since, and that too, to individuals who had followed him with unvarying fidelity through the various stages of his afflictions and persecutions, even to the death of the cross, the same epithet would apply with much greater force, not only to the unbelieving Jews, who, rejecting his sacred precepts and spurning his examples of holiness, perpetrated their last scheme of cruelty towards him by taking his life, but also to the people of the present age. Indeed, were we to compare the prevailing *belief* in the professing world at the present day, with the *unbelief* entertained by the Jews, anciently, so near a similarity would be found to exist as would silence all controversy upon the subject.

It appears to have made no part of the numerous complaints uttered by the Savior against the Jews that they entertained *no* fixed principles of belief, neither that they were destitute of faith in *some* things that the prophets had spoken; but, it seems to have been, as in the case of the two disciples, a lack of confidence in "*all things*," of which Jesus so frequently complained, and in consequence of which he pronounced the heaviest woes and curses upon that generation. That the Jews verily thought they believed all that the prophets had spoken, there is no manner of doubt; but when the Son of God plainly declared, "If ye had believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me," all their pretensions to faith in the writings of that prophet,

seemed to vanish. They well knew to acknowledge *all*, would have been to abjure their religion, renounce their own pretensions to holiness, lay aside the traditions of their elders, and embrace the babe of Bethlehem as their Messiah and King.

That the present generation has fallen after the same example of unbelief, will not, as we before said, be doubted by those who are acquainted with the "*all that the prophets have spoken*."—In order to illustrate this, we shall quote, not those sayings from the writings of the prophets, which, from their liability to misconstruction have been made, by the world, to mean any thing or nothing as the case might be (for now, as anciently, many have a peculiar faculty for manufacturing faiths, religions and gods to suit their own fancy) but to show, by an exhibition of some of the most meaning, prominent and unequivocal prophecies transmitted to us in the sacred record, that our position is entirely tenable, viz: that this generation is deeply implicated by the language of our text.

Without calling the attention of the reader to prophecies, the fulfillment of which, belonged to former ages, we shall proceed to quote a few of those whose fulfillment evidently relates to the last days. The prophet Isaiah has said, in the 11th chapter of his prophecy, 11th and 12th verses: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnants of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinor, and from Homath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Again, the same prophet declares, chap. 2, ver. 2: "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." Now, that the people of this generation

do not believe in these important sayings of the prophet, is evident from like testimony as that upon which the Jews were convicted: *they* did not believe in the *manner* of the fulfillment of the prophecies of Moses, neither do the world in this day believe in the *means* ordained of God for the fulfillment of those just quoted. We mean the ushering in of a new and entirely diverse order of things from any before existing on earth; or, as the apostle Paul expresses it, in Eph. 1: 10: "The dispensation of the fulness of times," in which God should, literally, not only gather together the remnants of Israel and all nations, as represented by the above quotations, in one, but also *all things in him*, both which were in heaven, and which were on earth.

This era, dispensation, or order of things, has been brilliantly signalized in its commencement by the coming forth of the book of Mormon, that prodigy of modern discovery, about which so little is known, yet so much excitement prevails in the religious world.—We would think mankind quite justified in rejecting this wonderful production, were it not supported, and proven to their understandings by as numerous and unequivocal prophetic references as was the divine mission of Jesus to the Jews. As the opening key to the dispensation above referred to, the book of Mormon may be well authenticated to the satisfaction of every honest believer in divine revelation, by testimony both ancient and modern. To refer the reader to a very few of the scripture declarations relative to this subject, must now occupy our attention for a few moments, with such remarks as may serve to illustrate their force and meaning.

We commence with Genesis, chap. 17, ver. 8, where the Lord in his covenant with Abraham, says: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger: all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." In the 48th chap. 16th and 19th verses, the reader will see according to the blessing pronounced by Jacob upon his grandsons Ephraim and Manassah, that they were to grow to a "multitude of nations in the midst of the earth." Again, the same subject is alluded to in the 49th chapter, from the 22d to the 26th verse inclusive.—

Let the reader turn to, and examine this quotation carefully, for it is very important to our purpose, but is too lengthy for insertion in full. In the last verse of this quotation, the patriarch Jacob says, "The blessings of thy [Joseph's] father, have prevailed above the blessings of thy progenitors, [Abraham and Isaac] unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills." Now, we have before seen, that the blessing of Joseph's progenitors was "all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession;" and, as Jacob expressly declares that his, Jacob's blessing upon Joseph, had prevailed above theirs, we must conclude that he, Joseph, had a *land* given him, not included in the blessing of his progenitors: and the expression "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills," fully warrants us in drawing that conclusion. Again, in the first verse of the above quotation, we have evidence in substantiation of this fact. Jacob says, "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well, whose branches run over the wall," or sea, for this the reader will perceive is the real meaning by examining the 8th ver. of the 16th chapter of Isaiah. Now, the beauty of this simile or figure can only be discovered by those who take the pains to contrast it with the literal *fact* as it occurred; the relation of which may be found in the book of Mormon, first book of Nephi, where a remnant of the branches or seed of Joseph are represented as crossing the sea, and settling this continent of North and South America. Yes, the concurrence or identity of the prophetic allusion, with the *fact* as set forth in the book of Mormon, demonstrates the truth of the latter as fully as the works and character of Jesus did the declarations of Moses and the prophets relative to himself.

Having now, by unimpeachable bible testimony, and as we believe, sound logical reasoning, followed the remnants of Joseph to their landing upon this continent, our next business must be to inquire whether their history and location, if capable of speaking, would emphatically pronounce them "a multitude of nations in the midst of the earth." So much of the history of the aborigines of America is known to the world, as would render any attempt to show that they have *not* been, and are not even *still* "a multitude of nations,"

perfectly vain and futile. Such was ostensibly the fact at the first settlement of the country by Europeans, and must, according to all human calculations, have existed to a greater extent previous to that time, from the well known coincidence that no social compact, existed among the different tribes, by which their national individuality could be perpetuated; and from a succession of intestine wars to which they were peculiarly addicted, they must have been diminished and commingled with other clans. As to their location, we leave it for the *learned* to say whether they actually occupy those degrees of latitude which with propriety may be said to comprehend "the midst of the earth."

Having now gone through with a cursory examination of some of the bible testimonies as to the origin and history of the American Indians, we shall come to speak more particularly of the record kept by themselves, a translation of which, through the providence of God, has been laid before the world. Nor are its advocates, as many have supposed, destitute of the necessary evidence to establish the fact. Besides the unimpeachable testimony of many good men, whose characters for truth and probity rank high in the circles of their acquaintance, they have the sacred word of God, and the fruits and gifts of his divine Spirit to bear testimony to its authenticity.—David says, Ps. 85: 11, (and let the reader mark the expression,) "Truth shall spring out of the *earth*; and righteousness look down from heaven."—Again, Ps. 119: 142, "Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy *law* is *truth*." Verse 151, "Thou art near, O Lord, and all thy *commandments* are truth." Again, John 17: 17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy *word* is *truth*." The Lord says by the prophet Hosea, in speaking of Ephraim, chap. 8, ver. 12, "I have written unto him the great things of my law, but they are counted as a strange thing." Again, Ezekiel, in the 37th chapter of his prophecy, makes mention of the same "great things" of the law of God, and calls it the "*stick* of Ephraim." Isaiah also comes in for a considerable share in the testimony upon this subject. He goes so far in the 29th chap. of his prophecy as to relate several very im-

portant *particulars* concerning this "truth" that should spring out of the earth—says "the words of the *book*" should be delivered to him that was learned, "saying, read this, I pray thee," and he should say, I cannot—that the *book* should then be delivered to him that was unlearned, &c. Let the reader turn to and examine the whole chapter. Now, from the foregoing quotations and references, we learn the following facts:—

First, That *truth* was to spring out of the earth.

Secondly, That *truth* is the *law*, *commandments* or *word* of God.

Thirdly, That the great things of that *law*, *word* or *commandments* of God were written unto Ephraim, or the descendants of Joseph, and

Fourthly, That the book of Mormon is that record.

Now, if the world will know whether truth *has* sprung out of the earth, let them candidly consider and accredit the foregoing evidences, as well as the internal testimony of the record itself. If they would understand what "the great things" of the law of God written unto Ephraim, *are*, we point them to the book of Mormon. Should dubiety exist in the minds of any as to the real meaning of the prophecies of Ezekiel and Isaiah, above referred to, we confidently assert, read the book of Mormon—learn its history—study and obey its precepts, and the light of heaven will abundantly illuminate your understandings.

In conclusion we would observe, that vain are the pretensions and professions of a bewildered world, to faith in the divine oracles of God, so long as they array themselves against his work and purposes by opposing the book of Mormon; and, until they cease their unholy and heaven-offending warfare, break off their sins by righteousness, and "believe all that the prophets have spoken," we may with propriety adapt towards them the language of the Savior: "O fools and slow of heart."

WM. SMITH.