

October 24, 1927.

Bob
Parallels

Elder Richard R. Lyman,
L. D. S. Church Office Bldg.
Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dear Brother Lyman:

You perhaps will recall our conversation of a few days ago in relation to the inquiry we had before the Council of the Twelve Apostles on some problems associated with the Book of Mormon, just previous to my commencing my mission in the Eastern States, and how I reminded you that on the former occasion here alluded to I announced that what I had presented did not constitute all our B. of M. problems, that there were others. You then asked, "Well, will these help solve our present problems or will it increase our difficulties?" to which I replied, "It would very greatly increase our problems!" At which you said (and I thought rather lightly) "Well, I don't see why we should bother with them then." To this I answered that I should go on with my studies nevertheless, and the other day I told you, if you remember, that I had continued my investigations and had drawn up a somewhat lengthy report for the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve. Then came my call to the Eastern States and the matter was dropped, but my report was drawn up nevertheless together with a letter that I had intended should accompany it, but in the hurry of getting away and the impossibility at that time of having my report considered, I dropped the matter, and have not yet decided whether I shall present that report to the First Presidency or not. But since I mentioned this matter to you the other day, and also because you took considerable interest on the former occasion of more than five years ago and wrote letter to Professor Chamberlain and Dr. Middleton and others about the subject, I thought I would submit in sort of tabloid form a few pages of matter pointing out a possible theory of the origin of the Book of Mormon that is quite unique and never seems to have occurred to anyone to employ, largely on account of the obscurity of the material on which it might be based, but which in the hands of a skillful opponent could be made, in my judgment, very embarrassing. I submit it in the form of a Parallel between some main outline facts pertaining to the Book of Mormon and matter that was published in Ethan Smith's "View of the Hebrews" which preceded the Book of Mormon, the first edition by eight years, and the second edition by five years, 1823-5 respectively. *It was* published in Vermont and in the adjoining county in which the Smith Family lived in the Prophet Joseph's boyhood days, so that it could be urged that the family doubtless had this book in their possession, *and as* the book in two editions flooded the New England States and New York.

In addition to this publication of such matter Josiah Priest published at Rochester, N.Y., twenty miles from Palmyra his first work on American Antiquities, under the title of "The Wonders of Nature and Providence." This in 1824, six years before the publication

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of the Book of Mormon and within twenty miles of Palmyra. And in this book Mr. Priest quotes very copiously from the "View of the Hebrews" and quite extensively from Humbolt's "New Spain" which was published in translation into English, and largely circulated throughout the United States in 1811.

Necessarily the matter presented is rather large in volume, but I hope its interest will excuse its length, ~~and I~~ will ask you to consider it from this view point. Suppose it to be submitted to you as a question in this form:

"The Origin of the Book of Mormon—Did Ethan Smith's "View of the Hebrews", published eight and five years before Joseph Smith's Book of Mormon, Supply the Structural Outline and Subject Matter ~~of the detail~~ of the Alleged Nephite Record?"

Some of the

Such a question as that may possibly arise some day, and if it does, it would be greatly to the advantage of our future Defenders of the Faith, if they had in hand a thorough digest of the subject matter. I submit it to you and if you are sufficiently interested you may submit it to others of your Council. Let me say also, that the Parallel that I send to you is not one fourth part of what can be presented in this form, and the unrepresented part is quite as striking as this that I submit.

Very truly yours,

BHR/ec