

ELDER HUGH B. BROWN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

As we grow older and have more experience in the ministry, we become increasingly aware of our utter dependence upon divine guidance and inspiration, and therefore it is not just habit that causes us so frequently to ask for that guidance and to solicit your help, sympathy, and prayers.

Like Elder Richard L. Evans, it was my pleasure to attend the dedication of the temple in London, England, and I appreciated the privilege.

Two of the most frequent questions asked of us as we travel are, "What is your creed?" and "What distinguishes your Church from others?"

We do not have a written creed in the usual sense of the word. However, we do have a concise and authoritative statement of the beliefs of the Latter-day Saints given by the Prophet Joseph Smith, in the early days of the Church, known as the Articles of Faith. In that statement we declare our faith in God the Father, in Jesus Christ his Son, and in the Holy Ghost; known generally as the Holy Trinity. We declare our conviction that men will be held accountable for their own sins and will not be answerable for the sins of others, that there are certain principles and ordinances that must be believed and observed by those who would gain salvation, and that those principles and ordinances must be taught and administered by men who have authority in the apostolic Church as organized in the Meridian of Time, of which Jesus Christ was, and is, the chief cornerstone.

In this declaration we affirm our faith in the atonement of Christ and its universal applicability. We believe that he will come again, that there will be a thousand years of universal peace. We make the statement that we believe in sacred scriptures, ancient and modern; that we believe that men are entitled to freedom of religious belief. We honor and sustain the laws of the land. We commit ourselves to Christ's standard of moral conduct, and service based on love of God and of fellow men.

As many sermons have been preached and much has been written on each

of these articles, I shall not elucidate, but I should like to refer for a moment to the ninth Article of Faith.

"We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

This simple and forthright statement of faith in revelation has elicited the criticism of some of our friends, because it includes past, current, and future revelation. Many other churches profess belief in the revelations recorded in the Bible, but they do not believe that God still reveals his will through chosen prophets on the earth.

We declare that the line of communication between heaven and earth is open, and operating, as anciently. We believe that revelation is continuous and expedient, and is suited to the times in which it is given. When we make that statement, it follows that we believe in scriptures other than the Holy Bible, because divine revelation is the word of God, and his word is scripture. We unequivocally declare our faith in the Bible as the word of God, and we specify the King James version thereof.

Our acceptance of other revelation does not diminish our faith in the Old and New Testaments. On the contrary, our belief in the Bible is strengthened and our understanding of it clarified by these new corroborative revelations.

Among the volumes of scripture in which we believe, the one most frequently referred to by friends and critics is the Book of Mormon. It has had the largest circulation and has elicited more comment during the past century, favorable and otherwise, than any other modern book.

This book is an inspired text, having been written by various prophets who lived in America at the times of which they write. It is a sacred record of the ancient inhabitants of America, covering in the main that portion of their history from about 600 B.C. to 400 A.D.

Its message was inscribed on metallic

Saturday, October 11

Second Day

plates by various authors. These writings were abridged by the Prophet Mormon, one of the last survivors of a dwindling race. It is therefore known as the Book of Mormon. He entrusted the plates to his son, Moroni, who was the last of the Nephite historians. Moroni deposited the plates in a stone box on a hillside and some fourteen hundred years later he, at that time a resurrected being, revealed their hiding place to Joseph Smith, the prophet, who translated what is said to be reformed Egyptian characters into English by the gift and power of God.

It is doubtless this element of the miraculous which disturbs many who hear of this record and causes some to shrug it off without further interest. It seems strange to us that believers in the Judeo-Christian Bible should be skeptical of the miraculous.

Miracles form an important part of the Old and the New Testaments. The story of the earth life of Jesus of Nazareth continues to grip the hearts and intrigue the minds of men, largely because of the miracle of his birth, the almost daily miracles he performed during his ministry, and the transcendent miracle of his resurrection and ascension. Moreover, he left his apostles and disciples with a promise of a miraculous reappearance in the last days. Paraphrasing the Apostle Paul we ask, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should reveal his will to his servants, the prophets, as he promised to do."

One remarkable fact about this book is its continued popularity and appeal. One hundred thirty years after the first edition was published, it is still a best seller, over thirty-five thousand copies being printed in English each year, and other thousands distributed in the twenty-seven different languages into which it has been translated. Nearly three million copies of this book have been distributed in almost all countries of the world in the last century.

Yes, we do believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God, and we believe in the miraculous that was involved in its preservation and production. There have been many who have sought to discredit it, many things have been written against it, but in more

recent times some of our friends who have made a careful study of the book have made statements which are significant. I shall refer to one or two taken from a little book called, *The Book of Mormon Message and Evidences* by Dr. Franklin S. Harris, Jr. Charles H. Hull, professor of American history in Cornell University wrote:

"I am perfectly willing to say to anyone that I suppose the Book of Mormon to be one of the most famous and widely discussed books ever published in America."

Says a Rochester newspaper, "The book itself remains on which was founded the greatest religion of the continent and the century. It was not the book itself, but the wonderful influence it had on America that counted."

And a former Secretary of Agriculture, who had read the book carefully said, "Of all the American books of the nineteenth century, it seems probable that the Book of Mormon was the most powerful. It reached perhaps only one percent of the United States, but it affected this one percent so powerfully and lastingly that all the people of the United States have been affected, especially by its contribution in opening one of our great frontiers."

Now, our declaration regarding the Book of Mormon is a solemn one. If it is false, it is almost blasphemous. If it is true, then all who believe it are under a solemn obligation to its author to proclaim its truth.

One of the prophets of that book emphasized this fact in the following words, and I read from Second Nephi:

"Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise." (2 Nephi 2:8.)

And further in his same book, after reciting the miraculous events in the history of the Israelites, he said,

". . . I say unto you, that as these things are true, and as the Lord God

liveth, there is none other name given under heaven save it be this Jesus Christ, of which I have spoken, whereby man can be saved." (*Ibid.*, 25:20.)

It is the message of the Book of Mormon that has caused people from almost all nations of the earth to accept it as the word of God. Its inspiring theme and divine message, from the title page to the last chapter, constitutes the testimony or witness of a whole nation of people that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of mankind. It bears witness to the efficacy of the atonement, of its universal application and its value to all individuals who will accept his word and keep his commandments.

We urge our friends to examine the book itself, to check its claims, listen to its message and to feel of its spirit. Yes, we believe in continued revelation, ancient, continuous, current, and future.

And personally, I wish to bear my testimony with those that have already

been borne that the Church today, the kingdom of God, is being led by revelation. God is not the author of confusion. He does not work in dark places. He makes it known to the world when he appoints a prophet, and I testify that I know as I know I live, that this Church today is guided by prophecy and by revelation, and that these men whom we honor are prophets of God.

I pray that he may help us to live as though we believed it, to be true to ourselves, to them and to God, by carrying out the instructions they give, and living the gospel of Jesus Christ, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Hugh B. Brown of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. Elder Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy will now address us. He will be followed by Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson.

ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

Of the First Council of the Seventy

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read these words of the Prophet Joseph Smith, "Seek ye knowledge out of the best books, words of wisdom." (See D & C 88:118.) Today I should like to read to you some of the words of wisdom which I have found in good books. Some of these words are from the Bible, some are from the writings of Abbott Lawrence Lowell, late president of Harvard University, and from other sources. All these sources and many more good books are easily available to all of us. I am very much interested in them and wish to pay attention to the Prophet's words.

Our pioneer fathers read the best books. Sometime I shall tell you what books they brought to this valley with them. The founding fathers read *most* of the best books of their time and in many languages. They were educated and wise men.

What is "wisdom"? President Lowell says, "We think of wisdom as a part of religion. In its highest strains it involves wisdom as an attribute and emanation of God, such that, if a man

take her as a companion and guide, he shall find righteousness and happiness. Such wisdom demands serenity of temper, a judicial attitude of mind, a habit of seeking what *good* reasons and motives, rather than what *bad* ones, others may have for differing from us. It demands not only a negative, but a positive intellectual integrity, a desire to understand that which contradicts, as well as that which supports, one's own views of what is just and wise. This means an open, earnest mind, a mind based upon wide and deep insight into ultimate realities."

Men are not born with wisdom, they acquire it by habitual self-control, by looking not at the popular impulse of the day, not by conforming, not by mass participation, *but* at those principles that endure and are eternal.

The following words, which I now quote, will be particularly helpful to our missionaries: "There are thousands of men in the world who live on a high moral plane and are not thought self-righteous. If we have any insight into the deeper springs of human nature, we