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We Affirm Our Faith

Author(s): Hugh B. Brown

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Abstract: This article celebrates that, after one hundred thirty years, the influence of the Book of Mormon continues to steadily increase. It is the word of God, a sacred record of ancient inhabitants of America, translated by the power of God. Though many have tried to discredit it, the Book of Mormon is probably the most influential and most widely discussed book in America. It is a witness of Christ.



beyond the things he can touch and see and rest his feet upon, which are undeniable.

And as to those friends to whom President Richards spoke so earnestly yesterday morning, I would witness to them, also, with him, that this in which we are engaged is not merely a vocation or a profession, but the dedication of a life to a conviction that cannot be denied.

And as to how one can know: He who does not know cannot know that another man does know, and some things are so certain within the souls of men that they cannot be denied.

A few days ago President Clark spoke

a sentence that I have not been able to forget. He said, "We are no better than we are." It is profound in its simplicity and it leads into many applications. Our positions do not make us better, or do not assure our being better than we are. I know of no generalizations that would save the souls of men. It is the specific performance of specific things that make men better—not theory, not merely the fact that there is a set of principles or that there are commandments, or that there is counsel, but the living of it.

I am thinking of the Danish sculptor of great fame, Thorvaldsen, who chose to be buried in the midst of his works—

WE AFFIRM OUR FAITH

Hugh B. Brown

of the Council of the Twelve

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 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

not in a cathedral or a cemetery, but in a museum among the monuments of his own making—in the midst of his statuary; and there what he made and what he did with his life surrounds him. He did not theorize upon sculpturing, only, but with his hands and with his creative gift he fashioned those things and he lies there in the midst of his works, as we all shall do someday—and it will not be the theories or the discussions or the speculations or the set of principles or the set of commandments that shall save us. We shall be no better than we are. We are no better than the tithing we pay, no better than the teaching we do, no better

than the service we give, no better than the commandments we keep, no better than the lives we live, and we shall have a bright remembrance of these things and we shall, in a sense, lie down in the midst of what we have done when that time comes, and never in my life have I felt more fully to say with all the earnestness of my soul, "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet, to guide us in these latter days."

My beloved brethren and sisters, may we take counsel with each other. There is safety in counsel: counsel with our children, with the family, with our friends, with our Father in heaven, and not attempt to live life alone and to

make the decisions alone, but to strengthen each other, and encourage each other, and go forward and do what there is to be done and follow the living leadership as the prophet interprets for us the great principles and commandments of all time.

I thank God for a prophet this day, for an assurance that I am not alone in life, and that you are not, that we none of us are, nor are left without inspired leadership. Thank God for it. And I leave this witness with you, in the name of him in whose name we do all things, and in whose name we are met, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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.