

THE

Book of Mormon

BOOK

IS

TRUE

By James S. Menzies

## THE BOOK IS TRUE!

### A Living God

For centuries mankind has thrilled to the biblical record of a living God purposefully ministering to people as they attempt to obediently serve him. The Bible covers a four-thousand-year span of history and seems to be broken only when rebellion existed among men (Isaiah 59: 1, 2). The willingness of the Almighty to continue such recognition and blessings is clear when he declared, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3: 6). Jesus, willing to continue his ministry to men, also declared, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28: 20). However, let it not be imagined that this everlasting promise was without condition. It was to be true only should mankind be faithful in "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20).

## Divided Christianity

Today Christianity is seriously divided. In many places the promised blessings are not even expected. The teachings of Jesus are being interpreted in several hundred different ways. This confusion has been largely responsible for the slow and halting progress of Christian evangelism in many non-Christian nations. In Christian nations it has also bewildered many, and the question is many times asked, "Where is truth?" Some have longed that God would move in his former grandeur, that by his Spirit his truth might be clarified, and by this testimony a sure knowledge of his ways might be had.

## A Marvelous Claim

The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints believes that the Book of Mormon has been designed by the direction of God for this very purpose—not, as some have assumed, to replace the Bible but to augment its testimony of the universal and continuing love of God, to

clarify its teachings, and to bring unity out of confusion. At the same time we believe that the Spirit of God is available to certify to the truthfulness of such a message to the earnest seeker for truth.

The Book of Mormon claims to be an authoritative history of great pre-Columbian civilizations of Central America—colonies brought from Bible lands by divine guidance and established in the New World. It also records the greatness of the heavenly Father's love, as he ministered to these ancient Americans through prophets raised up for them by his power. In the fullness of his love, he also sent to them his Son, Jesus Christ, after his resurrection and ascension from the land of Palestine. It tells how our Lord established his church and its divine ordinances and blessed the people by the power of his Spirit. The Book of Mormon records the rapid degeneration of their civilization when they turned from the teachings of the Lord, and his commandment to the last of its prophet-writers to con-

ceal this record from them that it might be preserved and made available to the next great people who would be raised up by divine grace upon this land.

In our generation the existence of this sacred record was made known to a young man by the name of Joseph Smith by an angel of God. Its exact hiding place was made known by means of a vision. By divine power the ancient characters of inscription were translated into English. An angel of God also showed the plates from which this record was translated to three additional witnesses while a voice from heaven certified to them the correctness of the translation. Thus by Almighty power has this record been commended to us!

As soon as the translation was complete it was loaned by its friends to all who would read it. Thousands were won. At the martyrdom of its translator fourteen years after its publication, a reproach was brought upon it by evil men who spurned its teachings and, under its name, en-

tered wicked and forbidden marital practices. Spurred to investigation by these transgressions, many critics searched its pages for moral flaws but frankly acknowledged it to be free from any such taint. Friends, using it as a standard, rallied around its pure teachings to reorganize the work brought into disrepute by such defections. They again loaned it to friends assured that God would vindicate its divine authenticity to those who would earnestly seek for such assurance.

### **An Early Experience**

An interesting example of such experiences is found in the case of Joseph Luff, a young minister who was living in London, Ontario, Canada, in 1876. He had read some literature of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and was mildly interested but well content with the truth which he possessed. In his own words he describes what occurred as he continued his investigation:

Having heard considerable about the Book of Mormon, I secured a copy and shut myself up in the parlor nearly all day to read it. While thus engaged I was visited several times by as peaceful an influence as ever pervaded my frame. . . . The persuasive force of that influence drew tears from my eyes and praise from my lips almost involuntarily and my suspicions regarding the book melted under it. . . . It was strange to me then, for it was no mere feeling of gladness or ecstasy, but the distinct consciousness of a presence and power near me that was associated in some way with the book.—The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Luff, pages 133, 134.

Wondering in his mind whether this beautiful influence was the manner in which the spirit of God manifested itself in former times, and wondering if the spiritual gifts manifest in this organization were genuine expressions from God, he attended a prayer service. During the service he offered a silent prayer, asking for assurance that the influence which he had so richly enjoyed was the Spirit of God. And he prayed that if this church was approved of heaven, the Lord (forgiving the presumption to ask so great a request) would speak to him in the anciently enjoyed gift of prophecy through a young boy, Robert Parker (at that

time only ten years of age), and instruct him further of the divine will. He records the answer to that unspoken prayer in the following words:

When the number so desiring had prayed vocally, the company rose and was seated, and the singing and testimony were resumed. Soon Robbie, as he was familiarly called, stood up and began to speak as any child of that age would in testimony. He had not uttered many words till his face became waxen and the tears started from his eyes and flowed profusely down his cheek, and turning till he faced me, he raised his hand and said, as nearly as I can remember: "Verily, thus saith the Lord God unto you, O son of man, Go now and obey my gospel, for this is indeed my church. It is my will that you shall be baptized at the hands of one of these my servants, for you have received of my Spirit, saith the Lord."

The prayer Joseph Luff had offered had been completely answered, and in words beyond the ability of a ten-year-old child to frame had the question been audibly put to him. The information requested had been fully granted. Joseph Luff obeyed the instructions given him, and for all the years of his full life served with honor and distinction, rejoicing in the surety of the eternal Father's universal love.

## In Our Time

Another remarkable experience, in modern times, is recorded by a distinguished minister, Evangelist E. Y. Hunker. He writes:

Twenty-one years ago at this time of year, I came to Independence [Missouri], and for the first time in my life was having direct contact with Latter Day Saints. By the door of the living room in the home where I roomed was a small stand table, and on it a copy of the Book of Mormon. My prejudice against it, however, was so strong that I never touched the book, but eyed it with suspicion, feeling surely that it was a book of satanic power and inspiration. Then one morning as I was waiting for my lunch to be packed, being in the room alone, I cautiously and gingerly reached out and picked up the Book of Mormon. The book in my hand came open at the flyleaf that carried the brief statement of the nature of the record. These words seemed to flash out at me: ". . . 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."

Those last words burned into my consciousness like a fire. I hastily closed the book and threw it down on the table. All day at work, those words would burn in my memory and I found it impossible not to think of them. As prejudiced as I was, I realized that any work that had as its purpose the convincing of nations that Jesus is the Christ was not a satanic mission, yet I did not wish to bring myself to believe that there was or could be any good whatever in the Book of Mormon. Day and

night, however, those words hammered at me until I asked myself if it might be possible that in my stubborn prejudice, I was, actually withstanding something God wished to share with me.

After a number of days, I decided to read the Book of Mormon, but I planned on comparing it with the Bible, and to endeavor to prove that it was entirely out of harmony therewith. I told my cousin that I would read the book, but I expected to find it false, and inasmuch as I did, I would declare it to all I knew. She smiled kindly, and replied, "That is just what we want you to do."

Each night, after returning from work, I would go to my room, and before beginning to read the Book of Mormon, I would kneel in prayer to ask divine direction that I might not be deceived by any strange spirit not of God. In heart, I really hoped I should find those things in the book that would satisfy me that it was false. I found, however, that as I continued to read, I came to feel an increasing spiritual warmth that I had often felt when I had read the New Testament narrative of the birth and mission of Christ. The quickening was unmistakable; but I did not feel satisfied at the first about its origin, so I continued to pray for guidance and light. The presence of spiritual power became so marked as I progressed with my study that I would find tears coming to my eyes. I would lay the book aside and pray that I might not be misguided by such spiritual experiences; and then as I would return to my reading, I would find it increasing in power.

By the time I was one third or one half way through the book, I was convinced that no mere person could have written a book like that. So powerfully did the Spirit of God witness to me the divinity of the book that when on page 775 I read, "And when ye shall re-

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ceive 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 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; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things," I knew by my own experience that these words were true, and that I had a divine witness to the validity of the Book of Mormon story.

As a result of this experience, and the further guidance of God, Mr. Hunker united with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and hundreds have been blessed through his ministry. As in former days, God continues to bear witness of his universal works.

### An Invitation

When the last of the prophets had almost completed his writing in the Book of Mormon he was moved upon to extend an invitation:

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.—Moroni 10:3.

The invitation is to read the Book of Mormon. It testifies of Jesus Christ and his love that brought him to ancient America. Should we not desire to learn more of God's dealings with mankind? In Bible times many would not believe that God had sent his Son into the world. However, it was when the Ethiopian nobleman was reading of the prophetic ministry of Christ that an angel of God was sent to Philip to direct this man to the fullness of truth (Acts 8: 26-35). It was when noble and honorable people, such as lived at Berea, "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17: 11) that the Lord was able to bring them to an assurance of truth. Today, in our search for truth, let us read the Book of Mormon, asking God for discernment to determine the truthfulness of its message.

The further suggestion of this writer is to "remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men." The Bible record, as

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has been pointed out, covers a four-thousand-year period of history. God revealed himself in widely separated places, from Babylon to Egypt, to Nineveh and Patmos. Are not the experiences of the men who wrote the Book of Mormon further evidences of a divine compassion that is universal? (See Acts 17: 26, 27). The Almighty declared that our Redeemer should be called "The God of the whole earth" (Isaiah 54: 5).

Moroni, the last Book of Mormon prophet, also counseled that as we read we should ponder it in our hearts. It is while in this mood that Deity seems best able to move in the lives of his servants. It was while Joseph "*thought* on these things" (Matthew 1: 20) that an angel was sent to inform him of the Deity of the child to be born of Mary, his espoused wife. It was "while Peter *thought* on the vision" (Acts 10:19) that the Spirit instructed him of the grace being shown to the Gentiles and his duty to them.

The further counsel of Moroni stated:

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.—Moroni 10:4.

It is a marvelous claim that is associated with the Book of Mormon—the universal love of Jesus Christ and his ministry to America anciently, his continuing love and ministry today! Would not such certitude be worthy of prayer? If we go to the eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, would we need to fear deception from him? Is not this invitation to seek our information direct from heaven in perfect accord with the words of James in the Bible?

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.—James 1:5.

The instruction of James is reinforced with the promise “and it shall be given him.” The instruction of Moroni is also reinforced with the promise of Deity:

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; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.”  
—Moroni 10:5.

This promise of confirmation is conditioned by the requirements of "a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ."

Have we faith in Christ, the resurrected Lord of life, at the right hand of God, having "all power . . . in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28: 18)? Have we faith that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10: 34)? Have we faith to test the promise of Christ, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Luke 11: 9)? Have we faith to believe the promise, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11: 13)?

The two testimonies quoted, selected from many, assure us that God has fulfilled this promise in former and present times. We are not at liberty to say just how Deity may give such a testimony to another sincere investigator; but from personal experience we are assured that as you examine the teachings of the Book of Mormon in the light of

those of the Bible, as you earnestly seek from the heavenly Father a testimony of its divine authenticity, by divine grace you will be able to unite with the hundreds of thousands who attest "The book is true!"

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