

Build others

If you would be loved, love another. If you would be understood, show understanding to another. If you would find peace, harmony, and happiness, lift another.

Yet, if we build another for selfish reasons, our acts cannot produce desirable fruits. Has not Jesus said:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. [Alms are righteous acts.]

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites, . . . that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

"But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

"That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:1-4).

Power of the gospel

I am convinced that when we give unconditional love; when our interest is first in serving, building, edifying, strengthening without thought of self; when we do not expect an automatic return for each act of kindness, generosity, or sincere effort to help; when

we are not concerned about what we will receive or what others will say or whether our own burdens will be diminished, but selflessly seek to build another, the miracle of the power of the gospel is released in our lives. When we permit the Lord to work through us to bless others, that sacred experience releases power in our own lives, and miracles occur. Well did the Master say, "For inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me" (D&C 42:38).

Respect and love must be earned, and there is no better way to earn them than to lift another.

Begin now with your best effort. Reach out to another. You will feel the power of the Lord flow through you. Your own self-respect will return, and you can love yourself again. Your life will be enriched and given purpose, and you will be given the power to make a difference in everything around you. Of this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder Richard G. Scott, a new member of the Presidency of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now speak to us.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Read, ponder, and pray about Book of Mormon

Two ministers of one of the largest and most powerful Protestant denominations came to a Latter-day Saint conference to hear me preach.

After the meeting I had a private conversation with them, in which I said they could each gain a testimony that Joseph Smith was the prophet through

whom the Lord had restored the fulness of the gospel for our day and for our time.

I told them they should read the Book of Mormon, ponder its great and eternal truths, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, in faith, and he would reveal the truth of the book to them by the power of the Holy Ghost.

As every gospel scholar knows, the Book of Mormon proves that

Joseph Smith was called of God to minister in the prophetic office and to restore the truths of salvation in plainness and perfection.

The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It contains a record of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. It is another testament of Jesus Christ.

American witness of Christ

It contains the fulness of the gospel, meaning that it is a record of the Lord's dealings with a people who had the fulness of the gospel, and meaning also that in it is found a summary and a recitation of what all men must believe and do to gain an inheritance in the heavenly kingdom reserved for the Saints.

As the teachings and testimonies of Moses and Isaiah and Peter find place in the Bible, so the parallel preaching and the same Spirit-guided testimonies of Nephi and Alma and Moroni have come down to us in the Book of Mormon.

This American witness of Christ was written upon gold plates which were delivered to Joseph Smith by an angelic ministrant. This ancient record was then translated by the gift and power of God and is now published to the world as the Book of Mormon.

If this book is what it purports to be—if the original record was revealed by a holy angel; if the translation was made by the power of God and not of man; if Joseph Smith was entertaining angels, seeing visions, and receiving revelations—all of which is an established verity; if the Book of Mormon is true—then the truth and divinity of the Book of Mormon proves the truth of this great latter-day work in which we are engaged.

Sincere and devout people

All of this I explained to my two Protestant friends. One of them, a congenial and decent sort of fellow, said

somewhat casually that he would read the Book of Mormon. The other minister, manifesting a bitter spirit, said: "I won't read it. We have experts who have read the Book of Mormon, and I have read what our experts have to say about it."

This account dramatizes one of our problems in presenting the message of the Book of Mormon to the world. There are sincere and devout people everywhere who have heard what other people say about this volume of holy writ, and so they do not read it themselves.

Instead of drinking from that fountain from whence clear streams of living water flow, they prefer to go downstream and drink from the roily, muddy, poison-filled streams of the world.

Door to salvation

The plain fact is that salvation itself is at stake in this matter. If the Book of Mormon is true—if it is a volume of holy scripture, if it contains the mind and will and voice of the Lord to all men, if it is a divine witness of the prophetic call of Joseph Smith—then to accept it and believe its doctrines is to be saved, and to reject it and walk contrary to its teachings is to be damned.

Let this message be sounded in every ear with an angelic trumpet; let it roll round the earth in resounding claps of never-ending thunder; let it be whispered in every heart by the still, small voice. Those who believe the Book of Mormon and accept Joseph Smith as a prophet thereby open the door to salvation; those who reject the book outright or who simply fail to learn its message and believe its teachings never so much as begin to travel that course along the strait and narrow path that leads to eternal life.

Read, ponder, and pray to gain witness

Shortly after my experience with these two ministers, two other minis-

ters from the same denomination came to another of our conferences to hear me preach. And, once again, after the meeting I had a private discussion with them.

My message was the same. Taking the Book of Mormon as their guide, they must read, ponder, and pray in order to gain a witness from the Spirit as to the truth and divinity of this great latter-day work.

I told them of my prior experience with their two colleagues and how one of them had refused to read the Book of Mormon, saying that they had experts who had read the book and he had read what their experts had said.

I then said, "What is it going to take to get you gentlemen to read the Book of Mormon and find out for yourselves what is involved, rather than relying on the views of your experts?"

Pray in faith

One of these ministers, holding my copy of the Book of Mormon in his hands, let the pages flip past his eyes in a matter of seconds. As he did so, he said, "Oh, I've read the Book of Mormon."

I had a momentary flash of spiritual insight that let me know that his reading had been about as extensive as the way he had just flipped the pages. In his reading he had done no more than scan a few of the headings and read an isolated verse or two.

A lovely young lady, a convert to the Church whose father was a minister of the same denomination as my four Protestant friends, was listening to my conversation with the second two. At this point she spoke up and said, "But Reverend, you have to pray about it."

He replied, "Oh, I prayed about it. I said, 'Oh God, if the Book of Mormon is true, strike me dead'; and here I am."

My unspoken impulse was to give this rejoinder: "But Reverend, you have to pray in faith!"

Pray, study, ask

This account dramatizes another of our problems in teaching those who read the Book of Mormon how to read it in order to gain the promised witness by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The pattern for this was set in the experience of Oliver Cowdery. He desired not alone to act as a scribe to Joseph Smith but also to translate directly from the plates. After much importuning, the Lord permitted Brother Cowdery to try.

The divine authorization contained these provisos: "Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith. Trifle not with these things; do not ask for that which you ought not. . . . And according to your faith shall it be done unto you" (D&C 8:10-11).

Oliver tried to translate and failed. Then came the divine word: "Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me." That is, he had not done all that in his power lay; he had expected the Lord to do it all merely because he asked.

"But, behold, I say unto you," the divine word continued, "that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right" (D&C 9:7-8).

Of the Lord or of Lucifer?

Now, if the Book of Mormon is true, our acceptance of it will lead to salvation in the highest heaven. On the other hand, if we say it is true when in fact it is not, we are thereby leading men astray and surely deserve to drop down to the deepest hell.

The time is long past for quibbling about words and for hurling unsavory epithets against the Latter-day Saints. These are deep and solemn and ponderous matters. We need not think we can

trifle with sacred things and escape the wrath of a just God.

Either the Book of Mormon is true, or it is false; either it came from God, or it was spawned in the infernal realms. It declares plainly that all men must accept it as pure scripture or they will lose their souls. It is not and cannot be simply another treatise on religion; it either came from heaven or from hell. And it is time for all those who seek salvation to find out for themselves whether it is of the Lord or of Lucifer.

A test

May I be so bold as to propose a test and issue a challenge. It is hoped that all who take this test will have a knowledge of the Holy Bible, because the more people know about the Bible, the greater their appreciation will be of the Book of Mormon.

This test is for saint and sinner alike; it is for Jew and Gentile, for bond and free, for black and white, for all of our Father's children. We have all been commanded to search the scriptures, to treasure up the Lord's word, to live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 84:44.) This, then, is the test:

Let every person make a list of from one hundred to two hundred doctrinal subjects, making a conscious effort to cover the whole field of gospel knowledge. The number of subjects chosen will depend on personal inclination and upon how broad the spectrum will be under each subject.

Then write each subject on a blank piece of paper. Divide the paper into two columns; at the top of one, write "Book of Mormon," and at the top of the other, "Bible."

Then start with the first verse and phrase of the Book of Mormon, and continuing verse by verse and thought by thought, put the substance of each verse under its proper heading. Find the same doctrine in the Old and New Testaments, and place it in the parallel columns.

What think ye of the Book of Mormon?

Ponder the truths you learn, and it will not be long before you know that Lehi and Jacob excel Paul in teaching the Atonement; that Alma's sermons on faith and on being born again surpass anything in the Bible; that Nephi makes a better exposition of the scattering and gathering of Israel than do Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel combined; that Mormon's words about faith, hope, and charity have a clarity, a breadth, and a power of expression that even Paul did not attain; and so on and so on.

There is another and simpler test that all who seek to know the truth might well take. It calls for us simply to read, ponder, and pray—all in the spirit of faith and with an open mind. To keep ourselves alert to the issues at hand—as we do read, ponder, and pray—we should ask ourselves a thousand times, "Could any man have written this book?"

And it is absolutely guaranteed that sometime between the first and thousandth time this question is asked, every sincere and genuine truth seeker will come to know by the power of the Spirit that the Book of Mormon is true, that it is the mind and will and voice of the Lord to the whole world in our day.

We ask, then: What think ye of the Book of Mormon? Who can tell its wonder and worth? How many martyrs have suffered death in the flesh to bring it forth and carry its saving message to a wicked world?

God has spoken in our day

We answer: It is a book, a holy book, a book of sacred, saving scripture. It is a voice from the dust, a voice that whispers low out of the earth, telling of a fallen people who sank into an endless oblivion because they forsook their God.

It is truth springing out of the earth as righteousness looks down from heaven. It is the stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim, which will guide all

Israel, the ten tribes included, to return to Him whom their fathers worshipped. It contains the word that will gather the whole house of Israel and make them once again one nation upon the mountains of Israel, as it was in the days of their fathers.

It is an account of the ministry of the Son of God to his other sheep in the day they saw his face and heard his voice and believed his word.

It is the divine evidence, the proof, that God has spoken in our day. Its chief purpose is to convince all men, Jew and Gentile alike, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, who manifests himself, by faith, in all ages and among all peoples.

Prepare men for now and for eternity

It came forth in our day proving to the world that the Bible is true; that Jesus, by whom the Atonement came, is Lord of all; that Joseph Smith was called of God, as were the prophets of old; that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the one place on earth where salvation is found.

It is the book that will save the world and prepare the sons of men for joy and peace here and now and everlasting life in eternity.

As it happens, I am one of the many who have come to know, by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to my soul, that the Book of Mormon is true. And, knowing that I will be accountable for that witness before the bar of the great Jehovah when he judges all men, I testify that as he lives the Book

of Mormon is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

Before hearing President Hinckley's concluding remarks, we should like to express, on behalf of all who have listened to the singing during sessions of the general conference, appreciation and our sincere gratitude to the Tabernacle Choir and Mormon Youth Chorus and to their conductors and organists.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference, and the Relief Society and Church Health Unit nurses who have been on hand to render service throughout the conference, and the ushers and interpreters.

We express appreciation to the local and national press representatives for the coverage given to the conference and to the owners and managers of the many radio and television stations and cable systems which have given public service time to carry sessions of this conference in many countries.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Gordon B. Hinckley, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, who will be the concluding speaker of the conference, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Precious Savior, Dear Redeemer."

The benediction will be offered by Elder Rex C. Reeve, Sr., a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

This conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My brethren and sisters, it has been customary for President Kimball to speak at the conclusion of the conference, but because of his age and the infirmities of his health, that is not pos-

sible. I know that you would have appreciated hearing from him. I know likewise that I am a poor substitute. It has been wonderful that he and President Romney have been able to be with