

to explain, but real to me. I seemed to hear a voice which said: "Don't you understand, my son? I have forgotten that. Why should you remember?"

I was chagrined. There was no satisfactory answer to the question. I have never wondered about it again. And I knew more surely than I had ever known before that the Lord is pleased when his children return to him.

All who are shepherds and all lost sheep should note this one last thing. The Lord really meant it when he said, "He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more" (D&C 58:42).

It is possible to come home

Some years ago it was fashionable in certain circles to use the phrase, "You can never go home again." That is just simply not true. It is possible to return. It is possible for those who have ceased to pray, to pray again. It is possible for those who are lost to find their way through the dark and come home.

And when they do, they will know, as I know, that the Lord is more concerned with what a man is than with what he was, and with where he is than with where he has been. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother F. Burton Howard, for those reminders of serious things. Before hearing President Benson's concluding remarks, we should like to express appreciation and sincere gratitude to all who have provided the music for this great

conference — to the Mormon Youth Chorus, the Murray Region Family Choir, and this great Tabernacle Choir who have sung to us so powerfully today, to their conductors and organists and all who have to do with it.

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

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

We have had in attendance all of the General Authorities except two: Brother Richard Clarke, who presides over the mission in Cape Town, South Africa, and who has remained at his post, and President Marion G. Romney, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, who now eighty-nine years of age lingers in a weakened condition. And as I suggested that we remember Brother Tuttle in our prayers, we should also remember President Romney and do so with faith.

We shall now be pleased to listen to President Ezra Taft Benson, our beloved prophet and leader, after which the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Abide with Me."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder Helio da Rocha Camargo of the First Quorum of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Ezra Taft Benson

Thanks for latter-day scripture

My beloved brothers and sisters, on this glorious occasion as we have gathered here together, I wish to give thanks to our Father in Heaven for the gift of modern revelation and particu-

larly for the books of latter-day scripture which He has given us.

I love the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. It is a source of great truth. It teaches us about the life and ministry of the Master. From its

pages we learn of the hand of God in directing the affairs of His people from the very beginning of the earth's history. It would be difficult to underestimate the impact the Bible has had on the history of the world. Its pages have blessed the lives of generations.

But as generation followed generation, no additional scripture came forth to the children of men. Without additional revelation to guide them, men began to interpret the Bible differently. Numerous churches and creeds developed, each using the Bible as its authoritative source.

But this in no way lessens the worth of the Bible. That sacred and holy book has been of inestimable worth to the children of men. In fact, it was a passage from the Bible that inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to a grove of trees near his home and kneel in prayer. What followed was the glorious vision that commenced the restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. That vision also began the process of bringing forth new scripture to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Bible in bearing witness to a wicked world that Jesus is the Christ and that God lives and loves His children and is still intimately involved in their salvation and exaltation.

Through the prophet Nephi, the Lord warned against those who might say that the Bible was all the scripture the world would need. He said:

"Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, . . . and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? . . .

"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? . . .

"And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever" (2 Nephi 29:7-9).

Today we have three new books of scripture: the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. I love all of these sacred

volumes. This afternoon I would like to speak particularly about the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. These two great books of latter-day scripture are bound together as revelations from Israel's God for the purpose of gathering and preparing His people for the Second Coming of the Lord. As President John Taylor wrote, the bringing forth of these two sacred volumes "cost the best blood of the nineteenth century" (D&C 135:6), namely the lives of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum.

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said, "This generation shall have my word through you" (D&C 5:10). The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are part of the fulfillment of that promise. Together these two great works of scripture bring great blessings to this generation.

Powerful proclamations of modern scripture

Each of these two books of modern scripture contains a powerful proclamation to the world. The Book of Mormon title page declares its purpose is threefold: to show what great things the Lord has done, to teach of the covenants of the Lord, and to convince both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.

Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants is the Lord's preface to the book. The Doctrine and Covenants is the only book in the world that has a preface written by the Lord Himself. In that preface He declares to the world that His voice is unto all men (see v. 2), that the coming of the Lord is nigh (see v. 12), and that the truths found in the Doctrine and Covenants will all be fulfilled (see vs. 37-38).

New witnesses of Jesus Christ

Each of these two great latter-day scriptures bears powerful and eloquent witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Virtually every page of both the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Mormon teaches about the Master — His great

love for His children and His atoning sacrifice — and teaches us how to live so that we can return to Him and our Heavenly Father.

Essential knowledge and counsel in modern scripture

Each of these two great latter-day books of scripture contains the knowledge and the power to help us live better lives in a time of great wickedness and evil. Those who carefully and prayerfully search the pages of these books will find comfort, counsel, guidance, and the quiet power to improve their lives.

Of the Book of Mormon, President Marion G. Romney has said:

“If our young folks are traditioned in the teachings of the Book of Mormon, they will not only be inspired with righteous courage to choose the right by example, . . . they will also be so schooled in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they will know what is right.

“From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Redeemer and Savior. *This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm*” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, p. 112; italics added).

Speaking of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “If we will put them into practice, if we will keep the commandments of the Lord, we will know the truth and there shall be no weapon formed against us that shall prosper. There shall be no false doctrines, no teaching of men that will deceive us. . . . If we will search these revelations then we will be fortified against errors and we will be made strong” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1931, p. 17).

The Lord gives modern scripture to preserve his people

Many years before the coming of the Savior to this earth, the prophet Enoch saw the latter days. He observed the great wickedness that would prevail on the earth at this time and foretold the “great tribulations” that would result from such wickedness; but in the midst of what was otherwise a very gloomy prophecy, the Lord promised, “But my people will I preserve” (Moses 7:61). How would He do so? Note what the Lord Himself promised He would do to preserve His people. He said:

“*And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; . . . and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare*” (Moses 7:62; italics added).

The Lord promised, therefore, that righteousness would come from heaven and truth out of the earth. We have seen the marvelous fulfillment of that prophecy in our generation. The Book of Mormon has come forth out of the earth, filled with truth, serving as the very “keystone of our religion” (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon). God has also sent down righteousness from heaven. The Father Himself appeared with His Son to the Prophet Joseph Smith. The angel Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and numerous other angels were directed by heaven to restore the necessary powers to the kingdom. Further, the Prophet Joseph Smith received revelation after revelation from the heavens during those first critical years of the Church’s growth. These revelations have been preserved for us in the Doctrine and Covenants.

These two great works of scripture, then, become a major tool in the Lord’s hand for preserving His people in the latter days: the Book of Mormon, written under the hand of inspiration for

our day, preserved through the centuries to come forth in our time, translated by the gift and power of God. It is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of our testimony. It is a keystone in the witness of Jesus Christ. It is a keystone in helping us avoid the deceptions of the evil one in these latter days. Satan rages in the hearts of men and has power over all of his dominions (see D&C 1:35). But the Book of Mormon has greater power — power to reveal false doctrine, power to help us overcome temptations, power to help us get closer to God than any other book (see Introduction to the Book of Mormon).

Study the Book of Mormon to receive God's approval

The Book of Mormon must be reenthroned in the minds and hearts of our people. We must honor it by reading it, by studying it, by taking its precepts into our lives and transforming them into lives required of the true followers of Christ. Speaking of the central role of the Book of Mormon in our worship, President Joseph Fielding Smith said:

"It seems to me that any member of this Church would never be satisfied until he or she had read the Book of Mormon time and time again, and thoroughly considered it so that he or she could bear witness that it is in very deed a record with the inspiration of the Almighty upon it, and that its history is true. . . ."

" . . . No member of this Church can stand approved in the presence of God who has not seriously and carefully read the Book of Mormon" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, p. 18; italics added).

Doctrine and Covenants given directly to this generation

Likewise, the Doctrine and Covenants becomes an essential part of our

spiritual life. The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "In these infant days of the Church, there was great anxiety to obtain the word of the Lord upon every subject that in any way concerned our salvation" (*History of the Church*, 1:207).

Thus, the Doctrine and Covenants is a glorious book of scripture given directly to our generation. It contains the will of the Lord for us in these latter days that precede the Second Coming of Christ. It contains many truths and doctrines not fully revealed in other scripture. Like the Book of Mormon, it will strengthen those who carefully and prayerfully study from its pages.

Use modern scripture to bless lives and resist evil

Do we, as Saints of the Most High God, treasure the word He has preserved for us at so great a cost? Are we using these books of latter-day revelation to bless our lives and resist the powers of the evil one? This is the purpose for which they were given. How can we not stand condemned before the Lord if we treat them lightly by letting them do no more than gather dust on our shelves?

My beloved brothers and sisters, I bear my solemn witness that these books contain the mind and the will of the Lord for us in these days of trial and tribulation. They stand with the Bible to give witness of the Lord and His work. These books contain the voice of the Lord to us in these latter days. May we turn to them with full purpose of heart and use them in the way the Lord wishes them to be used, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Abide with Me."
Elder Helio da Rocha Camargo offered the benediction.
