

Oh, that every father-heart in this whole Church could hear the cry of that mother-heart, and before it is too late, prepare himself to go and to enter into this sacred ordinance, for which I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Sonne will be followed by Elder Levi Edgar Young.

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

IN THIS POSITION, brethren and sisters, one always becomes conscious of his limitations. The other day I read in a local newspaper about a sarcastic lawyer who was making it pretty rough for the witness. The lawyer said, "Did you see the accident?" The witness replied, "Yes, sir."

"How far away were you?"

The witness said, "Oh, about thirty feet."

"Well, how far can you see anyway?"

He said, "I do not know, but in the morning when I wake up I can see the sun, and they tell me it is about ninety million miles away."

I shall always appreciate the fact that the missionaries of the Church found my grandparents in faraway Scandinavia. That circumstance accounts for my greatest blessing in this life. As a result, I have grown up in the Church among God's people in these valleys of the mountains. From my earliest recollections, I was taught faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the promises and the predictions of holy prophets. I recall that I was very young when I first heard the story of the restoration and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. I believed it then as I believe it now. I knew then as I know now that my grandparents had not been misled.

As a young man doing missionary work over in England, I became the private secretary to President Charles W. Penrose and to President Rudger Clawson. From them I learned many things which confirmed my belief and strengthened my testimony. Since then I have examined the claims of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I have weighed and tested every doctrine and every

teaching of the Church. I have compared them with the teachings of other churches. The gospel message as revealed through the latter-day Prophet is complete and soul-satisfying. It is the power of God unto salvation.

I know this, and I testify to you that I do know it. No alterations and no far-fetched explanations have been necessary. The original declarations made by Joseph still stand. They cannot and have not been changed to satisfy the whims of critics, either in the Church or out of the Church.

In the year 1829 the Book of Mormon appeared. It was received with an avalanche of abuse and ridicule. It was repudiated and cast aside as being unworthy of study and serious consideration. But, my brethren and sisters, the tide is turning. It is turning with marvelous rapidity in these, our days. Thinking men are beginning to regard it as a powerful book with a great message. It has had wide distribution. Many translations have been made. It reveals God's purposes with respect to man's sojourn in mortality. It brings to light the results of skepticism and wrongdoing. It emphasizes the sanctity and durability of divine commandments in directing men in this striving for God's favors and blessing. It confirms the teachings of the Holy Bible, and proclaims the deityship of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, and the atonement wrought out on Calvary.

There is much controversy in these modern times even among so-called Christian leaders concerning these religious fundamentals. Once they were regarded as the rock foundation of the Christian religion. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a part of the

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"marvelous work and a wonder," proclaimed and prophesied by Isaiah, the great prophet. The spirit of the book convinces a sincere reader of its divine origin. The book is not a product of man's genius or man's learning. It is a revelation from Almighty God.

It is a message to the modern world from an ancient race who went down because they failed to live to the light which God had given them. But the teachings of the Book of Mormon are timely. They fit into our lives today as we live amid conditions around us. They come as a warning to those who are inclined to trifle with the injunctions of an overruling providence. The sacred volume is also a continuing and compelling testimony of the divine calling of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. As with the Book of Mormon, so with the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants. They furnish a solid foundation for the exercise of faith and the development of spirituality.

These scriptural productions confirm and clarify the ancient scriptures known as the Old and New Testaments. As an example I read from the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel:

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions:

And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. (Ezek. 37:16-17.)

Biblical scholars have failed to offer a satisfactory explanation of this prophetic utterance. Where is the stick of Joseph, also called the stick of Ephraim? How shall this stick, or book, be joined with the stick of Judah, or the Bible? How can these sticks become one in the hands of God for the enlightenment of humanity? The Book of Mormon answers these questions. It is the only answer. The Book of Mormon, as you know, is a powerful witness. It is a builder of faith. It is a converter of souls to the truth, and the Book of Mormon is true, and truth

will triumph even against strong and determined opposition.

As a boy I attended a little chapel on the walls of which appeared in bold lettering these words: "Truth Will Prevail." I often read it. Everybody read it. They had to. It was there before their eyes. It was like a battle cry in those days of opposition and persecution. Truth will eventually break in pieces all the substitutes which confuse and bewilder a faithless and an unrepentant world. I recall the words often repeated by Elder Orson F. Whitney,

Truth is truth where'er 'tis found
On Christian or on heathen ground.

I am also reminded of the poem which has taken a place in the classics of our literature.

Then say, what is truth? 'Tis the last and
the first,
For the limits of time it steps o'er.
Though the heavens depart and the earth's
fountains burst,
Truth, the sum of existence, will weather
the worst,
Eternal, unchanged, evermore.

—John Jaques

Now, in conclusion, may I read Carlyle's statement:

Fight on, through dark fortune, and through bright. The Cause thou fightest for so far as it is true, no further, but precisely so far, is very sure of victory. The falsehood of it alone will be conquered, will be abolished, as it should be, but the truth of it is a part of Nature's own laws, co-operates with the world's eternal tendencies and cannot be conquered.

I testify that Mormonism, so-called, is true; that it is the power of God unto salvation; that it is the same gospel which Peter and Paul preached, and which was taught by the Savior of men. May we remember it, and may we adhere to its saving principles, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy.