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The Book of Mormon: Its Own Silent Witness

Author(s): S. Dilworth Young

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Abstract: This article claims that the Book of Mormon and restoration of the gospel fulfill the prophecies in Isaiah 29:13-14 and Daniel 2:35. The author states that the Book of Mormon is its own best witness, and that the Lord only asks the reader to honestly and prayerfully desire to know its truthfulness.

in Israel who are called to give advice.

"Now you have been convicted of a felony," he said. "A felony is a crime for which you might be sent to the penitentiary. In this case I do not have to send you to the penitentiary. . . . I am permitted to give you a parole.

"But if you never see the inside of a penitentiary or the jail you will not have escaped from the penalties of your crime.

". . . The record of your conviction will be here as long as the courthouse stands. . . . Next year, or ten years from now, or when you are old men, if you are ever called to be witnesses in any court of law, some lawyer will point his finger at you and ask this question: 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?'

"And you will hang your head and admit that you have. . . .

"It may be that some day . . . you will apply for a passport. . . . No country will allow you to become a resident. . . .

"Some day you may seek a position in the civil service of your state or of your nation. On the application blank you will find this question: 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?' Your truthful answer will bar you from examination; an untruthful answer will be detected because appointments are made only after investigation. . . .

"Some day you may want to take a position of trust, where a surety bond is required. On the application for the bond will appear this question: 'Have you ever been convicted of a felony?'

"And while you are going from one bonding company to another trying to find one willing to take a chance on you, the position will be filled by some applicant who has not been convicted of a felony.

"In a few years you will be 21 and others of your age will have the right to vote, but you will not. . . .

"You will be a citizen of your state and country, but you will have no voice in public affairs. . . .

"Your country is calling men to the colors. . . . But the Army will never accept you, nor will the Navy. Military men are proud of the service; they will not permit it to be debased by the enlistments of convicted felons.

"I am granting you a parole. A parole is in no sense a pardon. You will report to the men who have accepted your parole as often as they may ask. Your convenience is not a matter of importance. . . .

"Should the slightest complaint of your conduct reach this court your parole will be revoked immediately, and you will begin serving your sentence. You will not be brought back here for questioning or explanations. You will be picked up and taken to prison without notice to you and without delay." (*Deseret News*, February 23, 1965, p. A15.)

A lesson well taught is a lesson well remembered. I wonder what the two boys might have done had they had the influence of the judge's counsel before the theft, rather than the influence that promoted the felony.

Parents, church leaders, and all who aspire to positions of influence, teach the youth the proper way to live; help them to develop faith in God and a good, strong character; help them to follow the right influence, that they may retain faith in God. Guide them as Susanna Wesley, the wise and devoted mother of John Wesley, counseled her son: "Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a pleasure, take this rule: Whatever impairs in tenderness your conscience, weakens your reason, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things; whatever increases the authority of your body over your mind—that thing to you is sin."

Remember that the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly small. In every segment of society, there are those influences which elevate and those which deteriorate the human soul.

The Savior miraculously fed the four thousand. Then he crossed the Sea of Galilee and came into the coasts of Magdala. There the materialistic, self-centered, and egotistical Pharisees and Sadducees came, tempting him to show them a sign from heaven. He observed that they could determine the weather, but they could not discern the signs of the times. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; . . ." (Matt. 12:39) warned Jesus. Today we have some Pharisees and Sadducees in our society, cloaked in the disguise and the influence of "professionalism," urging youth not to believe unless such can be measured in terms of materialistic values. In this mill of life we should heed the counsel that Jesus gave to his disciples: "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." (*Ibid.*, 16:6.)

This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Book of Mormon: Its Own Silent Witness

President S. Dilworth Young
Of the First Council
of the Seventy

One looks with awe as he contemplates the history of the Book of Mormon. Today the account of how it was written is entirely plausible to most men. Because of archeological research it is now known that writing on metal plates was common in the time of Lehi. Men have written on plates many times. Prophets have sung their prophecies and recorded them, kings have told of their conquests, and ministers of state have described their relations with other nations. Even the common accounts of common people have been inscribed. Written on metal plates, leather, or papyrus, in languages strange to us today, all of these have come to our attention.

Men have gone to great lengths to certify their discoveries. "At this certain place we dug," they would write. And there were present others to verify discovery and to help interpret its place in history.

This was not so in 1829. At that time books written on metal plates were known to but few men.

But nowhere in recorded history has a sacred book been buried in the earth and then been brought forth by



For a quiet moment President Hugh B. Brown, Elder Harold B. Lee (center), and President David O. McKay confer.

a miracle such as this one in which an angel of God visited a young man and pointed the way to the hiding place and then withheld the record until the man was prepared to receive it. The prophecies said that the latter-day work would be marvelous and wonderful. Seldom before has a single act brought forth so much to marvel at. There was the revelation to the young man; there was the four-year period of instruction; there was the providential provision of scribes; there was the literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy in which a learned man said he could not read a sealed book (see Isa. 29:11); there was the miraculous vision in which three men saw the plates and heard the voice declare that this work was done by the power of God; there was the earthly view of the plates by eight earnest, solemn men who saw and "hefted" the plates and knew "of a surety that the said Smith" indeed had them. (See the Testimony of Eight Witnesses, Book of Mormon.)

With all of this the Lord asks but one thing of the reader. Read the Book of Mormon honestly, prayerfully, with a desire to know its truth; and if the intent is sincere, God will reveal the truth of it to that person by the power of the Holy Ghost. To their wonderment and marveling as they discover its truths for themselves, many have read and believed. And further, with that testimony from the Holy Ghost has come the assurance also that Jesus Christ is the Creator and Lord of this earth, that he is mindful of all those who seek him, that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God and by revelation established this, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The young missionaries bear their solemn witness; but as they do it, they do not stand alone, nor does a listening person need to pin his hopes on their word alone. In their hands as they speak is the Book of Mormon which bears its own witness. It is as if they said, "We have told you that the gospel has been restored; now here is a witness which will convince you that we speak truly. You will know it if you read it sincerely." Those fortunate enough to follow this advice discover that it is truly a witness for Christ. That is its chief purpose: to bear witness for Christ to the convincing of Jew and gentile that Jesus is the Christ and that his gospel is for all men.

The number of people who have picked up the book by chance, read it, and become converted to its message has been very great. It is a silent witness, on duty twenty-four hours every day in many unexpected places. But to do its most effective work it must be in many more. Every home should have it in its library; every place

people stop for a moment it should be available. It is possible that the person who obtains a copy will not read it, but sooner or later there will be those who will see it, pick it up, turn to the page containing its declared purpose, and then become lost in the spiritual message of its drama and its history. With marveling in their souls and wonder in their hearts, they will peruse its pages, receive and believe the promise at its end, and find the kingdom of God in this living, vibrant Church.

For a long time there has been a vast project to make the Book of Mormon available to everyone who can read. Quorums of the priesthood have placed it where people stay overnight or await their turn in professional offices. The high priests have done this great service. Now, from here on, under the direction of the missionary committee of the Church, the seventies quorums are to continue this act of love. On the firm foundation laid by the high priests, the seventies will now carry the work further and to more and more people. No one, it is hoped, will be able to say that he has not had opportunity to read this witness for Christ.

Anyone who reads it with sincere purpose and genuine desire to know the truth will have it borne into his soul that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Creator and Redeemer of the world. He will also know that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of the Living God, called by the Lord as the human agent for the restoration of the gospel in the last days. It will be a witness to a work so marvelous that wonder and joy will spring into the hearts of men as they respond to its message and its testimony.

In our day we see the fulfilment of a prophecy written more than two thousand years ago: "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." (Isa. 29:13-14.)

Let us not falter in the effort to bring about its complete fulfilment to the awe and wonderment of all men in this day.

The Church is carrying forth its assigned work to teach repentance and salvation to the world, and its beckoning arms say, "Come." President David O. McKay is the prophet of God on whom rests the responsibility to guide the work today. It is our equal responsibility to assist him all we can,

and the work will then roll forth as Daniel prophesied until it fills the whole earth. (See Dan. 2:35.) That it may soon be, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Man Does Not Stand Alone

Henry D. Taylor

Assistant to
the Council of the Twelve

After the earth had been organized and beautified, the Lord created man in his own image and after his own likeness. And then the Lord God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." (Gen. 2:18.) Eve was then created and given to Adam as a companion and wife.

The poet Longfellow beautifully expressed this relationship of husband and wife in the following verse:

As unto the bow the cord is,
So unto the man is woman;
Though she bends him, she obeys
him,
Though she draws him, yet she
follows;
Useless each without the other!

(*Hiawatha.*)

The Lord's declaration, "It is not good that the man should be alone; . . ." (Gen. 2:18) has lofty significance. A babe born into this world is a helpless creature, dependent on its parents for care, love, and sustenance. Then as his life's cycle expands toward maturity, many other people affect the course of his life. Association with other youth and participation in their activities, schools, movies, television, radio, and other media also influence the individual.

One of the most vital forces in this teaching or training process is that of the Church. Someone has estimated that a boy fourteen years of age, raised in the Church, would have had approximately twenty-five auxiliary and priesthood teachers and leaders who provided more than a thousand hours of gospel instruction for his benefit. Added to this there probably would be another twenty-five persons currently engaged in bringing the full program of the Church to him.

Although one is born alone and dies alone and is free to live, think, feel, and act by himself, he needs help in reaching his highest possible potential. He cannot do it fully by himself.

As members of the Church, we are traveling along the same highway, each one working out his own salvation, with exaltation and eternal life in the celestial kingdom as the goal.