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## Lesson II. The Place of the Book of Mormon Among the Great Books

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2. What was the territory in America originally occupied by each people?

3. How do you explain the fact that both the Jaredites and the Nephites preserved their civilization better than the Mulekites?

4. Outline briefly the history of

each of these groups. (Special assignment may well be made of the Book of Ether for a report.)

5. How do you justify the destruction of the Nephites rather than of the Lamanites?

6. Why is it important that we should have the Book of Mormon?

## LESSON II.

### THE PLACE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON AMONG THE GREAT BOOKS.

(For Tuesday, Oct. 26, or Sunday, Oct. 17.)

To know the Book of Mormon is to know a great book. Not to have read it not only leaves a person ignorant of the history of a most fascinating people, but robs him of an acquaintance with some of the choicest literary gems ever recorded. Hours spent with this book are hours spent with the Master and His holy prophets. They are hours which will bring to the reader an inspiration and an enrichment of spirit almost beyond comprehension. Indeed many readers declare that the reading of the Book of Mormon thrills them with a testimony of the truth, as the reading of no other book can. They enjoy the fulfillment of the promise of Moroni as he sealed up the records of Nephite history.

"And I seal up these records, after I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you.

"Behold I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the

power of the Holy Ghost." Moroni 10:2, 3, 4.

Of course every man must determine his own choice of books. He chooses them as he chooses his friends—for the joy, companionship, and inspirational help that they give him. But there are certain books which everyone ought to know—the master books—those volumes which come to us as a heritage from the great characters who are so largely responsible for the progress of civilization. Surely the soul of that man must be thirsty who has not drunk at the fountains of the world's best literature. The Bible, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Burns, Dickens, Emerson, and scores of others, call to us to enter into the higher world of thought. They offer us a course in soul expansion for the mere price of enjoyment.

To Latter-day Saints the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Book of Mormon, offer the same—with the additional blessing that they bear the stamp of approval of the Lord Himself. Through them we can know Him.

The question "What constitutes a great book" is a query which of course cannot be fully and satisfactorily answered in a brief chapter. Literature divides itself into such various types that it is diffi-

cult to dispose of them on any one basis of consideration. Poetry differs from prose and within each of these two classes there are diverse kinds.

But aside from form every book may be judged on the score of content and this after all is the test of all tests of good literature. What message of truth comes to the reader? How is his soul enriched by a perusal of certain pages? For after all criticism has been exhausted, "The greatest books are those in which one grows the most and the longest."

A book to be great, then, is one with a message of great worth to the world. Its author must so have known life—must so have lived, thought, felt, and acted that the record of his experience, heightened, of course, by the touch of art, stimulates other men to nobler living. Human nature is essentially the same in all men. Life is the great common game that we all play. Every man is a stockholder in that company whose business it is to pass on our heritage from the past—civilization. We draw our dividends from the same common experience. The blessings that attend righteousness and the calamities that trail on the heels of unrighteousness stand out in contrast throughout the pages of Nephite history so clearly that "he who runs may read."

The great books are those which most fully and beautifully record and interpret that experience to the joy and uplift of man. Noble deeds, noble lives, noble thoughts, noble emotions—these things adequately expressed, constitute great literature.

Under the test of such a definition, the Book of Mormon stands out distinctly as a great contribution to the world's literature. The

Book of Mormon is a unique book. Its history, its poverbs, its biography, its incidents, its wonderful truths, prophetic and otherwise, give it a place as a companion volume to that greatest of all books the Bible. But for it, we should be at a loss to account for our Indian civilization. As a text on history alone, the Book of Mormon is now challenging the attention of the scholars of the world. The biographies of Nephi and Alma are so inspirational and faith-promoting that they ought to be read and re-read by every Latter-day Saint.

Future chapters will present the dramatic story of Abinadi, of the Savior upon this continent, and many other incidents worthy a place along with selections from the world's best literature together with gems of truth that are worthy a place in the mind of any man. And as already pointed out, this richness of content is heightened throughout the book with that spirit which passes comprehension. Just as Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, saw the plates—beheld them laid before their eye by the hands of an angel—so the reader of the book today seems to feel behind the lines the spirit of the angel that led the Prophet Joseph to discover them in Cumorah. May we not well close this chapter with "the Testimony of the Three Witnesses" in the hope that the spirit of that testimony may guide us in this year's work in the Book of Mormon.

#### THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES.

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people unto whom this work shall come, that we, through



the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us: wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shewn unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens.

And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

"Oliver Cowdery,  
"David Whitmer,  
"Martin Harris."

#### Outline Lesson 2.

- I. Moroni's promise to those who read the Book of Mormon.
- II. The characteristics of a great book.
- III. The content of the Book of Mormon.
- IV. The spirit of the Book of Mormon.
- V. Two illustrations:  
The testimony of the Three Witnesses  
The first five chapters of the Book of Mormon.

#### Questions.

1. Name your three favorite books.
2. Why are they favorites?
3. What are the qualities you name, as essential to a great book?
4. Why name the Book of Mormon as a great book?
5. Read the first five chapters of the Book of Mormon. What is there of value in these chapters? What qualities do you discover in these chapters that make the book distinctive?

### LESSON III.

#### THE RESURRECTION.

(For Tuesday, Nov. 2, or Sunday, Oct. 24.)

The recent world war has forced many questions of great moment upon the minds of thinking men and women. Perhaps no one query is more persistent and more fascinating than "What Has Become of the Dead?" "Where are the Soldiers Who Gave Their Lives on the Field of Battle?" This question of course, has always been pondered since man knew death. It is one of the eternal queries of the human race. But of recent years it is calling for more and more consideration.

Before the outbreak of the war, David Belasco, in his remarkably interesting novel, "The Return of Peter Grimm," focused the attention of the reading public upon the inquiry, "Do the Dead Return?" Since his day, and particularly since the outbreak of the war, many of the world's greatest minds have puzzled over the same question. "Where are now, the Dead?" "Can we Commune with the Departed Spirits of Loved Ones?" "Is the Resurrection a Reality?" "Shall we Recognize and Associate with