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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.

presented for their choice, and they succumb to the temptation of desire or selfish motive and, unthinkingly sometimes, choose to say or do the evil thing. Of course, the degree of evil entailed determines the degree of punishment in all things, temporal and spiritual. It should be remembered that the extent to which self-control is exercised, law obeyed, and good is chosen and *done*, merits and receives the approval and reward of our Heavenly Father.

WHAT I AM

I will not further pursue the task of offering satisfactory answers to the question: "What Am I?" The pursuit could, of course, be greatly extended. I am aware that I have presented the matter in rather a rambling form, but what I have thus far written represents, as clearly as I can, my acquired knowledge and views on the subject. I hope, however, that you will agree with me that the statements submitted are profoundly impressive, conveying as they do the positive assurance of the marvelous fact that we—all mankind—are the spirit children of the Creator of this vast universe, which includes the earth on which we now dwell in a condition of mortality. Therefore, in view of the facts and reasons which I have endeavoured to convincingly set forth, I feel that we should regard the question: "What Am I?" as having been answered soul-satisfyingly, according to the sublime truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

You will find the texts of the following noted quotations of scripture are in line with others stated in the foregoing pages: Proverbs 8: 21-30; Hebrews 1: 2; John 1: 3; John 5: 17; Job 38: 4-7; Hebrews 12: 9; Matthew 6: 9; Zechariah 12: 1; John 16: 28; Genesis 1: 27; Psalms 82: 6; 36: 9; Ephesians 1: 4; Romans 11: 2; 2 Timothy 1: 9; Genesis 2: 5-7; John 9: 2; Jude 1: 6; Romans 8: 16, 17.—From the April 16th, 1929, issue of the *Liahona*.

RELIEF SOCIETY

BOOK OF MORMON STUDIES

For the first lesson in August

WITHIN a few short chapters now we follow the Book of Mormon peoples on the American continent from the uppermost height of their peace, glory and righteousness, down almost to the lowest depths of their carnal depravity. The entire book of Fourth Nephi and the first three chapters of Mormon are to be considered for this lesson.

Fourth Nephi allows us just to glimpse at a heavenly picture upon which our eyes would gladly linger. It gives us just a hint of the peace, happiness, prosperity, contentment and abundant living

that come to men and women when they follow the plan the Lord has given them. It convinces us that all sin and misery is a result of disobedience to the law of heaven. It lets us know that all evil known to us is man-made and devil-inspired.

For two hundred years the Nephites lived in a blessed state, having all things in common and working only works of righteousness. Such a condition has no parallel in Holy Writ, nor in world history, to our knowledge. We almost lose patience with the historians who did not leave us more of the details of this period of peace, and fewer of the intricate details of war. Yet their writings are valuable, and to some good purpose, we may be sure.

Even unbroken peace seems to become monotonous to foolish mankind. It did to the Nephites, and so they had more wars, caused by pride and petty differences. At least their experience of the two hundred years proves to us that the Lord's plan is perfect, if men will let it work.

QUESTIONS

1. Tell of the effect the visit of the Saviour had upon the lives of the Nephites for two hundred years. Was it the same in Palestine? Why?

2. Name the chief factors that contributed to the peace and happiness of the Nephites during the two hundred years. Could they be used to-day? Would they bring the same results? How?

3. What type of men and women does it require to have successfully "all things in common?" What has caused all such attempts to fail ultimately till the present time?

4. Note that as soon as wickedness became widespread, the servants of the Lord were persecuted and cast into prison. In what way has this always been true? Give examples of early Christian days. Give examples from Latter-day Saint history.

5. Trace the history of the sacred records between two hundred and three hundred twenty-two A. D. Why and how were they preserved throughout in spite of public conditions in the land? Are they fulfilling the purpose, in part at least, for which they were preserved? How?

6. Why did Mormon refuse to lead his people to war? What is the difference in the sight of God and man between a "defensive" and an "offensive" war? Discuss.

R. L. E.

WORD OF WISDOM LESSONS (No. 8)

For the third lesson in August

THE "PROTECTIVE" FOODS

NOTE: The facts given in these lessons are gleaned from the very latest sources of information. Dr. R. H. A. Plimmer, D.Sc., London, whose book, *Food, Health, Vitamins*, was published in 1928, has been frequently quoted; others as noted. Experiments are constantly being made in all civilized countries, and our knowledge concerning food is