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Editorial Thoughts

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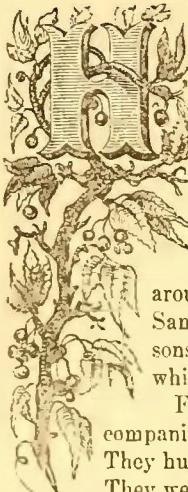
Abstract: Civilized manners were not taught to the Lamanites by Laman and Lemuel, and the Lamanites existed in a degenerate condition. On the other hand, due to the instructions of Nephi, the Nephites existed in a more civilized condition.

The Juvenile Instructor.

GEORGE Q. CANNON, - - - - - EDITOR.

SALT LAKE CITY, MAY 1, 1881.

EDITORIAL THOUGHTS.



ISTORY furnishes many examples of the effect of teaching upon the minds of children, but there is probably no illustration of this kind more plain and pointed than the effect of the lives and teaching of the children of Lehi upon their descendants. This the Book of Mormon furnishes us. Laman and Lemuel, the oldest sons of Lehi, became the founders, in part, of a great nation, whose descendants are all around us in this Territory to-day. Nephi and Sam, and Jacob and Joseph, the four other sons, also became the founders of a nation, which bore the name of Nephites.

For eight years Lehi and his family and their companions traveled in the peninsula of Arabia. They hunted, like the people of that land do to day.

They were wanderers, subsisting upon the spoils of the chase, the flesh of animals being their principal and almost only diet. And this food they did not cook by fire—it is very probable that, for convenience in carrying, and that it might be more palatable, they dried it in the sun, as the Indians do to-day, and ate it as dried meat.

After they crossed the ocean to this continent, Laman and Lemuel did not teach their children the arts of agriculture and cattle-raising, nor any of the arts of civilization. They forsook the Lord, His Spirit withdrew from them, and they became savages in feeling and of a murderous disposition.

They made several attempts upon the life of their brother Nephi, and also conspired to kill their own father.

They taught their children to be savages also, and they descended from being a cultivated people to be ignorant and debased.

They lived upon this continent like the family did in Arabia—on the spoils of the chase. They made no clothing; they built no houses or cities. They forgot all that they had learned concerning education, and therefore kept no records. All they knew about themselves or their forefathers was tradition, handed down from father to son.

The children of these men and their grandchildren were just such people as the Indians whom we know. They soon even lost their white skin through the curse which they brought upon themselves, and became dark and loathsome. These were the effects of the teachings and examples of wicked fathers.

Now let us turn to Nephi and his brothers who accompanied him. Nephi was a man of God. Though he had lived the same life that Laman and Lemuel did in Arabia, and had been a hunter like them, he did not sink into barbarism. He did not abandon his old feelings and knowledge, he did not forget the civilization of his forefathers; but as soon as he landed upon this continent, he commenced to teach his people to cultivate the ground, to raise flocks and herds and

all manner of grains and fruits and vegetables, to build houses and cities and temples, to practice all the mechanical arts by working in wood, in copper, iron, steel, silver, gold and other metals.

He laid the foundation of a stable government, and endeavored all his life to impress upon his people the value of true progress.

In order to do this more effectually he made plates out of metal, upon which he engraved the records of his people; and he also preserved the records of his fathers, so that his children were not left to tradition to know concerning themselves or their ancestors, or concerning the word of God and the predictions of the holy prophets.

The result was that a grand nation grew up, formed of the descendants of himself and those who accompanied him. They manufactured everything necessary for their own comfort and convenience, and for the adornment of their dwellings, of their cities and of their temples; and they became a highly-favored people, blessed of the Lord, having prophets and mighty men of God among them, who could tell them concerning His will, and from whom they could at any time learn the counsel of heaven respecting themselves and their lives.

What a contrast is presented to the thoughtful mind in these two nations, descended from the same parents, and starting out originally with the same advantages. Can there be a better illustration given of the effect of good and bad teachings and examples upon the rising generation?

If Laman and Lemuel had taught their children as Nephi did his, they would have been equally advanced in all true civilization. They would have been enlightened and favored of God, and been attractive in their persons. If Nephi had taken the same course with his children that Laman and Lemuel did with theirs, his posterity would have been as low, as degraded, as ferocious and murderous and as loathsome as theirs were.

Children, from this illustration you can see how important it is that we all should start out right in our lives. By laying a good foundation we can build upon it to our own salvation, the salvation of our posterity and to the glory of our God.

You are favored with true knowledge from God, with good teachings and with good examples; with everything, in fact, to make you great and noble. Avail yourselves of these opportunities, for if you do not you cannot escape condemnation.

Boys and young men sometimes start into life with the idea that one's success depends on sharpness and chicanery. They imagine if a man is able to "get the best of a bargain," no matter by what deceit and meanness he carries his point, that his prosperity is assured. This is a great mistake. Enduring prosperity cannot be founded on cunning and dishonesty.

The tricky and deceitful man is sure to fall a victim, sooner or later, to the influences which are forever working against him. His house is built upon the sand, and its foundation will be certain to give way. Young people cannot give these truths too much weight. The future of that young man is safe who eschews every shape of double dealing, and lays the foundation of his career in the enduring principles of everlasting truth.

Good news is only rumored, bad news flies.