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Aaron, Son of Mosiah

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Abstract: Aaron chose missionary service over the opportunity to serve as king and suffered hardship and inhumane treatment to preach the gospel to the Lamanites. Though little is known about him, the Book of Mormon sets forth the greatness of his character.

the Earl of Warwick was scarcely a less important personage in his time than the justly beloved Alfred was in his, or the more or less mystical Arthur in the chivalrous and romantic period graced by him.

He who is best known as the Earl of Warwick was by no means the first to bear the title. He won it, in fact, by his marriage with the heiress of the powerful Beauchamps, to which family the title and lands of the earldom had long belonged. Himself of the illustrious Neville family, his coming into the world was fortunately, perhaps, for his fame, at a time when his early manhood witnessed the most tempestuous period in English history. He became the most conspicuous figure in the War of the Roses, and by his daring courage as well as his strong and influential following he was soon more powerful than the king himself; he had the power not only to tear down but also to set up the king. Hence his proud title of King-maker. His success in the field soon brought him to the height of his power; a career so meteoric could not fail to terminate as suddenly as it grew. His influence began to wane with the installation and coronation of the monarch who owed his throne to Warwick's prowess; and when the inconstant Edward allowed himself to be captivated by the charms of Elizabeth Woodville, instead of contracting the diplomatic marriage with the princess of Savoy which the wily Louis XI. of France and the Earl of Warwick had arranged, the latter set about pulling down the sovereign he had raised to power. He accepted foreign embassies which were in truth nothing but honorable exile, and for a time was seemingly content. But his ambition again spurred him to activity, and, gratified at the prospect of a marriage between his daughter Anne and the Lancastrian prince, he was fickle enough to take up arms against the Yorkist sovereign. The latter was compelled to flee, and Henry resumed the crown. But the Flemings and Dutch, to whom Edward now appealed, responded warmly to his call, and at their head he rallied his followers and advanced bravely

upon London. Warwick came forth to stop him. The hostile forces met at Barnet, April 4th, 1471, and there one of the most decisive battles of history was fought. The earl was defeated, and he and his brother were left dead on the field. Here ended the glory of the house of Warwick, and with the battle of Tewksbury, which shortly afterwards occurred, terminated the bloody and disastrous War of the Roses. It is a singular coincidence that every individual of two generations of the great families of Warwick and Somerset died either on the scaffold or fell in battle.

Warwick is immortalized by Bulwer-Lytton as "the last of the barons" in his great work of that name,—one of the classics of the English language. Even in romance a more illustrious figure is difficult to find; in history his fame, notwithstanding his unholy ambition and his treasonable dealings, will endure as long as the English tongue is spoken or the English nation survives. *John Q. Cannon.*

AARON, SON OF MOSIAH.

IT is generally supposed that Aaron was the eldest son of his father, the second Mosiah, as it is said that the sovereignty of the people rightly belonged to him on the death of the latter, but he refused this great honor on purpose to fulfill a mission to the Lamanites, upon which he and his brothers had set their hearts.

Aaron was born in the land of Zarahemla probably not earlier than B. C. 125, as his father would then have been about thirty years old. During his youth he was wayward and uncontrollable, and joined with those who persecuted the people of God. In fact he and his brothers and the younger Alma were leaders among those who harassed the church. The conduct of the young princes in this regard cannot be ascribed to the corrupting influence of lives of pomp and luxury spent at their father's court, for that was a model of simplicity and frugality, and the

king himself labored with his hands to lighten the burdens of the people. But it may more justly be attributed to the want of thought, self-conceit and stubbornness so frequently shown in the lives of the young, until maturer years and wider experience teach them humility and reverence. From this sad course of life Aaron and his associates were rescued by the direct interposition of heaven. He was traveling in the company that was stopped on the way by the angel of the Lord, who, in tones of thunder, which caused the solid earth to tremble, reproved its members for their sins and commanded them to molest the saints no more. From this moment Aaron was a changed man, he gave to God and heaven his undivided life. Where he had done evil he sought to make amends and where he had incited to turbulancy he became a peacemaker. Shortly afterwards he and his brothers commenced to labor as missionaries among the Nephites. They next determined to lay their lives on the altar of sacrifice and go up to the land of Nephi into the midst of the Lamanites and bear to them the message of God's condescension and love. From this seeming rash resolve most of their friends sought to dissuade the young princes. They pictured to them the perils of the venture, the hopelessness of the task. But it availed not. The Spirit of the Lord was burning within them, they were oppressed with the thought of the value of human souls that were perishing for lack of knowledge. The good king himself, had scarcely the fervor of his sons, he hesitated to give his consent, for he doubted, as from past experience he had good cause to doubt, that they would be able to reclaim from their savage ways the benighted children of Laman. However, he inquired of the Lord. The answer was full of assurances of success, and of Divine protection for his sons. Thus strengthened he sent them forth with his blessing. But as he was growing old the question of who should succeed him on the Nephite throne filled his mind. He sent among the people to inquire who would be their choice. The people an-

swered Aaron. But Aaron would not accept the crown, his mind was on other objects fully bent. So, lest he should ever change his mind and demand the kingly authority as his right, his father decided, with the consent of the people, to change the form of the government of the nation from a monarchy to a republic; which change was made by unanimous consent.

When the young men left Zarahemla (B. C. 91) they plunged into the wilderness that divided the possessions of the Nephites from the Lamanites, and amidst its discouragements they almost lost heart, but were animated to renewed endeavor by Divine manifestations. When they reached the borders of the Lamanites the missionaries separated. Aaron journeyed towards a land called Jerusalem, in which was built a great city of the same name, peopled largely and controlled by Nephite apostates of the order of Nehor. Aaron entered into their synagogues and preached, he proclaimed the word wherever he had opportunity. But they would not accept it. Finding his efforts in their behalf useless after a time he left them and went over to a village called Ani-Anti. There he found some of his brethren zealously ministering, but the people hardened their hearts against the gospel message. So they all departed and journeyed to the land of Middoni. Here again they preached to many though but few believed. The hardened unbelievers treated the brethren with much cruelty so that some of them fled, while the rest, among whom was Aaron, were taken and cast into prison where they were abused with great inhumanity; their lives were preserved by the power of God alone. In prison they remained until they were delivered by Ammon, Aaron's brother, and King Lamoni. The latter had influence enough with Antionno, the king of Middoni, to secure the release of the brethren. Sometime after their release Aaron left the land of Middoni and was led by the Spirit to the land of Lehi-Nephi, where was the abode of the chief king over the Lamanites. Aaron and his

brethren repaired to the palace, bowed before the king, told him who they were and offered to be his servants. To this he would not consent. He had already learned something of the gospel from Ammon, and now desired to hear more. At his request Aaron explained to him many things relating to the nature of God and the plan of salvation; for, though he recognized the power and might of the Great Spirit, he was altogether ignorant of things concerning the Deity.

His words were gratefully received by the king, who besought Aaron to teach him how he might obtain the eternal life of which he spoke. Aaron instructed him to bow down before the Lord in prayer, and then in faith ask for the blessings he desired.

The aged king did so. He prostrated himself on the ground and cried mightily, saying, "O God, Aaron hath told me there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day." So great was his emotion, that when he had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead.

When the king thus fell his servants ran and told the queen what had happened. She at once came into the room where he lay, and seeing Aaron and his brethren standing by she became very angry, as she supposed that they were the cause of the evil that had, in her estimation, befallen her husband. She, without hesitation, ordered the king's servants to take the brethren and slay them; but they dared not, for they feared the power which was in Aaron. The queen was also afraid, but she seemed to think that the best way to get rid of the trouble was to destroy those who she imagined brought it. As the king's servants refused to obey her command, she ordered them to go out into the streets and call upon the people to come in and kill Aaron and his companions.

When Aaron saw the temper of the queen, he feared lest the multitude, in the hardness of their hearts, would raise a great commo-

tion, and be a cause of hindering the work of God, which had so auspiciously commenced with the king. Therefore he put forth his hand and raised the monarch from the earth, and at the same time said unto him, "Stand." The king at once received his strength and stood upon his feet, at the sight of which the queen and her servants wondered greatly and were filled with fear.

Then the king began to explain to them what he had learned with regard to God and the gospel, and he spoke with such great power that his whole household was converted. The multitude also that had gathered at the call of the queen were pacified by his words, and when he saw that their hearts were softened he caused that Aaron and his brethren should teach them the word of God.

After the king was converted he sent a proclamation throughout the land forbidding any and all from persecuting Aaron and his fellow-missionaries, giving them liberty to preach anywhere and everywhere that they desired. Our readers may be sure that this privilege was not neglected. Nor was the result of their labors trifling, but glorious in the saving of many thousand souls; for unto the Lord were converted the people of the Lamanites who dwelt in the lands of Ishmael, Middoni, Shilom and Shemlon, and in the cities of Nephi, Lemuel and Shimnilon; and they became a righteous, peaceful, God-serving people, and from faithful obedience to His law they never fell away. But the various bodies of Nephite apostates who dwelt among the Lamanites universally rejected the gospel message, with the exception of one single Amalekite.

The renegade Amalekites, Amulonites and others were not willing to be ruled by a Christian monarch. They had rejected Christianity altogether, and would not have it as the ruling power, either in Nephi or Zarahemla. With the old sophistries and falsehoods they raised a mutiny in the hearts of their associate Lamanites and urged them on to rebellion against the rightful king and his believing subjects. But the converted

Lamanites made no preparations to resist them; they felt that in times past with unholy hands they had spilt blood as water on the land; blood that they could never atone for, but they would do it no more. Passive non-resistance for the future should be their policy, but the blood of a fellow-being they would never again shed, no matter how great the peril, how intense the aggravation. As a witness of the completeness of this resolve, they took their weapons of war and buried them deep in the earth with an oath and covenant that they would never dig them up again. When the maddened hosts of their embittered brethren rushed upon them, they came forth unarmed, bowed down before their assailants, and submitted to their fate. With them to live was Christ, to die was salvation. The vengeful Nephite apostates led the inglorious charge and shed most of the blood that flowed that day, when one thousand and five unresisting martyrs glorified the Lamanite race by the tribute of their lives to God and the truth. A thousand ransomed souls, washed white in the blood of the Lamb, that day entered the gates of heaven to stand among the saviors on Mount Zion in the great day of the redeemed. Nor was there joy alone in that bright world beyond, but on earth the church was gladdened by fresh accessions to the cause. When many of the actual Lamanites witnessed the great change that had taken place in their brethren, that they would quietly, peacefully, joyously lay down their lives, their consciences smote them; they stayed their hands, and rose in tumult against their Amalekite leaders, and would no longer be the murderers of their kin. The blood of the martyrs was indeed the seed of the church, for there were more added to the fold of Christ on that memorable day than those who passed away to the presence of their God.

After a disastrous war with the Nephites a year or so later, the disappointed Lamanites again attacked their Christian brethren, who, as before, permitted themselves to be slain without making the slightest resistance. Seeing

the murderous temper of their assailants, it was determined, by the permission of the Lord, to remove all the believers to the land of Zarahemla. This was successfully accomplished, and by the consent of the Nephites these persecuted people occupied and established themselves in the land of Jershon; the four sons of Mosiah accompanying them.

After the return of the sons of Mosiah to the land of Zarahemla we have little account of Aaron, except incidental references to his virtues, nor do we know anything of his death. He was alive in the year B. C. 75, for in that year he accompanied Alma to the land of Antionum on the remarkable mission to the Zoramites, and there labored with his usual faithfulness and zeal. When that mission was ended he appears to have accompanied the rest of the missionaries to the land of Jershon, after which we hear no more of him or of his labors.

George Reynolds.

A LIFE'S EXPERIENCE.

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ON January 3rd, 1857, we received orders to proceed at once to Malta. Arriving there we loaded with all kinds of stores and a large amount of money and on the 12th of February sailed again for England. On the 28th, we arrived at Spithead and discharged all stores. We then received orders to go at once to Plymouth and refit. After doing this we sailed, on March 16th, for the South Pacific—the part of the world I hoped to visit when I first joined the navy.

In a few days we were in close proximity to the Equator and there began to be great preparations made to receive Old Neptune and his family on board to take part in the initiation of all “green horns” into the Neptune family. The whole crew had to appear before a committee of examination and they decided who should be shaved. As a matter of fact all who had not crossed the line had to undergo the ordeal, and their