

Though I wasn't friendly to you before,  
I wonder, God, if you'd wait at your door.  
Look, I'm crying! Me! Shedding tears—  
I wish I had known you these many years

Well, I have to go now, God, good-bye!  
Strange, since I met you, I'm not afraid to die.

### THE MASTER'S PRAYER

Our Master, just before his zero hour, spent the night in the garden in prayer. We are told that he shed drops of blood, but the concluding words of that prayer show that he received his strength. ". . . not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42) were his concluding words and then on the cross:

Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. (*Ibid.*, 23:-34.)

We are here today, brethren and sisters, because this great Church of ours has been organized—a wonderful organization—established for the last time, never to be taken away from the earth or given to another people, and all in answer to a prayer, a prayer in a garden, the Sacred Grove. Yes, there is power in prayer, and I trust that we will look up brethren and sisters, look up to the skies, that from now on that statement that prayer is the most unused resource of the world will not, at least, apply to Latter-day Saints and also the saying that people use their prayers very much as a spare tire, only in times of emergency, when we are sick or have trouble. May that also not be true of us, but may we pray always and live, as we pray so that we, too, can say, "Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done," I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

#### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

In 1832, in what is designated a revelation on priesthood, the Lord spoke rather sharply, referring to the whole Church as being under condemnation because of their unbelief and because they had treated lightly the things they had received; and this condemnation he said,

. . . resteth upon the children of Zion, even all.  
And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written. (D. & C. 84:56-57.)

### GOSPEL FUNDAMENTALS

Brother Merrill's statement this morning that he was not going to teach anything new, recalled to my mind a conversation he and

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I had on the way home from a conference assignment a few weeks ago. I said, "Brother Merrill, have you a subject for me to discuss at the general conference?"

"Well, Brother Romney," he answered, "I can tell you this, that neither you nor I are under any responsibility to teach any new doctrine. I am going to talk about some fundamental principle of the gospel."

In thinking over the fundamentals of the gospel, the fundamentals of the restoration, I remembered that in point of time the first great fundamental received was the vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Following that vision came the Book of Mormon, given to the world as a revelation from God. I remembered, too, that six months ago President George Albert Smith, speaking to the General Authorities of the Church and mentioning some subjects that might be discussed at conference time, referred to the Book of Mormon. It is about the Book of Mormon I want to talk today. I do so with just one objective in mind: To get you to read it.

I have read it a little, I believe in it, and I love it. I recommend that every person within the sound of my voice read the Book of Mormon. I can testify, as did Nephi, that the things written therein persuadeth all men to do good. It will enrich the life of every person who will read it, unless he is in rebellion against the truth; and in that event it will advise him of his awful fate unless he changes his ways.

Very early in my life I became somewhat acquainted with the Book of Mormon. The other day while going through some old records, I found a notebook I had used while in high school in one of the Church academies. In it I had written a short outline of each chapter in the Book of Mormon. I appreciate that training.

#### THE BOOK OF MORMON

A few years ago as I began to practice law, members of my family were a little uneasy. They were afraid I would lose my faith. I wanted to practice law, but I had an even greater desire to keep my testimony, and so I decided upon a little procedure which I recommend to you. For thirty minutes each morning before I began the day's work I read from the Book of Mormon—I read also from all the other standard works of the Church, but I am talking now about the Book of Mormon—and in just a few minutes a day I read the Book of Mormon through, every year, for nine years. I know that it kept me in harmony, so far as I did keep in harmony, with the Spirit of the Lord.

Now I want to tell you a few reasons why I think you and I should read the Book of Mormon. I hope that while doing so, I shall enjoy the spirit of the Book of Mormon.

I do not know any single verse which impresses the spirit of the Book of Mormon on me more than the first verse of the last

chapter of Second Nephi. As that great prophet approached the close of his record, he said:

And now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people; neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking:

My, how I would have enjoyed hearing him speak! When I read his writings, they well-nigh overcome me. In the following words he gives the key to his powerful speaking:

... for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men. (II Nephi 33:1.)

I pray that while I speak I shall have the spirit of the Holy Ghost, and I pray that you will have the same spirit, that we may all be edified.

The first reason for reading the Book of Mormon which I want to mention is that it is approved by the highest authority in the universe, the Lord himself. He said to the Prophet Joseph Smith, "Behold, thou wast called and chosen to write the Book of Mormon." (D. & C. 24: 1.) Later on, when the Prophet Joseph Smith received the record, the Lord said that he was given

... power to translate through the mercy of God, by the power of God, the Book of Mormon. (*Ibid.*, 1:29.)

After the Prophet Joseph had translated that part of the record which he had been told to translate, the Lord said: "... and as your Lord and Your God liveth it is true," (*Ibid.*, 17:6) and "... contains the truth and the word of God." (*Ibid.*, 19:26.)

Here are some more things the Lord said about it:

... a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also. (*Ibid.*, 20:9.)

And the Book of Mormon and the holy scriptures are given of me for your instruction. (*Ibid.*, 33:16.)

... the elders, priests and teachers of this Church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. (*Ibid.*, 42:12.)

#### WITNESS FOR BIBLE

Another reason I like the Book of Mormon and want you to read it is that it will sustain you against attacks being made by the modernists against that other great scripture, the Bible. The Book of Mormon is not only a new witness for God; it is also a witness to the truth of the Bible. If I had the time, I could give you many specific instances on that point. The Book of Mormon accepts the Bible unreservedly as the word of God. It accepts the five books of Moses as having been written by Moses. This the modernists deny. It accepts the great prophecies of Isaiah as

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the prophecies of the son of Amos. The resurrected Lord himself said, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, "Great are the words of Isaiah," and he advises us to read them. Further, this Book of Mormon, the doctrines in it will sustain you against many false doctrines that are current in the world today.

#### MAN'S MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

About two weeks ago, I sat in a group where a learned man was directing a discussion. He presented the modern doctrine that there is no personal responsibility for wrongdoing. I have heard that doctrine pressed so far as to hold that if a man commits a crime—lies, steals, commits adultery, or even murders—he has no personal responsibility for his act, but that it is the responsibility of society. I compared that evil doctrine with the teachings Lehi gave to his sons as he was about to go down into his grave. I remember how he taught his sons that men were placed upon the earth between good and evil, that they were sufficiently taught to know the difference between them, that they were endowed by their Creator with power to act for themselves, and that they are held responsible for their decisions and actions. And as the Lord liveth, that doctrine is true. Lehi carefully instructed his sons on these important principles under which they were to live and under which all people on the earth are to live. He taught them that there was an opposition in all things, as Brother Merrill explained this morning, the power of evil and the power of good. He told them that they were

... free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life; ... or to choose captivity and death. (II Nephi 2:27.)

This doctrine that man is not morally responsible for his own acts, which is gaining wide acceptance in the world today, is the doctrine of the evil one. If you will read the Book of Mormon, you will be convinced of that, and you will have a defense against it if you will accept the Book of Mormon.

#### GREAT AMERICAN BOOK

Now, I like the Book of Mormon, and you will like it, because it is a great American book. It was written in America, by Americans, for Americans. It has peculiar application to America. It is not full of foreign ideologies and uninspired interpretations of men. I believe that I am within the mark when I say that between the pages of that great book there is more ultimate truth about the overall history of America than there is in any other book and, I will go so far as to say, more than in all the libraries of the world where there isn't a Book of Mormon.

In it the history of this great land of America is foretold. Up until 420 A.D. the coming to pass of the history as it was foretold was faithfully recorded by the historians who witnessed it. We who are acquainted with the Book of Mormon know that the history of America from 421 A.D. to the present time is clearly foretold therein—the long withholding of the knowledge of the land from the Gentiles, the coming of Columbus as referred to by President Levi Edgar Young this morning, the coming of the Pilgrim fathers, the establishment of this great nation, the ushering in of this great last dispensation. All these things are there foretold as clearly as anyone can write them now after they have transpired. The coming to pass of these great prophecies of the Book of Mormon is an evidence of its divinity which the world cannot destroy.

Of the future of America the Book of Mormon gives some wonderful views. I have not time to go into them in detail, but I would to our Father in heaven that the people who have the management of this nation would become acquainted with them. The Book of Mormon advises us that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, is the God of this land and that he has said some very definite things about the future of America. Our own nation has a great stake in that future. If we will live the laws that the God of this land teaches in the Book of Mormon, we can participate in the realization of the marvelous promises made for the future of America. Here the New Jerusalem shall arise, and Christ shall come and bring peace to the earth.

#### INSPIRATION OF TEACHING

Now, I like the Book of Mormon, and you will like it, too, for the courage and the strength it inspires in times of discouragement and stress. Consider as an example a few incidents from the life of Nephi, whom I love and whom you will love, too, I'm sure, if you become well acquainted with him.

You will recall how, when he came down from the mountain where he had been praying to the Lord, he found his elder brothers whining because the Lord had told them to go up to Jerusalem and get the brass plates. He did not join in their whining. When he learned of the commandment, he said unto his father:

. . . I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commanded them. (1 Nephi 3:7.)

When they reached Jerusalem, Laman was chosen to go into the city and get the record from Laban. He did not get it, however, because he knew he could not get it. When Laban said to him, "You are a robber, and I will slay thee," he ran. Arriving outside the city walls, Laman, with Lemuel, wanted to go down into the wilderness to their father without the record, but Nephi said:

... As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us, (*Ibid.*, 3:15.)

Yielding to Nephi, they went to their former home and gathered up their precious possessions which they offered for the records. Pursued by Laban's guard, they abandoned their wealth and fled for their lives. Again the elder brothers desired to return to their father in the wilderness. They spoke harsh words to Nephi and so severely whipped him that an angel came and corrected them. After the angel had departed, Laman and Lemuel continued to murmur, saying:

... How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands? Behold, he is a mighty man, and he can command fifty, yea, even he can slay fifty; then why not us?

And it came to pass that I [Nephi] spake unto my brethren, saying: Let us go up again unto Jerusalem, and let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands. (*Ibid.*, 3:31; 4:1.)

Nephi finally went in alone and came back with the plates. He had faith; he had courage; and with the help of Almighty God he accomplished the thing which he had been sent to do.

One of the most outstanding faith-promoting statements of Nephi was made when they reached the border of the sea after they had been in the wilderness for eight years. The Lord told him to build a ship. He did not have any ore or tools or material with which to build the ship but, nothing daunting, he went into the mountain and dug out the required ore. From the skins of animals he made a bellows with which to blow the fire, which he started by striking two stones together. As he made preparations to build the ship, his brothers said of him:

... Our brother is a fool, for he thinketh that he can build a ship; yea, and he also thinketh that he can cross these great waters. (*Ibid.*, 17:17.)

Mistaking his sorrowing over their misconduct for discouragement, they taunted him. He then stood up in the power of the spirit and said unto them:

... If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done. (*Ibid.*, 17:-50.)

Here is an example of faith and courage which, if we can emulate, will do much to help us through our doubting and discouragement, for we serve the same God that Nephi served, and He will sustain us even as he sustained Nephi if we will serve him even as Nephi served him.

## READING ENJOINED

I urge you to get acquainted with this great book. Read it to your children; they are not too young to understand it. I remember reading it with one of my lads when he was very young. On one occasion I lay in the lower bunk and he in the upper bunk. We were each reading aloud alternate paragraphs of those last three marvelous chapters of Second Nephi. I heard his voice breaking and thought he had a cold, but we went on to the end of the three chapters. As we finished he said to me, "Daddy, do you ever cry when you read the Book of Mormon?"

"Yes, Son," I answered. "Sometimes the Spirit of the Lord so witnesses to my soul that the Book of Mormon is true that I do cry."

"Well," he said, "that is what happened to me tonight."

I know not all of them will respond like that, but I know that some of them will, and I tell you this book was given to us of God to read and to live by, and it will hold us as close to the Spirit of the Lord as anything I know. Won't you please read it?

God bless you. Amen.

## ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

*Patriarch to the Church*

I wish to acknowledge all that has been said so far in this conference and ask that I shall also have a portion of your faith and prayers in my behalf, as has been requested in the prayers of this conference.

I am sure there is no happier gathering than we have here today, for I don't think there are any happier people than those who are active, faithful members of the Church. Inasmuch as we have gathered here together to receive of more encouragement and help in performing our responsibilities in the work of the Lord, I am sure the Lord will answer that prayer for us.

I am happy in my testimony of the gospel, in the knowledge of the gospel with which the Lord has blessed me.

## GOAL OF HAPPINESS

As has been said, happiness has been the goal of man since the beginning of time, for man is that he might have joy. When Moses reached the age of 120 and it was time for him to depart this life, he commanded that all the children of Israel be gathered together that he might speak to them. He said, "Come, therefore, let me suggest to you by what means you may be happy."

Moses had been an instrument in the hands of the Lord, to bring many blessings to the children of Israel. Through Moses they had been released from bondage and delivered from Egypt. He had trav-