

We extend a sincere welcome to all assembled this afternoon in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the Fifth and concluding session of the 148th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We also welcome those seated in the Assembly Hall and Salt Palace. Elders W. Grant Bangerter and Loren C. Dunn preside at the Assembly Hall, and Elders J. Thomas Fyans and George P. Lee preside at the Salt Palace.

Sessions of this conference are being carried over hundreds of radio and television stations to a large audience in the United States and many other parts of the world.

We send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere participating in these proceedings by radio and television.

This morning's session was broadcast by oceanic cable to Europe and heard by members assembled in many chapels in England, France, Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, and Belgium.

The Tabernacle Choir with Brothers Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger directing and Brother John Longhurst at the organ is providing the music for this session. The Choir will

begin this service by singing, "Lead Kindly Light." The invocation will be offered by Elder Rex D. Pinegar of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

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The hymn, "Lead Kindly Light," was sung by the Tabernacle Choir.

Elder Rex D. Pinegar offered the invocation.

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### President Tanner

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "Consolation: I Am A Child of God."

Following the singing, we shall hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve.

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The Choir sang, "Consolation: I Am A Child of God."

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### President Tanner

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder Mark E. Petersen

Of the Council of the Twelve

Some continue to challenge the Book of Mormon. Not only do they attack the authenticity of that sacred volume, but they question our right to have scriptures other than the Bible.

### Scriptures

We Latter-day Saints have three volumes of scripture in addition to the

Bible. They are additional witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ, declaring to all who are willing to read them that He is our Savior and our Redeemer. In this day of trouble and doubt, shall we not be grateful for increased affirmations of the Christ?

Having been taught that the Bible contains all of the word of God, some ask us why we have these other scrip-

tures. They do not realize that the Bible provides for more scripture and that it points to a pattern established anciently by the Lord in which He placed prophets on earth to provide that scripture.

Their revelations were recorded, together with some of the history of the times, and became scripture. As each new prophet wrote, his records were added to the existing scripture. In this way there was a constantly growing volume of the sacred word. Eventually many of these writings were compiled into a book which we know as the Bible.

This process continued as long as the Lord had prophets on earth, both in Old and New Testament times. Never was it thought that this accumulated record contained all of the word of God because, over the years, the Lord continued to send new prophets who received new revelations which in turn became new and additional scripture. It was a set pattern of the Lord from the days of the patriarchs to the time of John the Revelator.

### **Apostles and prophets**

There are some who do not realize that there were prophets in the original Christian church and that it was the intention of the Lord that they should continue in the Church until we all come to a unity of the faith.

But instead of unity among Christians, what do we have? We have division, which is overwhelming evidence of the need for the continued ministry of Christian prophets.

Do you remember how Paul explained this principle to the Ephesians? He said that the very foundation of the Church rested upon the apostles and the prophets, with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. (Eph. 2:20.)

Then, describing the organization of the Church, he said that the Savior "gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers" as officers in the Church. He declared their purpose to be "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of

the ministry, for the edifying of the body" of the Church. (Eph. 4:12.)

Is there ever a time when the members can stop working toward perfection, when they no longer are benefited by activity in the Church, or when they do not require teaching and edifying?

Paul said that these officers who teach and edify are needed in the Church until we become perfect, until we reach the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ. Heaven knows that none of us has achieved that distinction.

But what was another reason these officers should remain in the Church? Paul says they were given to us as a protection "that we henceforth be no more [as] children tossed to and fro . . . with every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:14.)

They will protect you from the false teachings of cultists and splinter groups and from the misleading philosophies of men.

The Church of Jesus Christ, then, should always be led by living apostles and prophets who would receive the constant guidance of heaven. They would continue always in the Church as seers and revelators for the people.

But as they so ministered they would be providing also new and additional scripture appropriate to the times in which they lived, according to the Lord's pattern.

The prophets of the early Christian church ministered in their day just as the Old Testament prophets did during the preceding centuries. And why? Because they followed this same divine pattern, for as Amos explained, the Lord works only through prophets. (Amos 3:7.)

When there are no prophets, there is no divine direction, and without such guidance the people walk in darkness.

It is an infallible sign of the true church that it has in it divinely chosen, living prophets to guide it, men who receive current revelation from God and whose recorded works become new scripture.

## Other volumes of scripture

It is an infallible sign of the true church also that it will produce new and additional scripture arising out of the ministrations of those prophets. This unailing pattern of God is clearly made manifest through his dealings with his people from the beginning.

The Lord himself predicted that there would be other volumes of scripture in addition to the Bible. He knew, however, that some people would refuse to believe and would object to receiving more scripture. So He said:

"Many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible.

"Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?"

"Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.

"And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever.

"Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written.

"For I command all men, both in

the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them; for out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written.

"For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.

"And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews.

"And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one." (2 Ne. 29:3, 7-14.)

So said the Lord.

## The Book of Mormon

We, of course, have the Bible as do other Christians. But we also have the writings of the Nephites, who were the ancient inhabitants of America, and who recorded their revelations and history in what is known today as the Book of Mormon. And what is the Book of Mormon?

The Apostle Paul at one time defined faith as the evidence of things not seen. The Book of Mormon is solid, tangible evidence of both the seen and the unseen.

It is a book that can be felt and handled and read. It is a physical object. It cannot be explained out of existence. The critics cannot make it go away. As a

published book it is here—tangible, physical, and material.

We can hold it in our hands. We can give it away as a gift. We can send it through the mail. If we wished, we could drop it in the ocean or burn it in a fire, or we might even study it page by page for spiritual light and inspiration.

It is a physical volume which was printed on an electric press, in a commercial printing house, on paper made in a commercial paper mill, and with the use of ordinary printers' ink.

In other words, the Book of Mormon is a physical object, just as is the Bible or any other book. As a physical object, no one can say that it does not exist. Neither can it be explained away.

### Origin of The Book of Mormon

But where did it come from?

It was brought by an angel of God who came to earth for the particular purpose of delivering that book to Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet.

But does anybody believe in angels in this enlightened age?

If you believe the Bible, you *must* believe in angels. And further, if you read the Bible you will know that it plainly says that an angel was designated to come to earth in the latter days to give a particular book to a particular man within a particular time frame.

To identify that man, the scripture refers to him as an unlearned man. Strange, isn't it, that the prophet Isaiah would do this? But that angel did come within the specified time, and came to Joseph Smith who was the specified unlearned man. The book was then translated by Joseph Smith through the power of God and published to the world as the Book of Mormon.

There is no plausible explanation for the origin of that book except the one given by Joseph Smith.

The critics have tried other explanations for a hundred years, but have met only with dismal failure.

Who was this angel of whom we speak? His name was Moroni. In-

asmuch as he brought the Book of Mormon, his coming made that tangible book physical, material evidence that there are angels of God and that one of them came to Joseph Smith and gave him this book.

And who was Moroni? He was one of the prophets who lived in ancient America and died 1,500 years ago.

To appear in our day, obviously he had to come back from the dead. Our whole religion is based on angelic personages coming back from the dead. Then immortality is real, proved by the fact that an immortal personage delivered this tangible, material Book of Mormon to a modern, mortal man.

In coming back from the dead, Moroni was a physical being of literal, corporeal, material reality. He held those heavy gold plates in his hands. A block of metal measuring seven-by-seven-by-eight inches could weigh anywhere from thirty to fifty pounds. But Moroni held them in his hands and turned over the pages with his fingers. His were flesh and bone hands, resurrected hands.

Then the Book of Mormon, as a physical, material, tangible object, also becomes evidence of the resurrection of the dead.

Let us remember that twelve modern men saw and handled those same plates after Moroni had delivered them to Joseph Smith. In describing this experience, eight of them said that they handled them with their hands and added, "We have seen and hefted and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken." ("The Testimony of Eight Witnesses," Book of Mormon, p. vii.)

They handled the plates with their hands. So did Moroni.

They turned over the pages, one by one. So did Moroni.

They examined the engravings on those plates, some of which were made by Moroni 1,500 years ago.

So the published Book of Mormon is a physical witness to the fact of immortality, to the resurrection from the

dead, and to the reality of God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

In this day of doubt and criticism, should we not be grateful for physical evidence of unseen things? Then shall we not accept the Book of Mormon as such evidence?

### Two witnesses of Jesus Christ

The chief reason we have the Book of Mormon is that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all things be established. (See 2 Cor. 13:1.) We have the Bible; we also have the Book of Mormon. They constitute two voices—two volumes of scripture—from two widely separated ancient peoples, both bearing testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we have two other scriptural witnesses also, making four altogether. They are the modern scriptures given as revelations through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and they, too, declare that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior, the Creator, the long-promised Messiah.

### Modern Prophets

The world has been so confused by the conflicting creeds of men that the truth had to be given to mankind once again to disabuse their minds and correct their thinking. There was only one way in which this could be done and that was by new revelation. But to have new revelation requires the presence of a prophet to receive it, for as Amos said,

the Lord will not act except through prophets. (See Amos 3:7.)

There was no prophet in all Christendom at the time the new revelation was to be given. So God raised up a new prophet to receive that revelation, to publish the Book of Mormon, and to direct the preaching of the true gospel in every nation.

And who was that prophet? Joseph Smith, Jr. He was the divinely called seer of latter days. He was the modern revelator. He was the translator and publisher of the Book of Mormon under the direction of Almighty God.

Not only was he a divinely chosen prophet himself, but under his hands other prophets were raised up to carry on the work after him.

We are those other prophets! We hold the divine authority of Jesus Christ! We speak in his name and declare his word! And our testimony is true!

This we solemnly affirm with all the power of our being, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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### President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and Supervisor of the Andes Area will now speak to us.

## Elder Gene R. Cook

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

Several months ago while traveling by air in the Andes area, I had the opportunity to explain to the man sitting next to me why I was living in South America.

After coming to understand something about the Church, its doctrine, and my role as a General Authority, he finally said, "How can you give your entire life to *another man*, like this Mr.