

CHAPTER VI.

HUMAN, VERY HUMAN.

There are throughout the Book of Mormon many exhibitions of human weakness, altogether inconsistent with the supposition that it came from God.

A. *Vanity, Conceit.*

The opening paragraph in the book contains the words “I” and “my” sixteen times:

“I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God, therefore, I make a record of my proceedings in my days; yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.”

The following, on the next page, has certainly a smack of vanity:

“And now I, Nephi, do not make a full account of the things which my father hath written, for he hath written many things which he saw in visions and in dreams; and he also hath written many things which he prophesied and spake unto his children of which I shall not make a full account, but I shall make an account of my proceedings in my days. Behold, I make an abridgment of

178 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

the records of my father, upon plates which I have made with my own hands; wherefore, after I have abridged the record of my father, then will I make an account of mine own life.”

The second author, Jacob begins his book thus, p. 114:

“...And he (Nephi) gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these plates a few things which I considered to be most precious: that I should not touch, save it were lightly,

concerning the history of this people which are called the people of Nephi. For he said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates and that I should preserve these plates and hand them down unto my seed, from generation to generation. And if there were preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying, that I should engraven the heads of them upon these plates, and touch upon them as much as it were possible...we also had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy.”

The third author, Enos, begins his book by complimenting his father, Jacob,—a back-handed way of boasting over his own inherited good qualities, and the excellent training he had received—and then occupies a considerable space with an account of his own conversion written in first-class modern revival style. While the fourth author, Jarom, modestly hints that the things he proposes to write are as nothing, compared with the things he had publicly taught and that had been revealed to him.

“It must needs be that I write a little; but I shall not write the things of my prophesying, nor of my revelations.”—136.

And, in fact, this appears to be characteristic of nearly every author in the Book of Mormon, the modest boast though, every little while repeated: I only

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 179

record a very few of the remarkable revelations I have received, or of the remarkable deeds that have been accomplished through my leadership and inspiration.

Thus Nephi boasts, page 29:—

“Behold I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard; wherefore the things which I have written sufficeth me; and *I have not written but a small part of the things which I saw.*”

The following statements also sound slightly conceited:

“Neither am I mighty in writing like unto speaking.”

My writing, as you see, is “of great worth,” but it is nothing compared with my speaking!

“And behold, I am also a man of no small reputation among all those who know me; yea, and behold I have many kindreds and friends, and I have also acquired much riches by the hand of my industry.”—236 (N. Ed., 262).

“Now when Ammon saw this, his heart was swollen within him with joy; for, said he, I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants, or the power which is in me.”—258 (N. Ed., 286).

But for real simon-pure conceit, the following carries away the palm:

“And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying, look! And I looked and behold a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; and the angel said unto me, behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb! Behold, he shall see and write the remainder of these things; yea and also many things which have been, and he shall also write concerning the end of the world. . . . And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write, are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, *the remainder shalt thou see*; but the things which thou shalt see hereafter, thou

180 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

shall not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God, that he should write them. . . . And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel.”—29 (N. Ed., 31-2).

He means this: I have seen all that the Apostle John, six hundred years later, shall see on the isle of Patmos—but in order to give him a show, I am not permitted to write it. And I willingly divide honors with him—for should I write all I have seen, *poor John would be nowhere!!*

Strikingly in contrast with all this is the modesty of the different writers of the Bible.

The first book, Genesis, begins thus:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

And we look at the close of the book, examine every page of it, in vain, to find even a hint as to who was its author. So with Exodus and Leviticus and Numbers; in fact, we have to read through over one-half the entire Old Testament, embracing fifteen books, before we have so much as a hint of the authorship. The Book of Nehemiah opens with this brief and modest title:

“The words of Nehemiah, the son of Hachaliah.”

Then, we pass the books of Esther, Job and the Psalms without the names of the authors. The Book of Proverbs has this preface:

“The Proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel.”

The various prophets are under a necessity, from the very character of their work, of revealing their names. But, it is done in the same, modest, simple way:

“The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”

“The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth.”

“The words of the Lord that came unto Hosea.”

“The word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.”

“The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa.”

And so with every one of the prophets. The opening sentence tells who is its author, but always in the *third* person, with the single exception of Ezekiel, who begins his prophecy in the *first* person.

If we examine the New Testament, we find Matthew begins thus:

“The book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

Mark, thus:

“The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God.”

John, thus:

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.”

Luke is the only one of the four Evangelists who furnishes us anything like a *personal* introduction. And yet he entirely withholds his own name. The same with the Book of Acts. In fact we only learn from the early history of the church, entirely outside of the New Testament writers, *who wrote either one of these five books*.

With the Epistles it is, of course, different. They were private and personal affairs, addressed to individuals, as Timothy and Titus, or they were addressed to

182 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

particular churches, and required the signature of the writer to give them value and authority at the time they were written. And yet one of the most important of the Epistles, the Book of Hebrews, remains incognito to this day, the best scholarship of the world being divided as to its real author. And not one of the authors becomes the hero of his own story, until we come to the prophets, who in the most delicate way, with a modesty that has not the remotest suspicion of egotism, speak of themselves only when the necessities of the narrative require such mention, as in the case of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Only one solitary author in the entire Bible makes a boast, or even mentions in any way whatever, the abundance of his revelations. And that is the Apostle Paul. And he was obliged to do it in

vindication of the gospel he had preached, but apologizes in the most earnest and emphatic way for the necessity of thus *making a fool of himself*, as he calls it. "I am become a fool in glorying," he says to the Corinthians; "*ye have compelled me.*" (2 Cor. 12: 11.)

And do you know, this is the way God has always wrought in nature? This world of ours is a wonderful world, crowded full of God's handiwork. Every grain of sand in it, every drop of water, every blade of grass, every shrub and flower, as well as every living thing that swims in its waters, or creeps upon its surface, or flies in its air, is full of proof—"the hand that made us is divine."

Would not it seem a little strange, and somewhat out of keeping with the dignity and glory of the divine character, if God should attach a *label* to each separate

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 183

article in nature, saying, "I made this." If over each one of these beautiful shade trees were written, "This is my work," or suspended over every garden spot, or bed of flowers, or grassy meadow, in golden letters, "I, the Lord, did this;" or, if he should come down from heaven every evening in a cloud, and proclaim in thunder tones that every one might hear, "All the blessings you have enjoyed today came from my hand." Surely this is not needful, so long as the proofs of His handiwork lie all about us in such rich abundance.

Nor is it necessary for him to attach to the book of Genesis, or the book of Matthew, or John, or Hebrews, any affidavit whatever as to their inspired origin. Every page proclaims, "The brain that composed this had the help of God." The necessity therefore that requires the various authors of the Book of Mormon to assert so frequently their divine inspiration, and parade upon almost every second or third page the abundance of their revelations, is a confession of weakness, to say the least, and suggests the suspicion that the author fears you may not find out the divine origin of his plates unless he keeps reiterating the fact—the sad necessity of the young painter whose first attempt at painting proved so far a failure that he was obliged to write underneath his picture, "*This is a horse!*"

B. Another Argument from Nature.

The other day* a neighbor of mine was examining somewhat minutely a few of the *worms* or caterpillars with which our city is infested. Calling my attention to

*This was written by the author in Salt Lake City in June, 1885.

them, I discovered for the first time that they were not the muddy, dirty-looking, ugly creatures I had supposed. A close inspection revealed the fact that they were really beautiful; that an exquisite taste had been displayed in the various colors employed, their skillful blending, and the delicateness and perfection of their tints, and especially in the strange and endless variety exhibited. Really, you could find no two exactly alike.

And then there suddenly flashed upon me a fact I was taught when a school-boy, that there are no two objects in nature exactly alike; infinite *variety* and not *sameness* is the rule. And I recall hours spent with brothers and sisters in the old home garden, examining a large bed of "ribbon grass" to test the theory. There were only a few colored lines on each blade of grass, but they were always arranged differently, so that we never found two exactly alike. Extending our observation, we patiently examined hundreds and thousands of clover leaves, the leaves upon the apple trees, and the leaves upon the small oak saplings, growing in a neighboring pasture, and always with the same result—no two alike.

We all know that there are no two human faces just alike, no two human characters alike. All possess the same contour of face, the same faculties, passions and attributes; but the varieties of development are apparently infinite, so that, probably, no two persons have ever lived, or ever will live, who look and act and are exactly the same. And it is said that the same law of infinite variety extends even to the minutest animalculae that appears in a drop of water, and lives but a brief day; to every grain of sand upon the sea shore; in fact,

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 185

as some believe, to every ultimate, minute particle of matter of which our earth is composed.

And, friends, this endless variety, exhibited everywhere in nature, affording us such clear proof of the limitless, the unbounded resources of the great Creator, is found just as clearly marked in the Bible. There are certain great lines of truth distinctly and clearly revealed to us; but the unfolding of these great lines of truth is almost infinitely varied. So that there are, properly speaking, *no repetitions* in the Bible. There are repetitions of questions and commands for the sake of added emphasis: sometimes of words and phrases required by the bold and vigorous and animated style of the Holy Scriptures; yet, properly speaking, the Bible does not repeat itself.

There are instances in the Old Testament where a brief historical incident, in a few cases a prophecy, in one case

an entire chapter is repeated word for word by two different authors for reasons that are not explained to us. Perhaps two different authors, in making a record or compiling a history of the same personages, may have had access to the same original documents, and were permitted by the divine spirit to quote them alike. But these are rare exceptions, so rare as to make the rule all the more impressive and prominent, that the Bible does not borrow, nor in any proper sense repeat itself.

In the New Testament, three different men, Matthew, Mark and Luke, furnish a history of the life of Christ. They write independently of each other, in separate portions of the world, for entirely different classes of people, and evidently without any knowledge of each

186 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

other's work; and, as might be expected, when recording the same event, mention the very same particulars, the prominent points in the event they narrate. But, they scarcely ever *do it in the same words*. Each presents the fact from his own standpoint; and, hence, exhibits a different phase from the other, keeping up a constant variety and freshness. Even in the large number of quotations found in the New Testament from the Old, the language is so varied as to present a new side to the old truth, giving you a view of it that you had not been able to discover from the Old Testament reading. And, the quotations from the Old Testament found in the New are exceedingly brief; the longest one is in Rom. 3, quoted from the Psalms, to prove that "there is none righteous." And this quotation embraces only three brief sentences, making in all eight or ten lines on a printed page like this.

If it had been different, if one prophet had quoted large portions of a previous prophet's words, if the New Testament writers had borrowed whole chapters from the Old Testament prophets and made up their addresses chiefly in this way, we would at once have felt, "Something is out of joint": the God of nature and the God of the Bible seem to proceed differently. And has God really exhausted his resources in the Old Testament revelations, that He must needs repeat Himself thus? Has He *nothing new* to tell us? not even a *new way* of presenting the old thoughts?

Well, now, reader, the Book of Mormon has this very serious objection to its divinity: *It is not original enough to have come from God*. It is made up largely of *borrowed* material. Outside of the mere frame-work of

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 187

the book, its thread of history, the filling in is largely bor-

rowed. We mean the religious part of the book; its sermons, exhortations and addresses are either repetitions of the *exact* language of the Bible, or they are constructed as gospel sermons of the present day are constructed, filled in with a large amount of Bible phraseology, Bible allusions, illustrations etc.

For instance, we find that the Lord Jesus, when he first appeared to the Nephites, as recorded on pp. 455-464, after saying a few words (more than one-half of which are selections* from His various words as recorded in the four Gospels), began to repeat the sermon on the Mount, as recorded by Matthew in the 5th, 6th and 7th chapters, and repeated the entire sermon word for word. Then followed this, with about as much more material filled in constantly with short phrases or whole sentences taken from other portions of the Bible. When He came back the second time and addressed them at some length, he quotes verbatim nearly two whole chapters from the Book of Isaiah, and closes up his speech with a repetition of the two last chapters of the Book of Malachi.

In the second Book of Nephi, beginning with p. 78 (N. Ed., 87), the author quotes from Isaiah, the prophet, and fills up *sixteen pages*, transcribing in full *thirteen*

*The following is a specimen, The *borrowed* words and phrases are in *italics*, p. 458 (N. Ed., 504): "And again I say unto you, ye must *repent, and be baptized* in my name, and *become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God*. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is My doctrine and *whoso buildeth upon this, buildeth upon My rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them*. And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, *the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon My rock, but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell standeth open to receive such, when the floods come and the winds beat upon them*.

188 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

chapters from this prophet, commencing at the second chapter.

Nearly the whole of Isaiah, and occasional selections from the other prophets, are thus incorporated into the Book of Mormon, with the major portion of Christ's words as found in the four evangelists, and a generous sprinkling from all the epistles and the Book of Revelation.

It is no excuse for this lack of originality and constant repetition of the Bible, that, while it was not new to us, *it was new to the people in this country who heard it*. There could have been no possible objection to having those old sermons and addresses filled up with Bible quotations for the benefit of those who listened to them; but, such quotations should have been left out of a record that was kept for us who already possess the Bible. And, that ancient record,

as is frequently asserted, *was made for us exclusively*, and not for the people then living. The ancient Nephites had nothing whatever to do with the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated; in fact, *never saw them*.

The plates, professedly found by Joseph Smith, and from which the entire Book of Mormon was translated, were prepared by Mormon at the close of Nephite history, and were never seen by any person upon this continent, except by Mormon's son, Moroni. They were prepared and preserved for our benefit alone. And it is altogether a work of supererogation to furnish us the same message twice over. Jesus said a thousand things that are not left on record for us, and so did Paul and the other apostles, and undoubtedly, in their preaching, often quoted largely from the Old Testament, very like-

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 189

ly whole chapters at a time. But such sermons and such quotations were not left on record for us, because we have all such passages already in the Old Testament, and God *never does unnecessary things*.

We must, therefore, conclude that at least so much of these plates as contain such large repetitions of the Old and New Testaments cannot have been recorded at the command of God for our benefit, unless He would do in this country what He never would do in the old.

C. *The Forgotten Record.*

At this stage in the discussion we will read a passage where the poor man Nephi is made to give himself entirely away, so far as being inspired by the Holy Spirit or helped by an angel of God to write the Book of Nephi. He *forgets* a very important matter of record; *leaves out* of his book an important fact that should have gone in it—Page 481 (N. Ed., 531).

“And now it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words, He said unto them again, after He had expounded all the scriptures unto them which they had received, He said unto them, behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not. And it came to pass that He said unto Nephi, bring forth the record which ye have kept. And when Nephi had brought forth the records, and laid them before Him, He cast His eyes upon them and said, verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day the Father should glorify His name in me, that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And He said unto them, were it not so? And His disciples answered Him and said, yea, Lord, Samuel did prophesy according to Thy words, and they were all fulfilled. And Jesus said unto them, how be it that

190 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise and appear unto many, and did minister unto them? And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written. And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore, it was written according as He commanded.”

You readily see how it is. Jesus, in glancing over Nephi's record, discovers an important omission, *and chides Nephi for his neglect*. Nephi acknowledges the omission; and now, at the command of Jesus, inserts the omitted matter in at this place, entirely out of its proper connection. Now, was Nephi under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or assisted by an angel from heaven when he made such a blunder as this in keeping his record? Is a patched-up record inspired of God? If an angel comes all the way from heaven to help, it should have been an intelligent angel, blessed with a good memory, or he could have been of no particular advantage to Nephi.

ONE MARK OF A FALSE REVELATION.

No one can study the different religions which men have invented without being struck with the fact that they all profess to answer many questions, which a merely idle and unprofitable curiosity is always asking.

1. Any one who looks into the mythological stories respecting the pagan gods of Greece and Rome, will readily see that they are intended to gratify our curiosity, not to teach us duty, or bring to our remembrance moral maxims.

2. The same may be said of the additions made to the Old Testament by the writers of the Apocrypha.

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 191

One object of these additions is to satisfy the very natural desire of the Jews for a more complete history of their nation than is contained in their inspired history. And so fiction is made to fill up the gap. In like manner the Rabbis attempt to clear up the doctrinal parts of the Old Testament by the most absurd and groundless stories respecting God and his ancient people—stories that have little practical utility; are fitted chiefly to amuse the imagination or please the curiosity and the credulity of the people.

3. These old Hebrew Expounders and story tellers were followed by the priests and monks of the dark ages, who finding the people everywhere anxious to know more about the state of the soul between death and the last judgment, attempted to supply the demand by recording remarkable dreams of leading monks and nuns, and other “saints” as to the nature of this intermediate state. And in the course of

centuries dreams became revelations, and the doctrine of *purgatory* was framed, which professes to make very clear a subject concerning which Holy Scripture is silent. Had it been really profitable for us to know certainly anything about the intermediate state, the Lord would no doubt have revealed it to us—but as He did not, the Romanists have supplied the deficiency, though at the price, it is feared, of delusion and destruction to myriads of souls.

4. Turning to the impostor Mahomet, we discover the same mark of a false religion. This Arabian had some knowledge of the Old and the New Testament; but being dissatisfied with their silence on many points, he had the audacity to announce new revelations about

192 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

many things that were before mysterious or unknown. For instance, he has most minute descriptions of heaven and hell, and their inhabitants, a full and very circumstantial account of the creation of the world. To give his followers some idea of the immense size of the Almighty, he tells how long it takes an angel to fly around his head *from one ear to the other!* All these things he knew would please human nature, which is ever eager to know something more about whatever is hidden or wonderful, and yet is indifferent to such religious knowledge as relates to Christian doctrine, experience and practice.

5. Swedenborg fails when tried by this same test. For although believed to be an honest, sincere man, yet he evidently was the dupe of a diseased imagination. He gives us the most minute details regarding the celestial world, and its various ranks of beings. He answers a thousand idle questions, but as has been justly said, “while he furnishes abundant food for curiosity, there is nothing in his revelations that leads to any practical or moral lesson.” His system of religion, as taught in a large collection of volumes, is no real addition to the Christian system. It neither increases our knowledge of God, or of the duties we owe to Him and to our fellow-men.

The more carefully we examine the Bible the more clearly do we discover that it teaches us what is needful for us to know, but little or nothing besides. The information it gives us is such as is necessary to regulate our Christian character and practices, while it leaves our curiosity unsatisfied regarding a thousand historical facts, as well as many religious questions.

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 193

Had the writers of the New Testament been left to their own ingenuity, they would have set themselves to unseal

some of the mysteries of the gospel. They would, for example, have tried to explain the nature of the union of the divine and human natures in our Saviour—tell us many curious things about his death and resurrection, and ascension, explain to us more fully the agency and opinion of the Holy Spirit, and in what mode and with what bodies we come forth in the resurrection.

But an inspiration really divine not only moved them when they wrote, but checked them the moment they were tempted to say too much. There are as clear proofs of the divine hand in what is *left out* of the Bible, as in what is *put into it*. Hence, Solomon says (Prov. 25: 2.):

“It is the Glory of God to conceal a thing.”

We cannot expect an infinite God to explain everything to us that an idle or morbid curiosity may desire to know. As reasonably might a little boy tease his father or mother to answer all his questions. The boy could neither understand many of the answers of his parents, nor would the answers be profitable to him if he could understand them. Moses said: (Deut. 29:29):

“Secret things belong unto God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and unto our children forever; that we may do all the words of this law.”

Well does he add “that we may do all the words of this law.” For if we spend our precious time in trying to

194 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

unseal the mysteries that the Almighty has sealed, we must needs neglect his commands and fail to do all our duty. Our first parents fell from their state of innocence through the desire of forbidden knowledge. It was by seeking to “become gods, knowing good and evil,” that they became transgressors. By being too inquisitive they became disobedient; and by failing to practice what they knew “they brought death into the world and all our woe.” All human observation and experience since then has proved that the gratification of curiosity concerning religious things has been destructive of souls in various ways. It not only turns men aside from doing duty; it diverts thought and heart from the truth—it unsettles faith in the sure word of prophecy; it develops “itching ears,” that “turn away from the truth and are turned unto fables,” until men fall an easy prey to false prophets and deceivers and are left to “believe a lie that they might be damned.”

Well, now, if we apply this test to the Book of Mormon what must be our conclusion? Can we intelligently assert that it makes any profitable addition to our knowledge concerning the religion of Christ? Does it add a single ray of

light to that which we have already received from Christ Jesus, “the light of the world?”

It may be taken for granted that, however gratifying to our curiosity it might be to learn, for instance, all about the origin of the American Indian, and have presented to us a complete outline of the ancient history of these western continents, God would not reveal these historical facts to us without some far higher purpose in view. He has never discovered historical facts or scientific problems to us except in so far as they were

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 195

absolutely essential in revealing man’s spiritual relations and his higher duties to God and to his fellow men.

If, therefore, a man should resolve, as the Rev. Asahel Nettleton did, to “do all the good he can in this world, and to get safely out of it,”—is there anything in the Book of Mormon which could give him any useful information or needed guidance beyond what he has already found in the Bible? As a Christian pilgrim can he travel as safely and pleasantly without this book as with it? If he can, then the book was not sent to him from God for the welfare and salvation of the soul.

In answering this question, we will present *three* simple facts and leave the reader to form his own conclusions.

1. The Book of Mormon attempts to answer a large number of idle questions that God has not seen fit to answer. Without attempting a general survey, a few facts may be briefly enumerated.

It attempts to explain the origin of the *American Indians*, and at the same time answer in part the earnest inquiry of almost 1800 years past—what has become of the ten lost tribes of Israel; neither of which questions are answered in the Bible.

It attempts to tell us how the Indians came by a black skin, thus indirectly rebuking Bible silence upon the origin of color in the human species.

It attempts to explain how Jesus Christ existed, what his form and appearance before he came here in the flesh.

“And the veil was taken off the eyes of the brother of Jared,

196 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

and he saw the *finger of the Lord*; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood.”

Soon after this he shewed Jared’s brother his whole

body and said:

“Seest, thou, that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning, after mine image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.” p. 522 (N. Ed. 576-7).

It attempts to tell us what Jesus did between his death and resurrection as explained in Chap. 3. It tells us what Jesus did after his ascension in Judea—that is, visited this continent and remained here with his people forty days—thus directly contradicting the apostle Peter in Acts 3: 21.

“Whom the *heaven must receive until* the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

It fills up the supposed lack in the Bible instructions upon the subject of Christian baptism. And as this is a vital point with our Mormon friends, we will allow their best and clearest writer, Apostle Orson Pratt, to present it in his own way. (See *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 286-288):

“All these things combined with the unavoidable errors of an uninspired translation, have rendered the English Bible extremely uncertain and ambiguous. This uncertainty and ambiguity have been the principal cause of all the divisions of modern Christendom. The only way to remedy this great evil is to obtain another revelation of the gospel, free from all the corruptions and uncertainty which characterizes the English Bible. Nothing short of

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 197

such a revelation can ever redeem mankind from their errors of doctrine; nothing else can be an infallible standard of the Christian religion; nothing else can reclaim them from divisions and strifes; nothing else will give certainty and stability, so necessary to the happiness and salvation of man, and nothing else could be expected in the revelation of the gospel by an angel. *Such a revelation is the book of Mormon; the most infallible certainty* characterizes every ordinance and every doctrinal point revealed in that book. In it there is no ambiguity—no room for controversy—no doctrine so imperfectly expressed that two persons would draw two different conclusions therefrom. Such a revelation was greatly needed, and such a revelation the angel has revealed.

“As an example of the exceeding great plainness in which the doctrine of the Gospel is revealed we quote the teachings of Jesus Christ, in relation to baptism, as given by his personal ministry in the northern part of South America, soon after His resurrection.

“And it came to pass that he spoke unto Nephi (for Nephi was among the multitude), and he commanded him that he should come forth. And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself

before the Lord, and he did kiss his feet. And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before him. And the Lord said unto him, I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people, when I am again ascended into heaven. And again the Lord called others and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. And he said unto them: on this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you. Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them: behold ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye *immerse them in the water*; and come forth again out of the water. And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name, for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father,

198 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one; and I am in the Father and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one. And according as I have commanded you, thus shall ye baptize. And there shall be no disputations among you, as there hath hitherto been.' P. 457 (N. Ed. 503.)

"Now, we ask, how any one could err in regard to the meaning of this quotation concerning the mode of baptism; no two meanings could be drawn from these definite teachings. Every other point of the doctrine of Christ is equally as plain, and as definitely expressed as this, so that there is no possible chance for any differences of opinion in doctrine. There can be no question raised as to the meaning of the doctrine in the Book of Mormon; therefore, all who obtain a knowledge of its divine authenticity are from thenceforth sure and certain upon every point of the Gospel; and thus divisions, strifes, contentions and all the evils that flow from a diversity of opinions are, among the latter-day saints, for ever done away. The wranglings and quarrels about the doctrines of salvation, which have distracted mankind for generations and ages, can have no place in our midst. Among us new revelation has taken the place of opinion and guess-work, and the result thereof is union, peace and eternal life."

Beautiful, certainly very beautiful, and very desirable, if only true. But unfortunately there stands that little word "if" in the way of this earthly paradise.

The writer happens to be a member of a Baptist church, and as such, of course, sympathizes with the immersionists' side of the baptismal controversy, but he does not feel himself very largely strengthened by the above clear exposition of the ordinance—even though it professes to come directly from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ.

a. Every Mormon disputant upon earth will tell you instantly that the word baptize as used in the New Testament and the word immerse mean the same thing

precisely—in fact are originally the same word—there being no word in the Greek language to express the word immerse if the word baptize (or baptizo) does not express it.

b. If the Reformed Egyptian language as used upon this continent 1800 years ago had two words, one meaning to baptize and the other meaning to immerse, then the Book of Mormon should have explained the difference between the two words, since the passage as it now stands leaves us wonderfully in the dark.

c. But if the two words baptize and immerse had the same meaning upon this continent anciently, were in fact the same word, then the boasted clearness and plainness of the above passage is not in the *ancient record*, but in the *modern translation* by Mr. Smith. In which case he is badly beaten by the recent version of the American Bible Union for it would put the word *immerse* into every one of the above sentences!

d. But candidly, dear Mormon reader, what is there so very *original* or *new* in this passage? Our good Apostle Mr. Pratt fairly boils over with exultation and triumph as he presents this passage upon the subject of baptism as an illustration of the wonderful perspicuity, the "infallible certainty," the "exceeding great plainness," of the Book of Mormon in comparison with the "uncertainty and ambiguity," that characterize the Bible deliverance upon the same and other doctrinal subjects. But will the reader observe that every single statement in this passage descriptive of the act of baptism *is taken right out of the New Testament!* Let us see.

200 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>"Whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized."</p> | <p>So said Peter, Acts 2: 38: "Repent and be baptized every one of you."</p> |
| <p>"Behold ye shall go down and stand in the water."</p> | <p>"And they went down both into the water both Philip and the eunuch." Acts 8: 38.</p> |
| <p>"Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy ghost. Amen."</p> | <p>Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Matt. 28: 19.</p> |
| <p>"And then shall ye <i>immerse him in the water</i>."</p> | <p>And they were <i>baptized (immersed)</i> of him <i>in Jordan</i>." Matt. 3: 6.</p> |
| <p>"And came forth again out of the water."</p> | <p>"And when they were come up out of the water." Acts 8:39.</p> |

Where then is the boasted superiority of the Book of Mormon upon this subject, if its *most pointed statements* are stolen from the Bible? Indeed, we may go farther—for from the Mormon standpoint, with his interpretation of the passages, the Bible *far eclipses* the Book of Mormon in the clearness and positiveness of its statements upon this subject of baptism. For instance, take Paul's famous declaration in Rom. 6:3,4, and Col. 2:12, "*Buried with him by baptism unto death, wherein we have risen with him, etc.*" Can you coax an orthodox Mormon to accept any other interpretation than that these passages *define or describe* the *mode of baptism* as a burial in water and a resurrection therefrom. And with this interpretation accepted can you find anything in the Book of Mormon that approaches these New Testament utterances for clearness and definiteness! *How* the differences that now divide Christendom upon this and other subjects arose has nothing to do with the question; for from your own standpoint, good Mormon reader, the Bible is *ahead of* your Golden Bible upon this subject.

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 201

e. But once more. From the statement immediately following this description of baptism—"And there shall be no disputations among you *as there hath hitherto been,*" we are led to suspect this whole passage. Saying nothing for the present of its strong *modern* scent, we simply suggest here that *if this statement be true,* we have another proof that the boasted superiority of the Book of Mormon is a false boast. A great deal had been said in the Book of Mormon as to the mode and the subjects of baptism previous to this supposed deliverance of the Saviour: probably ten times as much as is said in the entire New Testament. It begins with the first author Nephi and stands out prominently everywhere. And yet, according to the above statement, the subject *was not yet clearly understood!* Honest Christian men had been *disputing* about its proper mode—so much so as to require this plain declaration by the Saviour to settle the question. Well now, we read of no such differences or disputations in New Testament history or during the first century of the Christian era. There was no ambiguity whatever, in the teachings of the New Testament. Its statements were as clear as the sunlight to those who lived at the time and understood the meaning of the Greek language. Whereas, the statements of the Book of Mormon up to the time the above passage was delivered had left the subject so ambiguous and mystified that the disciples of the Lord could not agree together in reference to it. The natural conclusion is that inasmuch as there were disputations here upon this continent, after an immense number of revelations upon the subject, but were none upon the old continent, therefore the revelations

upon the old continent in the New Testament must have been far clearer and less ambiguous than the revelations upon this continent as found in the Book of Mormon.

And, as we shall presently see, precisely the same conclusions are reached, as to every other Christian doctrine or practice. The boasted superiority of the Book of Mormon is an *empty boast*, a dazzling bauble, that bursts as soon as it is pricked, leaving nothing but a very small residuum of soft soap!

But this is not all. The Book of Mormon, as we shall see in the next chapter, *anticipates* a large number of the differences existing at the present day among the various Christian denominations; and of course settles them all according to the dictum of Mr. Smith (or Sidney Rigdon, as some believe) and by thus doing professes to fill up an acknowledged gap in the Bible record.

The Book of Mormon attempts to tell us how men are to be *converted*, and what genuine *faith* is—but the specimens given us in the book prove only too clearly that the ignorant author *had never been there himself*, and hence is a "blind guide," attempting to lead the blind. We had designed to present this matter fully but want of space forbids; and we think the illustrations to be presented in the next chapter of the modern "fall down" experiences will sufficiently show how utterly destitute of a saving faith the cases thus exhibited must necessarily have been.

Besides these and a multitude of other attempts to supply the supposed deficiencies of the Bible, the ridiculous *stories* in which the book abounds are a sufficient proof that it is a very, very human affair.

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 203

A large number have been cited in previous pages, but Jared's barges, Nephi's brass director and compass, the Lord's finger exhibited, Jared's brother becoming omniscient, disciples transfigured by a smile, pyrotechnic displays and angelic exhibitions upon numerous occasions, and almost a hundred other foolish things already mentioned in these pages gotten up to excite wonder, for exhibition purposes or to beat the Bible—do not by any means exhaust the list of wonders, or of ridiculous and absurd things in the Book of Mormon.

We will give place to two or three other brief specimens.

In the book of Ether, P. 534 (N. Ed. 591) after telling us that "the people had spread over all the face of the land" (North America) and that "there began to be an exceeding great wickedness upon the face of the land," we are informed of a most remarkable species of punishment. After

a terrible *famine*, which desolated the country, destroying the inhabitants “exceeding fast,” we are told of a lot of “*poisonous serpents*” that went into the stock herding or “rounding up” business, on the largest scale probably ever attempted. They ran over all North America and gathered up all the cattle, the cows, oxen, sheep, goats, etc., and drove them down in the direction of *South America!* Many of these cattle perished on the way down, and the hungry owners, who followed up their stock, devoured all such. The balance were hurried by the serpents into South America. When there—

“The Lord did cause the serpents that they should pursue them no more.”

204 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

But instead these cunning serpents leisurely stretched themselves across the Isthmus completely blocking the way.

“ . . . But that they should hedge up the way, that the people could not pass; that whoso should attempt to pass, might fall by the poisonous serpents.”

Thus completely baffled, with nothing left to eat, as they could not reach their cattle, the people saw that they must perish, and so—

“They began to repent of their iniquities and cry unto the Lord.”

Almost equal to this as an extraordinary *herding feat* is the statement upon p. 257 (N. Ed. 285) regarding a certain famous watering place called “the waters of Sebus.”

“*All the Lamanites* drive their flocks hither that they may have water.”

We have previously been told that the Lamanites had become literally “innumerable”—that they had spread over a goodly portion of the South American continent, become rich in flocks and herds, etc., but here we are informed that from all over that broad continent thousands of miles in extent, they persist in driving their flocks to this one place for their daily supply of water!!

Of a different character, but not a whit behind these stories in its unnaturalness, and its absolute silliness, is the following by Mormon, p. 506 (N. Ed. 559). Mormon is recording the rapid destruction of his people, the Nephites. They have been driven out of all their strongholds

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 205

in Central America: one after another their principal cities

have been taken and destroyed by the victorious Lamanites. Beaten everywhere and rapidly driven northward, Mormon finally writes a letter to the king of the Lamanites, making the following strange request:

“And I, Mormon, wrote an epistle unto the King of the Lamanites, and desired of him that he would grant unto us that we might gather together our people unto the land of Cumorah, and there we could give them battle. And it came to pass that the King of the Lamanites did grant unto me the thing which I desired. And it came to pass that we did match forth to the land of Cumorah, and we did pitch our tents round about the hill Cumorah; and it was in a land of many waters, rivers and fountains; and here we had hope to gain advantage over the Lamanites.”

Now, reader, do you think any sane general of an army would write such a letter as the above to his *deadly foe*? And if such a letter had been written, do you think such a deadly foe, if in his senses would have consented? Please bear in mind that the Lamanites’ *home* was in South America, and that the principal possessions of the Nephites, their largest cities, nearly everything desirable as plunder, are found in Central America, while this hill, *Cumorah*, is located in western New York*, from two to three thousand miles distant. Would the Lamanite king be willing to transport an army of several hundred thousand, at least two thousand miles away from his base of supplies, into a sparsely settled country, where provisions were necessarily scarce, for no other reason than to allow his enemy to secure a

*“The hill Cumorah is in Manchester, Ontario County, New York.”—From note in N. Ed. Book of Mormon, p. 559.

206 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

good position where they “had hope to gain advantage over the Lamanites”?

But again, why do you suppose the good prophet Mormon was so anxious to reach that particular hill Cumorah, so far away from the homes and possessions of his people? Was it really because said hill was a natural fortification, a famous strategic point? Not at all; it is only a little hill, while in reaching that hill he had climbed over hundreds of mountain fastnesses, had marched by scores of magnificent canons or river gorges and other of nature’s hiding places or of Thermopylae passes—a thousand places had been presented that were a hundred times better adapted to the object he had in view: “to gain some advantage over the Lamanites.”

Why then does he ignore all these strong places and march his army a thousand miles away from the mountains to a little hill in western New York that was utterly valueless as a natural barrier against an enemy? Reader,

we will whisper the reason. Joseph Smith found his golden plates in this hill Cumorah, and he must needs get Mormon and Moroni up there with their sacred records before these worthies are swept out of existence, or his ancient history will not tally with the modern facts!!

“And it came to pass when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land of Cumorah, behold I, Mormon, began to be old; and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer that the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites (for the Lamanites would destroy them), therefore I made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 207

been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni.” p. 507.

And Moroni is represented as living several years after, and managed to “hide up” “these few plates” in the same place! where Joseph Smith, who *happened* to live in the neighborhood, found them 1400 years afterwards!

2. Aside from a multitude of such unnatural, foolish and often impossible stories, of no possible value, except to excite wonder on the part of credulous people, or make up for imaginary lacks in the records of the Bible—the Book of Mormon presents absolutely *nothing new*—not one syllable in advance of Bible revelations upon any one of the grand doctrines of redemption.

The “*Compendium of the Doctrines of the Gospel*” is a little book of recognized authority in the church of “Latter Day Saints,” compiled by Apostle Richards and Elder Little, for the use of travelling missionaries and preachers. It contains, as its name imports, a compendium of the faith of the saints. After a brief but very clear and comprehensive statement of the *views* of the church upon each of the different doctrines, it follows up each separate proposition with the *proof texts* or brief references to the places where taught in the “Bible,” in the “Book of Mormon,” in the “Doctrines and Covenants,” and in the “Pearl of Great Price,” the *four* books recognized as of Divine authority.

In their *preface* they say:

“We have sought to furnish the *best available material* for the

use of the elders. . . On most of the subjects treated only a portion of the passages that refer to them have been cited; but *we have endeavoured to use the best.*”

If then the Book of Mormon contains a large amount of the “cream” of the gospel, that the Bible does not contain, or if its statements are characterized by “infallible certainty,” by “exceeding great plainness,” without a particle of “ambiguity,” as compared with the uncertain ambiguous statements of the Bible—here is a good place to find it out without the necessity of reading the two books through. The compilers of this “Compendium” have carefully selected the best and clearest passages upon the points in question from the *two* books—the Bible and the Book of Mormon—and these passages are placed side by side, and in a brief compass, so that the comparisons may be easily made.

The following are the general doctrinal subjects treated in the “Compendium”:

The “Fall of Adam,” “Free Agency,” “Atonement,” “Faith,” “Repentance,” “Baptism,” “Baptism for the Dead,” “Remission of Sins,” “Laying on of hands,” “The Resurrection,” “The Holy Priesthood,” “Christ’s First and Second Coming,” “The Scattering and Gathering of Israel,” “Marriage,” “Foreordination and Election,” “Fulness of Times,” “The Holy Spirit,” “Tithing,” “Apostacy,” “New Jerusalem,” “Spiritual Gifts,” “Pre-existence of Spirits,” “Plurality of Gods,” “The True and Living God,” “The Destruction of the Wicked,” “The Sabbath Day,” &c., &c.

First Fact. While a large number of passages from the Bible are referred to upon each one of the above subjects, the Book of Mormon has nothing whatever

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 209

upon the subject of “Laying on of Hands,” “Christ’s Second Coming,” his “Millennial Reign,” the subject of “Marriage,” except the prohibition of Polygamy already noticed, “Tithing,” the “Sabbath,” and “Baptism for the Dead.”

Have we a Mormon reader who can believe that any book could contain the “*Fulness of the Gospel*” without a word upon either of the above subjects? These are all *very* important subjects; with the Latter-day Saints they are *fundamental*; and yet here this *Golden Bible* is entirely silent.

Fact Second. Upon the leading doctrines of the Gospel we find the following to be the principal deliverances of the Book of Mormon:

A. *Free Agency:*

“The Lord gave unto man that he should act for himself.”

“Ye are permitted to act for yourselves.”

“Reap eternal happiness or misery according to the Spirit they obey.”

“In a state to act according to their will.”
“Being left to choose good or evil.”
“A man’s privilege to believe in God or not.”

B. The Atonement:

“He suffereth the pains of all men.”
“Made white in the blood of the Lamb.”
“The atonement satisfies the demands of justice on those without law.
“He layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him.”
“No other name whereby men can be saved.”
“Jews will reject the only foundation on which they can build.”
“The atonement which has been prepared from the foundation of the world for all men who have been or will be saved.”

210 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

“Take upon him death that he may loose the bonds of death.”
“The law of Moses is fulfilled in the infinite atonement of Christ.”

“Will not redeem his people in their sins, but from their sins.”

C. Faith:

“Which power he received by faith on the Son of God.”
“Save Christ should come all men must perish.”
“Because of our faith we are made alive in Christ.”
“Ye have not come thus far except by unshaken faith in Christ.”
“Do ye exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you.”
“Firm in the faith of Christ.”
“I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.”
“Purify those whom I have chosen because of their faith.”
“None can enter the kingdom unless they wash their garments in the blood of Christ by faith.”
“The Lord can do all things for men through their faith.”
“Salvation to him that continues in faith to the end.”
“The Spirit gives knowledge and power according to faith.”

D. Repentance:

“He gave a commandment that all men should repent.”
“If they will not repent and be baptized they must be damned.”
“You must repent of your sins and forsake them.”
“He commanded them that they should preach nothing but repentance and faith.”
“Baptized unto repentance.”
“Except ye repent ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God.”
“Bring forth fruit meet for repentance.”
“Ye must come to repentance or ye cannot be saved.”

E. Remission of Sins:

Only two passages referred to as follows:
“As oft as my people repent I will forgive them.”

of the Father unto the remission of your sins.”

F. The Resurrection:

“He layeth down his life and taketh it again, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead.”
“When all people and nations shall stand before God.”
“When the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God.”
“When all, both small and great, shall be loosed from the bonds of death.”
“He that is faithful at the last day shall be lifted up.”
“We shall all stand before God at the last day.”

G. Punishment of the wicked:

“The wrath of God poured out upon the mother of harlots.”
“The filthy shall go into everlasting fire.”
“Woe unto him that has the commandments of God and transgresseth them.”
“Those who have known the commandments of God and have not kept them shall have no part in the first resurrection.”
“The wicked shall be cast out.”
“Those who have been evil shall reap the damnation of their souls.”
“Those who do not repent are hewn down and cast into the fire.”
“Every soul that will not hear that prophet shall be cut off.”

Now in reference to all the above passages will the reader carefully note two things:

First.—That there is absolutely nothing *new* upon either of the above subjects. No advance upon the Bible whatever. On the contrary:

Second.—Every sharp, clear, well defined statement in the entire list, every statement that has any sense or reason in it is taken directly from the Bible. Either is an exact transcription of Bible language, or the gist of

212 THE GOLDEN BIBLE.

Bible passages expressed in a little different form of words. Every Bible student will recognize this fact at once. Those not familiar with the Bible can easily verify this assertion by the use of an ordinary *concordance*, or by a careful examination of the quotations from the Bible found in the above “Compendium,” immediately preceding these quotations from the Book of Mormon.

3. But this brings us directly to the third and last point we wish to make in this chapter: that, instead of the Book of Mormon being an *advance* on the revelations of the Bible, a *restoration* of the cream of the Gospel, the “precious things” eliminated from the Bible by “that great and

abominable church,” as is falsely and slanderously claimed—a careful examination proves it to be an unprincipled *plagiarist*. So completely is this so, that every real good thing in it *is taken bodily from our Bible*. And if you take away from it all that it has thus stolen from the Holy Scriptures, what is left will be neither cream nor even skim milk, it will be the veriest *slop!* an aggregate of unnatural and silly stories.

This would become still more apparent, if space permitted a careful analysis of some of the professed *prophecies* of the Book of Mormon relating to the present day, or to the future.

In every instance such prophecies will be found made up of various Bible prophecies, skillfully sometimes, and sometimes not so skillfully, put together. And that every attempt of the book to forecast the future that is not thus made up of the Bible prophecies

THE GOLDEN BIBLE. 213

will be found a miserable failure—a silly lot of *guessing* that has already been, or is constantly being contradicted by the facts of history.

Reader, What must be the *moral* make up of the author of such a book as this? Borrowing every one of its good things from the Bible, and then lifting itself up above the Bible. Like a robber who enters by stealth the house of a great prince, and, after donning the prince’s clothing, and appropriating his gold and his diamonds, immediately attempts to pass himself off as a veritable prince—a brother of the robbed man, forsooth! A brother, too, of richer blood and nobler mien and more costly treasures, and deserving higher consideration than the victim he has plundered!

This is the robber who has given to the world this Book of Mormon, and blasphemously tells us upon every page that he is an *angel of the Lord*, and therefore deserves the love and the homage of mankind!!