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Book of Mormon Studies

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Abstract: This is a series of articles intended for Relief Society course study. It discusses the importance of the Book of Mormon, its coming forth (i.e., the translation, the witnesses, the publication, Joseph Smith), brief overview of its contents, and explains the text from 1 Nephi 1 through Alma 58. Each article features several questions that are helpful in synthesizing and applying the Book of Mormon to daily life.

if they keep clean they will be fit instruments for the working out of the great purposes of our Lord. Let us devote our time and our energy, our preaching and our teaching, to the cleanliness of life that follows the keeping of the Word of Wisdom. I pray also that the message which comes from this great and remarkable statement given to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith may go beyond the confines of the Church into all corners of the earth, that men and women may understand that they are created in the image of God and have sacred obligation to preserve that image in all respects.

OBEDIENCE IS THE TEST OF DEVOTION

We love God. As we love Him we will do what He asks. He has asked us in the most kind and affectionate way to do these things for our own welfare, for our prosperity, for our spiritual growth and development, for the preparation we need to make to carry forward His great work, to preach the Gospel in its fulness and to give to mankind proper conceptions of life. Surely as we love Him we will follow His admonition and yield to His kindly persuasion. I pray that His Spirit may attend us in the keeping of our bodies pure and immaculate, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES*

SCIENTISTS tell us that our world is very old, as we count years. Indeed, we know that according to written history it has four or five thousand years to its credit. We know approximately the proportion and extent of land and water on the earth's surface during that period of time. According to earlier accepted history only a very small portion of the land was thought to have been occupied by man, and that upon the Eastern Continent. Yet when modern history began the Western Continent was found to be inhabited by many tribes of people living in differing stages of civilization. Evidence is plentiful to-day that the Western Hemisphere has been peopled during almost as long a period of time as has been the Eastern Continent. History gives no accounting of these peoples found in the so-called New World. But few attempts have been made to explain or account for their differing degrees of civilization as evidenced by their present living conditions, or the countless remains of earlier growth and development.

That these people were all God's children who received His care and guidance and were in possession of His holy Gospel and at times lived it in its purity is told in the very wonderful record called the Book of Mormon.

*This article is for use in the course of study for the Relief Societies on the first lesson night in January.

The Stick of Joseph—The Book of Mormon is a record of struggles for righteousness and lapses into wickedness for many centuries of the people who lived on the Western Hemisphere, now called North and South America. The Prophet Ezekiel foretells in a most interesting manner the coming forth of the “stick of Joseph”—clearly the Book of Mormon—which shall be united with that of Judah—the Bible—to the “confounding of false doctrines” and “to the establishing of peace” and “bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days and also the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.” Read and study in this connection Ezekiel 37 : 16-23, and 2 Nephi, chapter 3. Through the coming forth of the Book of Mormon this prophecy has been literally fulfilled.

Importance of the Book—It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the study of the Book of Mormon by the members of the Church. With this book must stand or fall the claims of the founders of the Church restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. For, if the book is not a message from God “to the Lamanites [American Indians] who are a remnant of the House of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment and also by the spirit of prophecy and revelation” then is the whole contention of the Church false and of no avail.

Study will prove the book to be as stated—verily the word of God to His children of another branch of Israel. A full understanding of these facts should be possessed by every church member. For this reason the women of this Mission are urged to make its study a joyous undertaking for this year's course of lessons.

Does not Supersede the Bible—Important as may be the study of the Book of Mormon, no claim has ever been made by the Church that it supersedes the Bible as the word of God. The one complements and strengthens the other, as the “stick of Joseph” and the “stick of Judah” add strength to each other.

Our assertion is: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.” Righteous living is our aim; joyous acceptance of all divine truth is our purpose.

Future lessons will help us to become better acquainted with this unique and interesting book. The practice of its teachings will enrich our lives and ennoble all our undertakings.

QUESTIONS

1. Read carefully the title page of the Book of Mormon. Discuss its meaning.
2. Why do you enjoy reading the Book of Mormon?
3. Why can not the Book of Mormon take the place of the Bible?
4. Why should all church members understand and be able to defend this book?