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L.D.S. Church History, Lesson II: Cumorah and the Golden Book

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Problems and Questions for
Discussion

1. Work out a trial budget for a family with a \$900 annual income.
2. Do you think it was wise for the Greens to give up their circle of friends? Discuss.
3. Can you justify the statement of the bridegroom who told his bride

soon after they were married that he did hope that she would not object to having to ask him for money when she needed it, because it would make him so happy to give her money when she asked for it?

4. Discuss methods of joint handling of income that you know have proved successful among your acquaintances.



Mission Lessons

L. D. S. CHURCH HISTORY

Lesson II

Cumorah and the Golden Book

(To be used in place of Literary lesson)

IN THE vision which we have just considered, Joseph Smith was told that in due time he should receive further light and guidance from heaven. Yet three years and a half passed without the fulfillment of that promise. It was now September, 1823, and he was approaching his eighteenth birthday.

How was this to be accounted for? Here is his own story:

“During the time between the vision and 1823, I was left to all kinds of temptation. For, being very young, and persecuted by those who should have been my friends, I did not join any of the churches, having been forbidden to do so. And mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors and displayed the weakness of youth. In making this confession no one need suppose me guilty of any great sins. A disposition to do so was

never in my nature. I was guilty only of light conversation, and sometimes associated with jovial company, which was not consistent with that character that ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem strange to anyone who recollects my youth and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament. In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections.

“On the evening of the twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to God for forgiveness of all my sins and also for a manifestation, that I might know of my state and standing before him. For I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I had previously done.

“While I was thus in the act of

calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room. This light continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noon-day. Immediately a personage appeared at my bedside. He stood in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen, nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist. So, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had on no other clothing but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom. Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person.

“When I first looked upon him, I was afraid. But fear soon left me. He called me by name and said that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me. His name, he said, was Moroni. God had a work for me to do. My name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues. He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this [the American] continent, and the source from which they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants. Also there were two

stones in silver bows deposited with the plates. This was the urim and thummim. The possession of these stones were what constituted ‘seers’ in ancient times. God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

“He told me that, when I got those plates, I should not show them to any person, neither the breastplate with the urim and thummim, only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them. If I did so I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision opened to my mind, and I saw the place where they were deposited, and that so clearly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

“After this communication I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so until the room was again left dark, except just around him, when instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended until he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as before his appearance.

“I lay musing on the singularity of the scene, marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger, when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted. In an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside. He again related the very same things which he had done at the first visit without the least variation.

“By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that

sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him relate the same things as before. He added a caution that Satan would tempt me to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me to do; otherwise I could not get them.

“Almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

“I shortly after rose from my bed and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day. But in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started, with the intention of going to the house, but in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything.

“The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking to me, calling me by name. I looked up and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related to me all that he had done the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him the vision and commandments which I had received. I returned to my father and did so. He replied that it was

of God and told me to do as the messenger had commanded me. I left the field and went to the place where the plates were deposited.

“The hill was convenient to the village of Manchester. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates in a stone box. Having removed the earth around the stone, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the urim and thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger.

“I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it for four years from that time. He told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, that he would meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates.

“Accordingly, I went at the end of each year, and each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews respecting what the Lord was going to do and how and in what manner His kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.

“At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the urim and thummim, and the breastplate. On September 22, 1827, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with the charge: ‘You will be responsible for them. If you let them go carelessly, or through any

neglect, you will be cut off. But if you will use all your endeavors to preserve them, they shall be protected."

That is the story of how Joseph Smith received the plates from which the *Book of Mormon* was translated.

Questions and Suggestions

1. In what way does Joseph's description of the angel Moroni differ from the descriptions of angels generally in his time?

2. Who was Moroni? Why was it that he, rather than someone else, was given this mission?

3. Give as many particulars as you can of the appearance of the heavenly messenger.

4. When did Joseph first see Moroni? When were the plates given to him? How many times, so far, has Moroni appeared to Joseph? Figure out the time which the two must have been together.

5. Why do you think Moroni appeared so many times to Joseph? Why did he repeat his message so many times and in every detail? How well do you remember the details of a conversation which you have heard but once?

6. Read or sing the hymn *An Angel From On High*, and explain why this hymn was chosen in connection with this lesson.

Note: Map printed in July magazine is to be used in teaching Church History lessons.



Attention: Farm Rehabilitation

WE are in receipt of a letter from Mr. C. B. Baldwin, Assistant Administrator of the Farm Security Administration of Washington, D. C., in which he states that a group of individuals in Salt Lake City is collecting a registration fee of \$1 each from farmers on the representation that they will initiate a farm rehabilitation program. The form which this group is distributing refers to their proposal as a "rehabilitation plan" and suggests that Governmental aid will be obtained.

The only rural rehabilitation program sponsored by the Federal Gov-

ernment is that administered by the Farm Security Administration. The individuals who are sponsoring the program referred to above have no connection with this organization. Further, under the program of the Farm Security Administration, there is no requirement that a registration fee accompany the application for rehabilitation assistance.

If a farmer needs assistance from the Farm Security Administration, he should apply to the local Rural Rehabilitation Supervisor in his county, and his application will receive careful consideration.