

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.

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.

Kimball, and stay in this country as long as he tells you to stay here? I could never do that." I responded, "I could not either, if he were *just a man*," and then bore testimony of the true role of the prophet on the earth, and that "for the Lord, through him, I would do anything."

Follow counsel of Church leaders

A few years ago I took a person who was not yet a member of the Church to a meeting to hear one of the General Authorities speak. I had told him previously that this was one of the Lord's anointed. After the meeting the man responded, "Well, he is nothing but *a man*." I suppose that he expected to see an angel, a demonstration of the gift of tongues, or something like that as a physical evidence of the General Authority's divine call.

I have often wondered how many of us might have been deceived had we been in the very presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the meridian of time. The great majority saw Jesus as nothing more than *a man*. The *few* with spiritual discernment knew who he really was. If one is to make judgments with only his natural senses, he will never perceive the truth of the spiritual world. Have you listened, my brothers and sisters, really listened, to the inspired counsel of these good brethren who have spoken to you during this conference? Are you willing to obey and follow their counsel and the counsel of your local leaders as well?

Where do you stand on this important matter of spiritually seeing your leaders the way the Lord sees them? Our response to that question ought to be like the faithful Israelites' response to Joshua:

"And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go.

"According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee." (Josh. 1:16-17.)

Sometime ago another man asked, "Do the General Authorities really know what is going on in the outlying areas? I am sure that they do not know of these detailed problems with which we are faced." Another good sister said, "If the bishop knew what I know about the difficulties in the Relief Society, I know he would act differently. It's too bad he doesn't consult more with us and obtain all of our opinions about how to run the ward." Another said, "I don't go to my branch president for direction because he sees things differently than I do. Our personalities are too different. We just don't seem to be on the same wavelength."

Priesthood leaders rely on revelation

May I suggest, my brothers and sisters, that the General Authorities, your stake president, bishop, and priesthood quorum leaders do know what is going on *with respect to the governing principles, the matters that really count*, and that the rest will be resolved in their due time. This is the Lord's church. It is directed by him through a definite priesthood power line of revelation. We believe in a God of miracles, and he does not cease to work spiritual miracles through his priesthood leaders.

We recognize that in any presidency or bishopric the president or bishop may obtain counsel from his counselors, and perhaps from some others, before he, by inspiration, makes the decision. However, we do not in the Church subscribe to a participative-management type of direction, wherein the opinions of all are gathered in, weighed and measured, a consensus drawn, and then a decision made according to the majority. There may be some few exceptions to that statement, but generally speaking that type of approach is representative of the way the world manages its affairs. Many other churches are in the same category because they have nothing better. All the world can do is to dispute an issue, share an opinion, exchange an expe-

rience, and then try to draw the best conclusion from the given amount of facts available on the subject.

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the leaders at all levels of administration rely on revelation from God to direct their particular stewardships. There are many people, too many, who seek out the wrong individuals for counsel, too many who would rather *give* counsel than *receive* it. Remember that others might share with you their experience, or broaden your understanding on a given issue, but if you are desirous of receiving revelation pertaining to your particular stewardship, it must come from the Lord. It may come directly through an interchange with him on your part or as revelation to you through your immediate priesthood leader.

Every member has a spiritual leader

One of the great blessings of this church is that everyone has a spiritual leader to whom he should direct himself. In the case of a father, his children and wife will want to consult him as the spiritual leader in their home. If the matter needs further attention, the wife and children do not go to a priesthood quorum leader, as the husband might on some priesthood matters. They counsel with the bishop or branch president. If there is a problem in the marriage, the husband and wife go to their bishop for he presides over *both* of them as the bishop and presiding high priest over the ward. They need not go elsewhere, unless otherwise directed by the bishop, for additional guidance.

After enumerating various spiritual gifts, the Lord provides this counsel concerning *your* bishop or any other presiding priesthood leader: "And unto the bishop of the church, and unto such as God shall appoint and ordain to watch over the church and to be elders unto the church, are to have it given unto them to discern all those gifts lest there shall be any among you professing and yet be not of God." (D&C 46:27.) It

is abundantly clear that presiding priesthood leaders are given the gift of discernment.

Remember that at times your local priesthood leader may truly see things differently than you do. Disagreements seem to come over details and methods for performing given tasks, but almost never are based in differences over gospel principles. Your leader has a right to function with his own unique personality and in his own realm of experience, and it may be in *detail* somewhat different in practice from the *exact way* you would perform. *Nevertheless*, counsel from a priesthood leader in the proper spirit is *of the Lord and binding*.

We live in trying times. When we receive counsel from our leaders that is difficult to comprehend, may we say in our hearts, "Father, I believe what I have been told. And when it is the right time, and I have paid the proper price to know, let me understand *why*."

It is a gift from the Spirit to believe on the words of your priesthood leaders. I seem to hear them say: "*Believe me*, because the view from up here is much clearer than where *you* now are. *Trust me*, because I can clearly see beyond the next hill." If one will listen to wise parents and priesthood leaders, he will perceive that they counsel with long lenses of eternity and not with cheap, near-sighted spectacles. He can then learn vicariously, through the spiritual vision of others, without having to participate in every type of activity to learn for himself good from evil.

Not blind obedience

Remember, last of all, we do not desire blind obedience in the Church. We desire that every individual may know for himself that the counsel he receives from his leaders comes from the Lord. He has the right and the great privilege to know for himself of the Lord that he has been counseled aright. If he will be patient and wait upon the Lord, he will find that his priesthood

leaders truly do counsel in righteousness, thus enabling him to walk upon safe ground.

I pray that each of us might be more humble and desirous of receiving and obeying counsel. May each of us seek not to counsel the Lord, but seek counsel from his hand and from his inspired priesthood leaders, *as it is the same*. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Gene R. Cook of the First Quorum of the Seventy, who is Supervisor of the Andes Area, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder Joseph Anderson of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Sterling W. Sill

Of the First Quorum of the Seventy

Sometime ago I read a very helpful book written by New York psychiatrist Smiley Blanton, under the title of *The Healing Power of Poetry* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1960). In his book Dr. Blanton explains how for forty years he had used great ideas to heal people of their emotional difficulties and psychiatric problems. These ideas were not all in poetic form. He also used the great scriptures, the great prose, and the great hymns.

I suppose this healing power of the psychiatrist might be related to the practice of a medical doctor who writes prescriptions for people to be filled not at drugstores but at bookstores, for he has discovered that there is frequently more healing power in books than in bottles. A mother heals the bumps and bruises of her children by her caresses and her loving expressions of sympathy.

As I meditated upon these healing procedures, I tried to understand some of the things that Jesus may have had in mind when he said, "Physician, heal thyself." (Luke 4:23.) And I think he was giving us the detail of one method for handling this healing power when he instructed Emma Smith to make a selection of the inspiring hymns to be

regularly run through our minds and hearts.

Celestial thoughts develop celestial minds

I recently went to the library and obtained a copy of this little book, which I hold in my hand, which is a compilation of the ninety hymns selected by Emma Smith for our benefit. (*A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, Kirtland, Ohio: F.G. Williams and Co., 1835. Available on microfilm in the Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City.) And because each of us has a different set of needs and a different set of interests, it seems to me that each one of us ought to make his own selection of hymns and then see to it that each one is thoroughly memorized and enthusiastically appreciated so that we may get the maximum from their healing message as well as their growing and saving power.

William James, the great Harvard psychologist, once asked this question, how would you like to create your own mind? But isn't that about what usually happens? Professor James explains that