

must also remember the farther we move away from a people the greater the possibility of their history becoming obscured.

c. History of Pre-Columbian Peoples. — There is a tendency to use the Book of Mormon as a complete history of all pre-Columbian peoples. The book does not claim to be such an history, and we distort its spiritual message when we use it for such a purpose. The book does not give an history of all peoples who came to America before Columbus. There may have been other people who came here, by other routes and means, of which we have no written record. If historians wish to discuss information which the Book of Mormon does not contain but which is related to it, then we should grant them that freedom. We should avoid the claim that we are familiar with all the peoples who have lived on American soil when we discuss the Book of Mormon.

d. Guard Against Misuses.—There is safety in using the book in the spirit in which it was written. Our use of poorly constructed inferences may draw us far away from the truth. In our approach to the study of the Book of Mormon let us guard against drawing historical conclusions which the book does not warrant.

B. A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

Scientific scholars have developed a discipline in their study which is not understood by the untrained mind. If a layman attempted to use a scientific approach in handling a designated study there would arise only confusion. There is safety in permitting the scientist to use his method of approach. But the unskilled should avoid such an attempt.

1. *Scientific Data*

The Book of Mormon was not written for a textbook on anthropology, archaeology, geography or geology. Neither was it intended to be a guide book in the discovery of scientific facts. However, scientifically trained