

A Marvelous Work and a Wonder

LeGrand Richards

of the Council of the Twelve Apostles
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
Saints

Wherefore the Lord said, 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.

—Isaiah 29:13-14

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CHAPTER 5

A MARVELOUS WORK AND A WONDER TO COME FORTH

We have already pointed out that the prophets foresaw a universal departure from the truth, and that such a condition obtained in the world at the time Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray. This being true, a restoration of the gospel must necessarily follow if the world were not to be left in spiritual darkness. Peter declared: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19.)

It now seems proper that we should consider the words of the prophets. We refer first to the words of Isaiah already quoted in the last chapter, since the visit of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith marked the first step in the "marvelous work and a wonder" the Lord promised to bring forth.

Wherefore the Lord said, 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. (Isaiah 29:13-14.)

What would really constitute a marvelous work and a wonder? Why should not honest lovers of truth welcome the pronouncement of such a work? Ought any generation to reject revealed truth when it is sent from heaven? Why does it seem so much easier to accept and believe in dead prophets than in living prophets?

The Restitution of All Things

In the accomplishment of this promised marvelous work and a wonder, the Lord had in mind a "restitution of all things" and moved upon Peter to so prophesy to those who had crucified Him:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21.)

Let us analyze this promise: (1) that their great sin might be forgiven; (2) that the Lord would send to them again that same Jesus which had been before preached unto them; (3) that there would be a "restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

When looking for the second coming of the Christ as herein promised, we must realize that he will not come before there is a restitution of all things. It is obvious that there cannot be a restitution of that which has not been taken away. Therefore, this scripture is another plain prediction of apostasy—the taking of the gospel from the earth—with a promise of a complete restoration of all things spoken by all the holy prophets since the world began.

It was the time of such a complete restitution that Paul must have had in mind when he wrote to the Ephesians:

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. (Ephesians 1:9-10.)

It is the pronouncement of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that this is the dispensation of the fulness of times, and that through the restitution of all things, the Lord has made provision to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." This restitution of all things will, however, not be complete until the end of the thousand years of the personal reign of Christ upon the earth when death will be destroyed. (See 1 Corinthians 15:24-26.) There is no other such plan in the world today.

God's Kingdom in the Latter Days

When the Lord gave the prophet Daniel the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel saw the rise and fall of the kingdoms of the world, which makes an interesting study for its accuracy. The important thing, however, was his observation that in the latter days the God of heaven would set up a kingdom that ultimately would subdue all other kingdoms and would become as a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these.

Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

... and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume

all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. (Daniel 2:27-28, 34-35, 44.)

The establishment of his kingdom by the God of heaven was to be the greatest event in the latter days. Though small and insignificant as its beginning would be, its ultimate destiny is to fill the whole earth, with Christ our Lord at its head. The kingdom was to be given to the saints of the Most High that they might possess it forever.

With all our present latter-day developments and progress, scientific and otherwise, why should we not be concerned with the promised spiritual development? Daniel gave us the sure word of prophecy:

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. (Daniel 7:13-14, 18.)

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith February 24, 1834, the Lord said:

But verily I say unto you, that I have decreed a decree which my people shall realize, inasmuch as they hearken from this very hour unto the counsel which I, the Lord their God, shall give unto them.

Behold they shall, for I have decreed it, begin to prevail against mine enemies from this very hour.

And by hearkening to observe all the words which I, the Lord their God, shall speak unto them, they shall never cease to prevail until the kingdoms of the world are subdued under my feet, and the earth is given unto the saints, to possess it forever and ever. (D&C 103:5-7.)

In our consideration of the apostasy, we referred to

what the Lord showed to John while he was on the Isle of Patmos. He saw that power would be given to Satan "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." (Revelation 13:7.)

John experienced these further prophetic visions:

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4:1.)

Restoration of the Gospel Foretold

John not only saw that Satan's power would be universal for a season, but he also saw a recommitment to the earth of the everlasting gospel which was to be preached to all people:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7.)

If there had been any nation, kindred, tongue, or people upon the earth still in possession of the everlasting gospel, it would not have been necessary that an angel bring it back to the earth. This angel was also to call the inhabitants of the earth back to a worship of the God that "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." We have already pointed out that the everlasting gospel was to be taken from the earth, and it is now our witness that it has been returned to the earth by an angel, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that it came from the God of heaven.

The prophet Malachi also saw this promised day of restoration through messengers sent from God, which he described in these words:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3:1.)

A full consideration of this verse and those following indicates that this promise had reference to the second coming of Jesus Christ and not to his first coming, since he is to come suddenly to his temple, which he did not do at his first coming.

The Calling of Joseph Smith

The promises herein referred to concerning the establishment of a latter-day kingdom through the sending of heavenly messengers, and the restoration of the "everlasting gospel" to be preached in all the world, could not be fulfilled without someone upon the earth to whom such restoration and commitments could be made.

This brings us to another great truth we learn from the visit of the Father and the Son to the boy Joseph Smith, i.e., that prophets are never self-sent—they must be called and sent of God: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.)

Thus, with Joseph Smith selected by the Lord, we are now prepared to consider what he revealed to his chosen prophet.

Criticism has been expressed because Joseph Smith was only in his fifteenth year when the Father and the Son appeared unto him. Let us consider the words of Jesus:

No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles

will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles. (Mark 2:21-22.)

We would not expect the Lord to select a man who had been steeped in the traditions and doctrines of men, for such individual would be too difficult to teach. As Jesus said, the new wine would burst the bottles and the wine would be spilled. However, by selecting the lad Joseph Smith, the Lord could teach him as he would, and it would truly be new wine in a new bottle without conflict with the old. Thus we see that the Lord has his own way of doing things. Surely this is his divine right and his privilege:

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9.)

There is another reason why it does not seem inconsistent that the Lord selected a mere boy, for we all lived in the spirit before we were born in the flesh. The Lord knew us and knew the nature of our spirits and the measure of our integrity. That is why he selected Jesus Christ "before the world was" to be the Redeemer of the world:

"And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John 17:5.)

This is the reason why Jeremiah was called to be a prophet unto the nations: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5.)

Now, Jeremiah could not have been so called and ordained before he was born if he did not exist. We will speak more of this subject later, and we will learn that Joseph Smith was also selected before he was born, as was Jeremiah.

This makes it easy to understand why the everlasting gospel could not be discovered through reading the Bible alone—the old bottles full of old wine could not contain the new wine. So glorious was to be the day when the Lord would “proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder,” that he had to select one free from all exposure to the unsound philosophies of men. That is why our original statement is consistent: that this is the only Christian church in the world that did not have to rely upon the Bible for its organization and government and that if all the Bibles in the world had been destroyed we would still be teaching the same principles and administering the same ordinances as introduced and taught by Jesus and the prophets. True, we take the Bible to prove that these principles and ordinances are in accord with divine truths of all ages, but if we had no Bible, we would still have all the needed direction and information through the revelations of the Lord to his servants the prophets in these latter days.

CHAPTER 6

THE COMING FORTH OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

At this point it seems proper that we should let Joseph Smith tell his own story of what happened from the time the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to him in the spring of 1820 until the first messenger was sent from heaven to further instruct him.

I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned—that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided.

I continued to pursue my common vocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision.

During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three—having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me—I was left to all kinds of temptation; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature; which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to anyone who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first day of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.

He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.

Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants;

Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these

stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “seers” in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus:

For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus: *Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.*

He also quoted the next verse differently: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.*

In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ; but the day had not yet come when “they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people,” but soon would come.

He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture, and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here.

Again, he told me, that when I got those plates of which he had spoken—for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled—I should not show them to any person; neither the breast-

plate with the Urim and Thummim; only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them; if I did I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

After this communication, I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so until the room was again left dark, except just around him; when, instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended till he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance.

I lay musing on the singularity of the scene, and marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger; when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside.

He commenced, and again related the very same things which he had done at his first visit, without the least variation; which having done, he informed me of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before; and added a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom; otherwise I could not get them.

After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me for the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

I shortly after arose from my bed, and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day; but, in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house; but, in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything.

The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received.

I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field, and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited; and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.

Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all around was covered with earth.

Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it

up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates.

Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days. . . .

At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off; but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.

I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible. But by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my

hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.

The excitement, however, still continued, and rumor with her thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating falsehoods about my father's family, and about myself. If I were to relate a thousandth part of them, it would fill up volumes. The persecution, however, became so intolerable that I was under the necessity of leaving Manchester, and going with my wife to Susquehanna county, in the State of Pennsylvania. While preparing to start—being very poor, and the persecution so heavy upon us that there was no probability that we would ever be otherwise—in the midst of our afflictions we found a friend in a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris, who came to us and gave me fifty dollars to assist us on our journey. Mr. Harris was a resident of Palmyra township, Wayne county, in the State of New York, and a farmer of respectability.

By this timely aid was I enabled to reach the place of my destination in Pennsylvania; and immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father, in the month of December, and the February following.

Sometime in this month of February, the aforementioned Mr. Martin Harris came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates, and started with them to the city of New York. For what took place relative to him and the characters, I refer to his own account of the circumstances, as he related them to me after his return, which was as follows:

"I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his literary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic;

and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him.

"He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation."

On the 5th day of April, 1829, Oliver Cowdery came to my house, until which time I had never seen him. He stated to me that having been teaching school in the neighborhood where my father resided, and my father being one of those who sent to the school, he went to board for a season at his house, and while there the family related to him the circumstances of my having received the plates, and accordingly he had come to make inquiries of me.

Two days after the arrival of Mr. Cowdery (being the 7th of April) I commenced to translate the Book of Mormon, and he began to write for me. (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:26-54, 59-67.)

Professor Anthon Fulfills Isaiah's Prophecy

From the words of the radio commentator to which we referred in chapter 1, such a story from Moroni, a prophet of God who lived upon the earth about A.D. 400, and who returned to the earth with a message from God, should constitute the greatest message that could possibly be broadcast to the world.

It has been said that if the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated had been found by one

plowing in his field and had been given to some college to be translated, it would have been considered the greatest event of the nineteenth century. But, true to form, men are loath to accept anything that bears relationship to the miraculous or is reported to have come from a divine source.

This was evidenced in the experience related above by the Prophet Joseph Smith of the visit of Martin Harris to Professor Charles Anthon of New York, when Martin Harris presented to him some copy of the characters that appeared upon the gold plates.

When Professor Anthon said, "I cannot read a sealed book," he did not realize that he was literally fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah:

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed. (Isaiah 29:11.)

Moroni's Prediction Concerning Joseph Smith

One of the important statements of the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith was:

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. (Joseph Smith 2:33.)

This remarkable statement was made by the Angel Moroni on September 21, 1823, when Joseph Smith was not yet eighteen years of age, and six and one-half years before the Church was organized. Who, except a messenger from the presence of the Lord, would dare make such a statement today of any young man eighteen years of age? To be able to make a statement that a young man who had achieved great success in his

schoolwork was destined to become prominent among his fellows might be done with reasonable accuracy, but to be able to say of this young man who had scarcely seen the inside of a schoolroom that his "name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds and tongues, and that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people," could only be done by one who understood the purposes of the Almighty as they were related to the divine mission of Joseph Smith.

The missionaries of the Church realize how completely the prediction of Moroni has been fulfilled. They have gone to all nations carrying the restored gospel message; and, like the Prophet Joseph Smith, they have been persecuted, evil spoken of, imprisoned, and some have been put to death because they have borne witness that Joseph Smith was a prophet sent of God. While multitudes have reviled the Prophet and called him an impostor and false prophet, the humble and meek of the earth who have heard and accepted the call of the missionaries have gathered together and worshiped the Lord as he has revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith. With joy and thanksgiving they have sung the song:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!
 Jesus anointed that Prophet and Seer.
 Blessed to open the last dispensation,
 Kings shall extol him, and nations revere.

History has recorded a complete fulfillment of this prediction of Moroni concerning the life of Joseph Smith, for he himself was imprisoned and caused to stand trial many times on concocted charges that had been brought against him, mostly instigated by ministers of religion. In no case, however, was he found guilty of the charges preferred until his enemies are reported to have said: "If the law will not reach them, powder and ball can." (*History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 594.) Accordingly, Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum were shot to death by a wicked mob at Carthage Jail, Illinois, June 27, 1844.

Some thought this would end the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith, established under divine revelation from heaven, but the works of a prophet are not so easily terminated:

All the prophets who have ever spoken upon the earth were insulted by men, and men will insult those who are to come. We can recognize prophets by this, that smeared with mud and covered with shame, they pass among men, bright-faced, speaking out what is in their hearts. No mud can close the lips of those who must speak. Even if the obstinate prophet is killed, they cannot silence him. His voice multiplied by the echoes of his death will be heard in all languages and through all the centuries. (*Giovanni Papini, Life of Christ*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1925, p. 93.)

The voice of the Prophet Joseph Smith has continued to be heard until his living followers today number several million souls, not counting those who have passed away nor those who believed his message but have not had the courage to accept it because of the unfavorable attitude of relatives and friends, and the public generally, toward the church that he established under the revelations of the Lord.

Book of Mormon Prophets Commanded to Keep Records

The most important phases of Moroni's visit and message to Joseph Smith were: (1) to acquaint him with the existence of the gold plates containing the history of early inhabitants of the Americas; (2) to reveal the words and teachings of the prophets who lived among them; (3) to proclaim the future destiny of the remnants of that people (the American Indians or Lamanites); (4) to declare that this land of America is "a land which is choice above all other lands" (see 1 Nephi 2:20) and that upon it shall be established the New Jerusalem, according to the promise of the prophets.

We learn that the prophets who lived among the

people of the Americas were instructed by the Lord to keep records, and that the Prophet Mormon, the father of Moroni, made an abridgment of all these records, from which the Book of Mormon was translated. The book bears the name of the great prophet, Mormon.

Moroni's introduction to his abridgment is found on the introductory page of the Book of Mormon:

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven—Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

From this it will be noted that one of the chief purposes for which this record has been preserved is for "the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

The Book of Mormon, A New Witness for Christ

It is general knowledge that faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, is waning,

among both clergy and laity. Some years ago the Northwestern University School of Education in Chicago, Illinois, sent a questionnaire to five hundred Protestant ministers, which revealed many modifications in religious beliefs. Of this number twenty-six percent were opposed to the deity of Jesus. If such be the result with the ministers, what can be expected from the laity? Such a condition would seem to indicate the great wisdom of God in providing a new witness of the divine mission of his Son, that he was in very deed "the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations."

Such is the testimony of the Book of Mormon. The Lord did not leave Joseph Smith's testimony regarding the plates from which this book was translated, and the inspired translation thereof, to stand alone, for as the apostle Paul stated: ". . . In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." (2 Corinthians 13:1.)

Testimony of the Three Witnesses

Read the inspired testimony of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon:

BE IT KNOWN unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we

know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY

DAVID WHITMER

MARTIN HARRIS

Each of these three witnesses passed from this life to meet his reward with a confirmation of the truth of his testimony upon his lips. Why should the world doubt? The testimony of three such men would convict any man in the courts, and the testimony of these witnesses will stand against those who have heard it and who have refused to accept the truth.

The Lord's Promise Concerning the Book of Mormon

We should not overlook the promise contained in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Moroni 10:4.)

Millions have put this promise to the test and have witnessed its veritable fulfillment. Only God could make and fulfill such a promise.

CHAPTER 7

THE BOOK OF MORMON FULFILLS BIBLE PROPHECIES

When the plates that had been delivered to Joseph Smith by the Angel Moroni had been translated and published as the Book of Mormon, its distribution was met by much opposition, particularly by the ministers of the day who warned their followers against reading it. This, of itself, seems rather absurd, for if it were the work of man, as they claimed, their followers might have been counseled to read it and learn for themselves of its falsity. They were told the canon of scripture was complete; that we would never have more than that which was contained in the Holy Bible. They often quoted:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (Revelation 22:18-19.)

At first reading, one might be justified in assuming that the apostle John meant that no other scripture would be added to the Bible, and this particularly in view of the fact that it is contained in the last chapter of the Bible as we now have it. It is easy to understand, however, that this interpretation is erroneous when one realizes, according to Bible scholars, (1) that this revelation was written sometime between A.D. 64 and 96; (2) that John himself wrote his gospel (The Gospel According to St. John) at a much later date at Ephesus; (3) that at that time the books of the Bible were not compiled as we now have them. It must, therefore, be understood

that John was warning against adding to or taking from the revelations he had received and written while banished upon the Isle of Patmos. This does not, however, prevent the Lord from adding to what he had revealed.

By referring to the words of Moses we find evidence that no other conclusion is tenable, else we would be compelled to reject all the books of the Bible from Deuteronomy on:

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2.)

What things soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. (Deuteronomy 12:32.)

Prophecy Concerning Other Scriptures

The Lord understood that Satan would put it into the hearts of the children of men to refuse to accept this new volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon, and so declared himself through the prophet Nephi:

But behold, there shall be many—at that day when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel;

And also, that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed; and that the words of your seed should proceed forth out of my mouth unto your seed; and my words shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth, for a standard unto my people, which are of the house of Israel;

And because my words shall hiss forth—many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible.

But thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a Bible;

and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? Do they remember the travels, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?

O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay; but ye have cursed them, and have hated them, and have not sought to recover them. But behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads; for I the Lord have not forgotten my people.

Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?

Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?

Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? 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? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.

And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words according to mine own pleasure. And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever.

Wherefore, because that ye have a Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written.

For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them; for out of the

books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written.

For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.

And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews.

And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one. And I will show unto them that fight against my word and against my people, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever. (2 Nephi 29.)

From this revelation we are justified in assuming that there are other scriptures besides those contained in the Bible and in the Book of Mormon. Jesus enlightens us further on this subject:

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (John 10:16.)

A writer on the life of Christ has indicated that he could find no excuse for this passage of scripture, since he knew of no other sheep except those to whom Jesus ministered. Some have explained that it must have been the gentiles, but Jesus indicated: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 15:24.)

Jesus Visited His Other Sheep

It should be noted that Jesus did not minister unto the gentiles, although he did send his apostles unto

them after his crucifixion. This leaves us with the question unanswered, so far as the Bible is concerned: Who were the other sheep he promised to visit? For this information we must look to the restoration of the gospel and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

After Jesus had been crucified and had ascended unto his Father, he visited his "other sheep," known as the Nephites, in America, and there chose twelve disciples and organized his church, as he had done among the Jews. An account of this is given in some detail in Third Nephi of the Book of Mormon, from which we quote:

And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he said unto those twelve whom he had chosen:

Ye are my disciples; and ye are a light unto this people, who are a remnant of the house of Joseph.

And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; and the Father hath given it unto you.

And not at any time hath the Father given me commandment that I should tell it unto your brethren at Jerusalem.

Neither at any time hath the Father given me commandment that I should tell unto them concerning the other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land.

This much did the Father command me, that I should tell unto them:

That other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

And now, because of stiffneckedness and unbelief they understood not my word; therefore I was commanded to say no more of the Father concerning this thing unto them.

But, verily, I say unto you that the Father hath commanded me, and I tell it unto you, that ye were separated from among them because of their iniquity; therefore it is because of their iniquity that they know not of you.

And verily, I say unto you again that the other tribes hath the

Father separated from them; and it is because of their iniquity that they know not of them.

And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching.

And they understood me not that I said they shall hear my voice; and they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice—that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost.

But behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; and ye are my sheep, and ye are numbered among those whom the Father hath given me. (3 Nephi 15:11-24.)

From this we learn who the other sheep were whom Jesus told his disciples at Jerusalem he would visit, and that they were a remnant of the house of Joseph. Jesus further explains that he has still other sheep "which are not of this land, neither of the land of Jerusalem" (3 Nephi 16:1), whom he must visit. Since we do not yet know who or where they are, we will now concern ourselves with the remnant of the house of Joseph, and we will see what the Bible has to say about this branch of the house of Israel.

The House of Judah and the House of Joseph

A study of the promises of the Lord to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), and to his twelve sons, whom we understand to be the heads of the twelve tribes of the house of Israel, indicates clearly that the outstanding promises were given unto Judah and Joseph. Much confusion and misapplication exists in the minds of many with respect to the use of the name *Israel*. Many think of it, even today, as referring to the Jews or to the house of Judah, forgetting that Judah was only one of

the twelve sons of Israel. Reuben was the eldest son, but because of his transgression, the birthright was taken from him and given to the sons of Joseph:

Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.

For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him came the chief ruler; but the birthright was Joseph's.) (1 Chronicles 5:1-2.)

Speaking of the relative importance and position of Judah and Joseph, Paul said: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." (Hebrews 7:14.)

When these promises and blessings are understood, it is clear that the blessings of Joseph, who received the birthright, gave him preference over all the sons of Israel, including Judah. It is probably due to the fact that Judah and his descendants, the Jews, have held together that they have come to be regarded as the only Israelites. In earlier days Israel was divided, Judah comprising the smaller group, the larger group being called "Israel":

And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men. (2 Samuel 24:9.)

And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. (2 Kings 23:27.)

Under Ephraim, Israel was led into the north at the time the kingdom of Israel was overthrown by the Assyrians about 721 B.C., and never returned. They were sifted among the nations:

... I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord.

For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel

among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. (Amos 9:8-9.)

Then Amos promised that after this sifting they shall be gathered again. (See Amos 9:14-15.) In a later discussion we will consider the gathering of Israel in the latter days as promised by the prophets.

Moses Blessed Joseph

Let us now consider in greater detail the promises made to Joseph and his seed. We will find that not only were their promises greater than those made to Judah, but also that Joseph and Judah were to be separated into two great divisions, as we have already pointed out. Joseph, after the sifting of Israel, was to be given a new land separate and apart from the promised land occupied principally by Judah.

Moses "blessed the children of Israel before his death." (See Deuteronomy 33.) The reader is referred to the account of the blessings with the suggestion they be read carefully, noting particularly the import and significance of Joseph's blessing as compared with the blessings of his brothers. Let us give specific consideration to Joseph's blessing:

And of Joseph he said, *Blessed of the Lord be his land*, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,

And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun and for the precious things put forth by the moon,

And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,

And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.

His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: *and they are the ten thousands of*

Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. (Deuteronomy 33:13-17. Italics added.)

When this blessing was given by Moses, the patriarch, it is clear that he had in mind first the new land that would be given to Joseph, which would be abundantly blessed of the Lord to produce precious fruits and the precious things of the lasting hills and of the ancient mountains.

When the descendants of Joseph were led to the land of America about 600 B.C., they were told that it would be a land choice above all other lands. The reading of Moses' blessing to Joseph indicates that Moses was impressed with this fact and attempted to so describe it. He further indicated that it would be in the "ancient mountains" and "lasting hills." The land to which they were led was the western part of South, Central, and North America, in the Rocky Mountains, which accurately answers Moses' description.

Then Moses further indicated that the good will of him who dwelt in the bush (referring to the God of Israel who dwelt in the burning bush—see Exodus 3:2) would be upon Joseph who was separated from his brethren. He refers to his glory as like "the firstling of his bullock," or the firstborn or heir of his father, and we have already pointed out how Joseph became heir to the birthright. Moses looked beyond to the power and authority that should be given to Joseph's seed and added: ". . . he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." (Deuteronomy 33:17.) This seems to look forward to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the earth in the latter-days, which we have previously outlined, and the gathering of Israel, which we will discuss later.

Jacob (Israel) Blessed Joseph

The great patriarch Jacob called his children to him and blessed them just prior to his death:

And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.

Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob: and hearken unto Israel your father. (Genesis 49:1-2.)

It is suggested the reader study the entire forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, noting the great difference in the respective blessings.

Now let us give careful consideration to the special blessing Joseph received from his father:

Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him:

But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:)

Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb;

The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. (Genesis 49:22-26.)

This blessing is similar to that given by Moses and begins with reference to the land to which Joseph's seed would go: "a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall." It seems consistent to assume that the ocean was regarded as the wall over which Joseph's branches were to run "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." Then Jacob indicated that Joseph would be blessed "with the blessings of heaven above . . . blessings of the breasts, and of the womb," indicating that his posterity would be great, and that his blessings would prevail above the blessings of his progenitors.

Significance of Joseph's Dream

Add Joseph's dream to these two blessings, when he saw his brothers' sheaves pay homage to his sheaf. Then he dreamed that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to him. (See Genesis 37:5-10; 44:14.) Now ask yourself these questions:

1. Does the Bible record promises to any other man equal to these promises, except the promise that through the loins of Judah the Christ would come into the world?

2. Does the Bible record the fulfillment of these promises? If so, where?

3. It is generally conceded that the Bible is a record of the Jews, but where is the record of Joseph and his seed?

4. Is it consistent to assume that God would make greater promises to Joseph and his seed than to any other group of the eleven sons of Jacob (Israel) and his seed, and then make no provision that a record should be kept of the fulfillment of those promises?

The Stick of Joseph—The Book of Mormon

The Lord did not overlook this very important matter, but made adequate provision that a record should be kept of his agreements with Joseph and his seed beginning with his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh:

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying,

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all of the house of Israel his companions:

And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.

And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. (Ezekiel 37:15-20.)

In ancient times it was the custom to write on parchment and roll it on a stick. Therefore, when this command was given, it was the equivalent of directing that two books or records should be kept. A careful reading will indicate that it would be in coming generations (verse 18), when their children would ask the meaning of this commandment, that the Lord would "take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand."

Note that the Lord said he would do this and would make them *one* in his hand. Now, granting that the Bible is the stick of Judah, where is the stick of Joseph? Can anyone answer? God commanded that it should be kept to record the fulfillment of his greater promises to Joseph. It would naturally be a record kept in another land, since Joseph was to be "separate from his brethren." It is plain from the reading of this scripture that the record of Judah, or the Holy Bible, would remain with this people, that the record of Joseph would be joined unto it, and that the two would become one.

Should anyone object to God's doing exactly what he promised Ezekiel he would do? Could this promise be fulfilled in a simpler and more perfect manner than it was through the coming forth of the Book of Mormon? God led a branch of the house of Joseph to America and commanded them to keep records of all their doings. He then commanded his prophet Moroni

to hide this sacred record in the Hill Cumorah in the western part of the American state of New York. Centuries later he sent Moroni back to deliver the record to Joseph Smith, and gave Joseph power to translate it with the assistance of the Urim and Thummim. The two records have now been joined together, constituting a complete fulfillment of another great prophecy. Again, who could object to God's doing the thing he promised to do? Until someone can explain where the record of Joseph is, the Book of Mormon stands unrefuted in its claim to be "the stick of Joseph."

A Voice from the Dust

Isaiah saw the coming forth of this record as the voice of one that has a familiar spirit whispering out of the dust:

Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust. (Isaiah 29:1-4.)

Isaiah saw the downfall of Ariel, or Jerusalem, at a time far in the future, "add ye year to year." Then he seems to have been carried away in vision to witness a similar destruction of the cities of Joseph, "and it shall be unto me as Ariel." He describes how they would be besieged and forts would be raised against them. They would be brought down and would speak out of the ground. Their speech would be "low out of the dust"; their voice would be as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground; and their speech would whisper out of the dust. Now, obviously, the only way a dead people

could speak "out of the ground" or "low out of the dust" would be by the written word, and this the people did through the Book of Mormon. Truly it has a familiar spirit, for it contains the words of the prophets of the God of Israel.

The prophet Nephi describes this event:

After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have camped against them around about, and shall have laid siege against them with a mount, and raised forts against them; and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten.

For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust.

For thus saith the Lord God: They shall write the things which shall be done among them, and they shall be written and sealed up in a book, and those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not have them, for they seek to destroy the things of God. (2 Nephi 26:15-17. Compare with Isaiah 29:1-4.)

Isaiah not only saw the destruction of this people, that they would be brought down, that they would speak out of the ground, and that their speech would be as one that hath a familiar spirit, whispering out of the dust; but he saw also that this whole vision was represented by a sealed book:

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed. (Isaiah 29:11.)

After this vision closed, the word of the Lord came

again unto Isaiah, informing him of the marvelous work and a wonder he would bring forth:

Wherefore the Lord said, 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. (Isaiah 29:13-14.)

The bringing forth of the Book of Mormon is a "marvellous work and a wonder." The wise men and prudent men of the world cannot account for it in any other way than the story told by Joseph Smith, and he did not get it, neither could he have gotten it, by reading the Bible only. He received it by revelation from the Lord through the Angel Moroni.

CHAPTER 8

EVIDENCES OF THE DIVINE AUTHENTICITY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

We have considered the Book of Mormon as a companion volume of scripture (the stick of Joseph, a record of the "other sheep" Jesus promised to visit) that the Lord promised he would join unto the Bible (the stick of Judah) and make them one in his hand. Now it seems proper that we should mention briefly a few of the evidences of the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

One of the greatest evidences is the testimony of the three witnesses to whom the Angel Moroni showed the plates and bore witness that they were translated by the gift and power of God. This testimony we have already quoted in its entirety; it appears in the front of each copy of the Book of Mormon, together with the testimony of the eight witnesses, to whom Joseph Smith was permitted to show the plates. Not one of these witnesses ever denied his testimony, even though each was subjected to much persecution and ridicule.

"Translated by the Gift and Power of God"

Let us give consideration to the statement of the Lord to the witnesses that the plates were "translated by the gift and power of God." When Moroni told Joseph Smith of the record deposited in the Hill Cumorah, he said:

Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted "seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. (Joseph Smith 2:35.)

It was through the use of the Urim and Thummim

that Joseph Smith was able to translate into English, from the gold plates, the Book of Mormon, consisting of over five hundred printed pages. This was accomplished in about sixty days time, from April 7, 1829, to the first week in June, 1829. We doubt that any other writer has ever written even a book of fiction of such magnitude in such a comparably short period of time.

The Urim and Thummim

Would it be unfair to ask what the spiritual leaders of Joseph Smith's day knew about the Urim and Thummim? Would Joseph Smith, of himself, have thought of claiming that he translated the Book of Mormon with the assistance of the Urim and Thummim? Yet, the use of the Urim and Thummim was known to the prophets of old:

Urim and Thummim, (i.e., 'Light and Perfection') mentioned as the means by which the High Priest inquired of the Lord, Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Nu. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6. The Urim and Thummim were clearly material objects of some kind; it has been suggested that they were (I) stones in the High Priest's breastplate, (II) sacred dice, (III) little images of "truth" and "justice" such as are found hung around the neck of an Egyptian priest's mummy. The Urim and Thummim did not exist after the Captivity—Ezra 2:63. (*A Concise Biblical Encyclopedia*, p. 154.)

Since the Urim and Thummim was used by the ancient prophets as a means by which they inquired of the Lord, and since it was preserved by the hand of the Lord and delivered to Joseph Smith along with the gold plates, it would demonstrate the wisdom of God in preserving it for this sacred purpose. These facts account for the statement of the scribes for the Prophet Joseph Smith that they wrote as he dictated, and that he made no corrections. Follow the testimony of Oliver Cowdery, the chief scribe:

I wrote, with my own pen, the entire *Book of Mormon* (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph, as he trans-

lated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim. . . . I beheld with my eyes, and handled with my hands, the gold plates from which it was transcribed. . . . That book is true. (B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1965, vol. 1, p. 139.)

Origin of the American Indians

The Book of Mormon gives a very definite account of who the American Indians are and how they came to the western hemisphere. The first people of whom we have record who occupied the western hemisphere were the Jaredites, who left the tower of Babel at the time of the confounding of their language and the scattering of the people. They were led to America by the Lord:

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. (Genesis 11:6-8.)

In view of the statement "the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth," it is not unreasonable to assume that some of the people were scattered to the land of America, for certainly it is a part of "all the earth."

The Jaredites became extinct through their failure to keep the commandments of the Lord. For an account of this people, see the book of Ether in the Book of Mormon.

Lehi and his family were led from Jerusalem 600 B.C. by the hand of God to the land of America and have since continued to occupy the land. However, shortly after their arrival there, because of the wickedness of the followers of two of the sons of Lehi—Laman

and Lemuel—the Lord cursed them, and to separate them from their brothers caused that their skin become dark:

And he had caused the cursing to come upon them, yea, even a sore cursing, because of their iniquity. For behold, they had hardened their hearts against him, that they had become like unto a flint; wherefore, as they were white, and exceeding fair and delightful, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them.

And thus saith the Lord God: I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they shall repent of their iniquities.

And cursed shall be the seed of him that mixeth with their seed; for they shall be cursed even with the same cursing. And the Lord spake it, and it was done. (2 Nephi 5:21-23.)

Those who were thus cursed succeeded in destroying all the white people, save twenty-four souls, about A.D. 384. It was at this time that Mormon deposited in the Hill Cumorah all the records that had been entrusted to him except a few plates that he gave to his son Moroni. (See Mormon 6.)

About A.D. 420, Moroni placed these plates with those his father, Mormon, had already deposited in the hill. (See Moroni 10:1-2.) It was from the latter plates that the Book of Mormon was translated by Joseph Smith.

The dark-skinned people who occupied the land of America from that time on were called, in the Book of Mormon, Lamanites, which are the people known generally as the American Indians, who are of the house of Israel.

It is to be assumed, therefore, that since the Book of Mormon is a record or history of this ancient American people, quite a complete account may be expected of their origin and travels, their wars and contentions, the lives and teachings of their prophets, and prophecies as to the future destiny of America.

One of the most interesting features of the entire book is an account of Jesus' visit to the inhabitants of America following his crucifixion and ascension, including an account of the destructions that took place at the time of his crucifixion which literally changed the face of the entire land: mountains were thrown up; tempests and whirlwinds raged; cities were sunk; buildings were leveled by violent earthquakes, and "the face of the whole earth became deformed." (See 3 Nephi 8.)

Modern archaeological research has accounted for many of these buried cities; uncovered cement highways mentioned in the Book of Mormon; and located temples and other magnificent buildings erected by those people who reached a high stage of civilization and culture in the land of America. The traditions of the Indians confirm these facts.

Washoe Indian Legend

Typical of these traditions is the following Washoe Indian legend, which seems to have preserved the story of the disappearance of the great intermountain lake. This immense "sheet" of water was called Lahonitan. Its existence in the past is attested by the fossilized remains of animals that have been found in various parts of the basin, as well as by other unmistakable evidences. The Indian legend is related as follows:

"Long time, heap long time. Maybe one hundred years, injun no sabe, white man sabe. My grandfather's father, he heap old man. Maybe two, three hundred years, me dunno, Carson Valley, Wasu Valley, Truckee Valley, Long Valley, Pilamid Lake, Lublock, eblywhere all water, plenty pish, plenty duck. Big pish too, now no see him no more, all go away, no come back.

"Wasu Injun, he lib big mountains (pointing to the Comstock and Pyramid range). Some time Wasu Indian take 'em boat go see Piutee, maybe Piutee he take 'em boat go see Wasu Indian, Yash he good friend, all time."

Pointing to the Sierra to the west of Washoe Valley, the old Indian continued:

"Big mountain all time pire, plenty 'boom, 'boom, heap smoke, injun heap flaid! Byme bye, one day, mountain heap smoke, heap noise, glound too much shake, injun heap flaid, pall down, plenty cly. He sun ebly day come up (pointing to the northeast) he go down (pointing to the southwest). One day sun no come up, Injun no sabe, mountain heap smoke, glound plenty shake, wind blow, water heap mad. *Maybe two, tlee day sun he no come*, injun no eat, no sleep, all time cly, cly, yash, heap flaid. Byme bye water make plenty noise, go plenty fast like Tlukee Liver; water go down, down, mountain come up, come up, plenty mud, plenty pish die, byme bye sun come back over this mountain (pointing to the southeast) he go down ober there (pointing to the northwest). Yash, whiteman sabe, injun no sabe,

"Maybe two, tlee week, mud he dly up, Piutee, Wasu Injun walk, no more boat. All water he go; maybe little water Pilamid Lake, Honey Lake, Wasu Lake, too much mountain, he come purty quick. Yash, injun no sabe water, big pish no come back. No see him no more." (Mrs. M. M. Garwood, *Progressive West Magazine*, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, February 5, 1906, p. 4.)

The narrative is lacking in detail, but it is sufficiently clear to indicate that the Indians of early America have preserved, in legendary form, some account of the terrible cataclysms that have convulsed the American continents.

Nephi's Testimony

Now read an account of this same incident as related in Third Nephi of the Book of Mormon and you will note that the two accounts agree on practically every detail, even to the length of time in which the sun failed to come up. This is the account given by Nephi of the happenings upon the American continent at the time the Savior was crucified:

But behold, there was a more great and terrible destruction in the land northward; for behold, the whole face of the land was

changed, because of the tempest and the whirlwinds, and the thunderings and the lightnings, and the exceeding great quaking of the whole earth;

And the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough.

And many great and notable cities were sunk, and many were burned, and many were shaken till the buildings thereof had fallen to the earth, and the inhabitants thereof were slain, and the places were left desolate.

And thus the face of the whole earth became deformed, because of the tempests, and the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the quaking of the earth.

And it came to pass that there was thick darkness upon all the face of the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof who had not fallen could feel the vapor of darkness;

And there could be no light, because of the darkness, neither candles, neither torches; neither could there be fire kindled with their fine and exceedingly dry wood, so that there could not be any light at all;

And there was not any light seen, neither fire, nor glimmer, neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, for so great were the mists of darkness which were upon the face of the land.

And it came to pass that it did last for the space of three days that there was no light seen; and there was great mourning and howling and weeping among all the people continually; yea, great were the groanings of the people, because of the darkness and the great destruction which had come upon them. (3 Nephi 8:12-14, 17, 20-23.)

In considering the marked similarity in these two accounts, it should be remembered that the Book of Mormon was published in 1829 and this Indian legend in 1906. What is the explanation if neither of them be true?

Supplementary Reading

It is not the writer's purpose to attempt to consider in detail the archaeology and ethnology of the Americas

that contribute so much corroborative evidence in support of the Book of Mormon. For a study of such evidences as (1) that this land has been occupied by different peoples at widely separated periods; (2) that the traditions found among the native races of America, seeming to come from common stock, are closely allied to, if not identical with, traditions of the Israelites; (3) that the ancient inhabitants of the American continents had a knowledge of such major biblical events as the creation, the building of the tower of Babel, the flood, the life and crucifixion of the Savior, the second coming of the Redeemer, the administration of the sacrament, etc., the reader is referred to *Articles of Faith* by James E. Talmage as well as numerous articles in Church magazines and other publications that should be available in local meetinghouse libraries.

A Choice Land

The Book of Mormon contains a record of the teachings of inspired prophets who ministered among the people and prophetic predictions as to the future destiny of this land.

Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written. (Ether 2:12.)

But behold, this land, said God, shall be a land of thine inheritance, and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land.

And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles.

And I will fortify this land against all other nations.

And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God.

For he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words. (2 Nephi 10:10-14.)

And now I, Moroni, proceed to finish my record concerning the destruction of the people of whom I have been writing.

For behold, they rejected all the words of Ether; for he truly told them of all things, from the beginning of man; and that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord; wherefore the Lord would have that all men should serve him who dwell upon the face thereof;

And that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, and the holy sanctuary of the Lord.

Behold, Ether saw the days of Christ, and he spake concerning a New Jerusalem upon this land.

And he spake also concerning the house of Israel, and the Jerusalem from whence Lehi should come—after it should be destroyed it should be built up again, a holy city unto the Lord; wherefore, it could not be a new Jerusalem for it had been in a time of old; but it should be built up again, and become a holy city of the Lord; and it should be built unto the house of Israel.

And that a New Jerusalem should be built up upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type.

For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore, the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph that he should perish not.

Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built upon this land; and it shall be a land for their inheritance; and they shall build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; and they shall no more be confounded, until the end come when the earth shall pass away. (Ether 13:1-8.)

A high government official, after reading the Book of Mormon, made the following statement:

Of all the American religious books of the Nineteenth Century, it seems probable that the Book of Mormon was the most powerful. It reached perhaps only one per cent of the people of the

United States but it affected this one per cent so powerfully and lastingly that all the people of the United States have been affected especially by its contribution to opening up one of our greatest frontiers.

A Tourist's Testimony

After visiting on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, where he obtained a copy of the Book of Mormon, a tourist wrote the following: "I have been a minister of the Methodist Church in _____ for 37 years. I have built up a library of the greatest books in the world, costing me more than \$12,000. But I have found here in the Book of Mormon a library more valuable than all the collections of books in the world because it is the word of God."

Dr. Willard Richards' Testimony

Dr. Willard Richards was in jail with the Prophet Joseph Smith when the Prophet and his brother Hyrum were martyred, and he later became a counselor to Brigham Young in the First Presidency of the Church. It is reported that when he first saw a copy of the Book of Mormon, he opened it in the center and read a few pages, then closed the book with this statement: "That book was either written by God or the devil, and I am going to find out who wrote it." Accordingly, he read the book through twice in the next ten days, whereupon he replied: "The devil could not have written it—it must be from God."

The Promised Witness

It is regrettable that the world moves so slowly in accepting truth. With such a marvelous book in our midst, the companion volume of scripture the Lord commanded Ezekiel to write (the stick of Joseph), which he declared he would join to the stick of Judah

(our present Bible), why is the world so unwilling to accept it?

In this brief presentation of the message of the Angel Moroni to the Prophet Joseph Smith, we have not attempted to present the teachings of the Book of Mormon nor the history contained therein. We have contented ourselves with an effort to show that it has a place, yes, an important place, in the religious literature of the world; that God himself commanded the record should be kept; that it should be preserved; and that it should be brought forth in due season. The sending of Moroni to deliver the gold plates to Joseph Smith with the Urim and Thummim for their translation constitutes one of the most important messages that could possibly be broadcast to the world. It is hoped that this presentation will encourage many with a desire to read the Book of Mormon and put to the test the Lord's promise contained therein:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Moroni 10:4.)