

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# THE SCRIPTURAL RESTORATION

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Much of the Restoration of the gospel through Joseph Smith involved scripture. As a significant branch of his calling, the Prophet restored the Bible to earlier purity and brought forth new holy books that no one living in his day had ever heard of. Although a book of the modern Church was revealed (the Doctrine and Covenants), most of the scriptural restoration involved records from the past. The coming forth of scriptural truths and sacred volumes formed a crucial part of the Lord's latter-day work.

Among the important events of the Restoration was a series of encounters Joseph Smith had with scripture, most often involving the Bible. Each of those encounters contributed in its way to the bringing forth of gospel light, and each continues to bless the Church today, in some ways even more so now than in the early days of the Restoration. We shall examine those scriptural encounters in the order in which they happened, highlighting the contributions each makes to our understanding of the Bible or of biblical teachings. The intent is not to analyze these contributions but simply to list and summarize them. Again and again, we will see that modern revelation confirms, clarifies, and explains the teachings of the Old and New Testaments. Even more to the point, the Restoration not only

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touches on every biblical doctrine but also dramatically improves upon the Bible's presentation of every doctrine.

### **ENCOUNTER 1: JOSEPH SMITH'S QUEST FOR TRUTH**

Young Joseph Smith grew up in the home of "goodly parents who spared no pains to instructing [him] in the Christian religion."<sup>1</sup> Part of that instruction was to believe in the Bible and trust it to provide answers for life's most important questions. In the search that ultimately led to his prayer in the Sacred Grove, he sought an answer in the Bible to his question regarding which of all the churches was right. Yet because "the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently," he finally lost confidence in "settling the question by an appeal to the Bible" (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). As good and as important as the Bible is—an assessment Joseph Smith maintained throughout his life—it alone is not sufficient to answer all gospel questions. That was perhaps the first revealed lesson of the Restoration, coming even before the First Vision.

### **ENCOUNTER 2: THE FIRST VISION**

The First Vision was part of the scriptural restoration because it teaches us important things about the Bible. Joseph Smith was motivated by Bible passages to pray in his quest for truth (James 1:5; see Joseph Smith—History 1:11–12). By doing so, he learned the truth of the promise in the scriptures: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7). The Prophet noted in his 1835 account that his prayer in the Sacred Grove tested the truth of that scripture.<sup>2</sup> But he also learned from the First Vision that not all truth is in the Bible, because the fullness of the gospel was not then on earth, yet it would "at some future time be made known" to him.<sup>3</sup>

Although the First Vision shows that not all truth is in the Bible, it nonetheless bears confirming testimony to important biblical teachings. From the First Vision, we learn that Satan, as the Bible tells us, is real and is not an imaginary force but an "actual being from the unseen world" (Joseph Smith—History 1:16). We learn that the God of the Bible exists, that Jesus Christ is God's Son, and that the Bible is true in its teaching that we are indeed created in God's physical

image. From the First Vision we also learn the truthfulness of the biblical teaching that God and Jesus are separate, individual beings. In the Sacred Grove, those truths were revealed in plainness, unencumbered by the ancient creeds that distorted their meaning for most of Christianity. The First Vision, as part of the scriptural restoration, confirms those truths and thus bears testimony that the Bible is true.

### ENCOUNTER 3: MORONI'S TEACHING OF JOSEPH SMITH

On the night of September 21–22, 1823, the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith to begin the process of preparing him for his life's mission. In addition to informing him about the Book of Mormon, Moroni quoted scripture after scripture to teach Joseph Smith about the work that God would soon undertake through him. In the account in the Joseph Smith—History in the Pearl of Great Price, the Prophet mentioned only five passages that Moroni quoted and discussed, but he stated that the angel also “quoted many other passages” (Joseph Smith—History 1:41).<sup>4</sup> In 1835 Oliver Cowdery published three articles in the Church's newspaper, the *Messenger and Advocate*, in which he gave greater detail about Moroni's visits, undoubtedly based on what he had learned from Joseph Smith.<sup>5</sup> Those articles mention thirty passages that Moroni quoted or discussed, and like the list the Prophet himself provided, almost all were from the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup> Moroni's scriptures combine to give a coherent message about the great work that was then beginning, as can be seen in the topics covered in those verses: (1) the scattering of Israel and apostasy, (2) the calling of Joseph Smith, (3) the opening of the heavens and gifts of the Spirit, (4) the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, (5) the restoration of the priesthood and its keys, (6) the gathering and restoration of Israel, (7) the destruction and the purification of the earth, (8) the deliverance of the faithful, (9) the Second Coming of Jesus, and (10) the millennial blessings of the Saints.<sup>7</sup> Moroni's teaching of Joseph Smith from the Bible provided nothing less than a panoramic introduction to the dispensation of the fulness of times and the work of the Lord's Saints in it.

It is not insignificant that Moroni chose to teach Joseph Smith by citing, quoting, and commenting on the words of earlier prophets in scripture. Indeed, his doing so was part of the scriptural restoration,

not only because he clarified and contextualized the words of biblical writers but also because he confirmed their truth.

#### ENCOUNTER 4: TRANSLATING THE BOOK OF MORMON

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon is a great tangible sign that God was doing a marvelous work in the latter days (see 3 Nephi 21:1–7). Joseph Smith’s translation of the Book of Mormon is perhaps the most profound miracle of the Restoration. An uneducated young man who had spent his entire life in an obscure corner of the earth brought forth a book with such an amazing message that it is changing the world. Critics have tried for over a century and a half to destroy it, but its assertions become more and more credible the more they are scrutinized.<sup>8</sup>

Recent research into the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon has led to a greater understanding of how it was produced. Joseph Smith did not translate the Book of Mormon by using expertise in an original language to convey its meaning into a target language. Instead, evidence suggests that the English translation was *revealed* to Joseph Smith visually and that he dictated to his scribes the English words that he saw.<sup>9</sup> The text was revealed in Joseph Smith’s dialect of English, but at the same time it contained vocabulary and usage that were foreign to his time and place.<sup>10</sup> Thus in the most technical sense, Joseph Smith was not the “translator” of the Book of Mormon any more than he was its “author,” as he was identified for copyright purposes on the title page of the 1830 edition.

#### ENCOUNTER 5: THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon is a keystone of the Restoration that reveals in plainness fundamental truths that are central to the gospel. The following are some important doctrines that are found in the Bible but for which the Book of Mormon makes indispensable contributions.

*Jesus and the Atonement.* The Atonement is at the core of the Book of Mormon, and no book in the world teaches it better. In addition to clear and masterful presentations on the first principles and ordinances (see 3 Nephi 11:31–39; 27:13–21), the Book of Mormon contains profound teachings on salvation through the merits of Christ (see 2 Nephi 2:8), the relationship between grace and works (see

2 Nephi 25:23; 31:19), and what it means to be born again (see Mosiah 5:6–9).

*Satan.* The Bible says nothing about Satan’s origin and little of his objectives. Lehi taught that Satan was once “an angel of God” who fell from heaven. Because he knew he would be “miserable forever,” Satan “sought also the misery of all mankind,” “that all men might be miserable like unto himself” (2 Nephi 2:17–18, 27).

*The Fall of Adam and Eve.* Lehi taught that if Adam and Eve had not fallen, they would have had no children (see 2 Nephi 2:22–23). In contrast to the traditional Christian view, the Book of Mormon teaches that the Fall was a positive step in the progress of the human family. “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

*The antiquity of the gospel.* The Book of Mormon begins with a colony of Christians six hundred years before Jesus’ birth and informs us of another such group perhaps two thousand years earlier. Those groups had the gospel revealed to them in plainness, and they knew, even centuries before Jesus’ coming, that His gospel was the only way to salvation (see Jacob 4:4–5; Mosiah 5:8).

*The house of Israel.* The authors of the Book of Mormon conveyed to us a clearer understanding of the house of Israel and its role in God’s plan than can be found in any other book. Israel’s restoration includes the restoration of the knowledge that Jesus is Israel’s Redeemer (see 1 Nephi 10:14; 22:11–12), that the promised gathering of scattered Israelites will follow their conversion to Christ (see 2 Nephi 10:7–8; 3 Nephi 20:30–33), and that the Gentiles will save scattered Israel in the last days by bringing them Jesus’ word (see 1 Nephi 13:38–40; 15:13–14).

*The law of Moses.* The Book of Mormon teaches the meaning and the intent of the law of Moses far better than does the Old Testament. The law and its observances “were types of things to come” (Mosiah 13:31).

*Prophets and scripture.* The Book of Mormon models processes by which revelation is received, including appearances (see Alma 8:14–18), dreams (see 1 Nephi 2:1), visions (see 1 Nephi 11–14), and quiet promptings (see 2 Nephi 32:7; Alma 14:11). In the Book of Mormon we learn that the message of all God’s prophets, even in the Old Testament, is Jesus Christ (see Jacob 4:4; 3 Nephi 20:24).

*The Bible.* Nephi learned in a vision that “many plain and precious things” would be “taken away” from the Bible, causing people to “stumble” because of the omissions (1 Nephi 13:28–29, 32). Other books would come forth in the latter days to restore “the plain and precious things which have been taken away” from the Bible (1 Nephi 13:39–40).

One of the purposes of the Book of Mormon is to establish the truth of the Bible (see 1 Nephi 13:39–40). To do so is part of the scriptural restoration. Indeed, the Book of Mormon stands as a witness for the biblical prophets and writers, “proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true” (D&C 20:11).

### ENCOUNTER 6: TRANSLATING THE BIBLE

In June 1830 Joseph Smith began working through the Bible to revise it by inspiration. In an intense biblical encounter that took about three years, he restored to the Bible “precious things” that been lost from it (see 1 Nephi 13:23–29) and revealed many important truths pertaining to biblical passages, people, and events.<sup>11</sup> The Prophet made changes, additions, and corrections in hundreds of verses. Collectively, these are called the “Joseph Smith Translation” (JST) or, as Joseph Smith and others in his day referred to it, the “New Translation.”<sup>12</sup> In some parts of the Bible, much new material was added, as in the Genesis chapters that are included in the Pearl of Great Price, called “Selections from the Book of Moses.” As far as can be determined, every book in the Bible was examined, but no changes were made in thirteen of them.<sup>13</sup> On some of the manuscript pages, the Prophet made a later pass (or passes) to revise his original dictation or to add further information until he felt the text was as the Lord wanted it to be.<sup>14</sup>

Joseph Smith’s encounter with the Bible during the process of the New Translation was a unique part of the scriptural restoration. He was not revealing new scripture from ancient texts in his possession, as with the Book of Mormon and the book of Abraham. His “original manuscript” was the King James Version—already in English, already in print for more than two centuries, and already in the hands of members of the Church. Thus the work on the JST was a unique revelatory experience. Its importance was not limited to what is found in the final product, however. In addition to the New

Translation itself, including the book of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price, the translation project yielded much fruit in educating the Prophet. It was an important means by which he gained knowledge of the Bible and knowledge of the Spirit that he used throughout his life.

#### ENCOUNTER 7: THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Most changes the Prophet made to the biblical text were small rewordings or modernizations of King James language to make the text more clear and understandable for today's readers.<sup>15</sup> But the most significant changes are the revisions and additions that shed new light on history and doctrine. The following are some important topics that are taught in the JST with greater clarity and precision than they are in the Bible.

*The nature of God.* The Joseph Smith Translation testifies to the literal reality that God has a body (see Moses 6:9; 7:4; Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:15–16; 1 John 4:12).<sup>16</sup>

*The extent and purpose of the Father's work.* In the Joseph Smith Translation, we learn that God has created “worlds without number” inhabited by His children (Moses 1:33), with the purpose “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

*The mission of Jesus Christ.* From the New Translation we learn that Jesus was divine in the premortal world. He cast Satan out for rebellion (see Moses 4:2–3) and was the Creator (see Moses 1:32–33).

*The plan of salvation.* The Lord's plan of happiness is revealed clearly in the JST, even in the Old Testament. In the earliest generations, men learned that Jesus Christ is “the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men” and that redemption is “unto all men, through the blood of [the] Only Begotten” (Moses 6:52, 62).

*Satan.* In the JST we read that Satan proposed his own desires in contrast to the plan of the Father: he would be God's son, he would “redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost,” and the Father would give him His honor. Now it is his goal “to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto [God's] voice” (Moses 4:1–4).

*The Fall of Adam and Eve.* Eve said, “Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have

known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5:11). These and other teachings from the New Translation are foreign to the Bible as we have received it, and they contradict traditional Christian beliefs.

*The antiquity of the gospel.* The JST teaches that the gospel of Jesus Christ was revealed in the beginning of human history. Adam and Eve were Christians (see Moses 5:9–12; 6:51–62, 64–66), as were their righteous descendants (see Moses 7:10–11; 8:23–24).

*Enoch and the establishment of Zion.* Even though Enoch is mentioned in the Bible, if we did not have the New Translation, we would not know anything about his life, his righteous people, or his people's translation because none of these details is in the Bible (see Moses 6–7).

*Melchizedek and his priesthood.* The JST teaches that Adam held what we call the Melchizedek Priesthood (see Moses 6:67), and it informs us of the ministry of Melchizedek and of the priesthood that bears his name (see Genesis 14).

*The house of Israel.* The New Translation teaches of the descendants of Joseph of antiquity taking the gospel to the rest of Israel (see Genesis 48). Joseph foretold the ministry of a choice seer who would bring Israel the Lord's word. The records of Joseph and Judah would grow together to establish the truth (see Genesis 50).

*The purpose of animal sacrifice.* The JST teaches the origin of animal sacrifice. An angel told Adam that it was "a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth" (Moses 5:7).

*The law of Moses.* The New Translation shows that after the golden calf incident, the Lord withdrew from Israel His sacred law—"my holy order, and the ordinances thereof" (JST, Exodus 34:1), "the everlasting covenant of the holy priesthood" (JST, Deuteronomy 10:2). In place of the higher law and the blessings that pertain to it, the law of Moses was instituted, governed by the Aaronic Priesthood. None of this is found in the Bible.

*The Second Coming of Jesus Christ.* Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price, an excerpt from the JST, is one of the great revelations concerning the last days, and it makes sense of Matthew 24, a



very difficult biblical chapter that otherwise cannot be fully understood.

*Degrees of glory.* While translating John 5, Joseph Smith and his scribe received a vision of the degrees of glory that clarifies and expands on biblical teachings. In the revelation itself we read this explanation: “While we were doing the work of translation, which the Lord had appointed unto us, we came to the twenty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter of John, which was given unto us as follows. . . . And while we meditated upon these things, the Lord touched the eyes of our understandings and they were opened, and the glory of the Lord shone round about” (D&C 76:15, 19).

### ENCOUNTER 8: THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS

The Doctrine and Covenants is a scriptural book unlike any of the others already discussed, being not a restored book but a truly modern scripture. At the same time, however, it is a significant part of the restoration of ancient scripture. For Joseph Smith, the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were another encounter with the Bible because most of the revelations, in one way or another, expound on principles, doctrines, or themes already present in the Old and New Testaments. Consider the following Doctrine and Covenants topics, among many others that could be listed: God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost; or faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, justice, mercy, the Fall, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the last judgment; or covenants, temples, ordinances, spiritual gifts, tithing, the Church, missionary work, angels, Satan, temptation, the last days, the Second Coming, and the Millennium. All of these are biblical concepts, and none of them was introduced to the world for the first time in the Doctrine and Covenants. Yet the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants add significant understanding to each of them, with clarifying words in the voice of the Lord Himself that teach us more—in many cases much more—than can be found in the Bible.

The Doctrine and Covenants contributes to the scriptural restoration in more direct ways as well. Some of the revelations deal explicitly with passages or events from the Bible. Section 45 is a new account of the Olivet Discourse from Matthew 24. Section 86 provides a needed explanation to Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the

tares in Matthew 13, and it also expounds on words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Section 77 is a question-and-answer session concerning the book of Revelation, and section 113 is a question-and-answer session concerning Isaiah. Section 132 responds to questions about marriage raised during the Bible translation. In section 65, we learn that the stone that Daniel saw cut out of the mountain without hands is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Section 7 is a revelation concerning the mission of the Apostle John, and section 74 is an explanation of a passage in 1 Corinthians. Section 46 expands some verses from the same New Testament book. Section 76 is a grand enlargement of a statement of Jesus in John 5. Section 84 provides new insights into the lives of Moses and Jethro (among others), and it sheds dramatic new light on the history of the priesthood in Old and New Testament times. Similarly, section 107 reveals things about Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek, and other patriarchs that are entirely unknown in the Bible. And section 110 records the actual visits to Joseph Smith of three persons whose lives are known and discussed in the Bible—Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

To these lists can be added many examples in which the Doctrine and Covenants uses biblical phrases or biblical images in such a way as to explain and clarify them, thus enabling us to understand the Bible better. Indeed, the Doctrine and Covenants is one of the great keys to understanding the Bible, an indispensable companion and guide to the records of ancient Israel and the early Church. Without it, the scriptural restoration would not be complete.

### **ENCOUNTER 9: THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM**

Starting in 1835, Joseph Smith had another revelatory encounter with a previously unknown ancient scripture when the record of Abraham came into his hands. In early 1842, the first installments were published, with the anticipation that more would come at a later date.<sup>17</sup> The book of Abraham restores much gospel light to the world. Consider the following topics in which this book reveals in plainness things sometimes only hinted at in the Bible:

*God and Jesus Christ.* In the book of Abraham, we learn that there is order among the citizens of the universe, with God the Father being the greatest of all (see Abraham 3:1–24). Abraham learned that Jesus Christ was among “the intelligences that were organized before

the world was." Even then, he was already "like unto God" (Abraham 3:22, 24).

*The premortality of humankind.* The book of Abraham gives us our best scriptural view into our premortal existence (see Abraham 3:22–28). In the presence of the Father and the Son, humans had agency, the capacity to make rational choices and be accountable for them. There some were foreordained to be the Lord's chief servants on earth (see Abraham 3:22–28).

*The reason for life on earth.* The book of Abraham gives us the scriptures' clearest statement concerning a fundamental purpose of our mortal existence. The Father's children would be tested on earth to see if they would "do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." Those who would be faithful in their mortal estate would "have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" (Abraham 3:25–26).

*Satan.* From the book of Abraham, we learn things about Satan that are not preserved in the Bible. He was our spirit sibling before the creation of the earth. When the Father chose Christ instead of him, Satan became "angry, and kept not his first estate." He rebelled, and "many followed after him" (Abraham 3:27–28).

*The Creation.* The book of Abraham teaches the doctrine that the earth would be made of already existing materials: "We will go down, . . . and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereupon these may dwell" (Abraham 3:24). This doctrine expands on what is contained in the Bible and refutes the basic belief of traditional Christianity that the world was created *ex nihilo*—out of nothing.

*Abraham's life and priesthood.* The book of Abraham contains historical material not found in Genesis or elsewhere in the Bible. The account of Abraham's father's efforts to offer him as a human sacrifice helps us view his history in the Bible in an entirely new light (see Abraham 1:5–15; Genesis 22:1–18). Abraham and his ancestors had true priesthood: "It came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth" (Abraham 1:3).

*The Abrahamic covenant.* The book of Abraham provides important insights into the Abrahamic covenant, the mission of Abraham's

descendants, the future of the house of Israel, and the principle of adoption (see Abraham 2:9–10).

### ENCOUNTER 10: JOSEPH SMITH'S BIBLE SERMONS

During the last five years of his life, the Prophet Joseph Smith gave frequent sermons in which he taught from, and expounded on, Bible passages. Those Bible-based sermons were among the most important aspects of his ministry, because they were the primary means by which he taught doctrine to the Saints during that time. The Prophet discussed, quoted, and paraphrased from the Bible with ease, apparently without having a Bible with him as he spoke. Yet he discussed many passages, and as he did so he opened new meanings to the minds of his hearers, often going far beyond the teachings in the Bible. Following are some of the things that we learn:

*The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three separate beings.* "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage. Jesus Christ [is] a separate and distinct person from God the Father; the Holy Ghost is a distinct personage or spirit."<sup>18</sup> This doctrine is evident in the Bible, but it stands in sharp contrast to fundamental beliefs of most other Christians.

*The Father and the Son have bodies of flesh and bones.* This doctrine is another dramatic departure from traditional Christian doctrine (see D&C 130:22). Because God has a material body, "the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false" (D&C 130:3).

*The Holy Ghost has a body of spirit.* "The Son has a tabernacle and so has the Father. But the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit without a tabernacle."<sup>19</sup> "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter" (D&C 131:7–8).

*God is an exalted man.* "God, that sits enthroned, is a man like one of yourselves. That is the great secret. . . . If you were to see him today you would see him in all the person, image, [and] very form of man."<sup>20</sup> This is a dramatic departure from the beliefs of most other Christians, but it is consistent with the actual doctrine of the Bible.

*We are eternal beings.* "The spirit of man is not a created being. It existed from eternity and will exist to eternity."<sup>21</sup> Some part of us,

described as “the spirit,” “the soul,” “the immortal spirit,” “the mind of man,” “the intelligent part,” and “intelligence,” is eternal. According to Joseph Smith, God did not make it; it always existed.<sup>22</sup>

*We may become as God is.* “What was the design of the Almighty in making man? It was to exalt him to be as God.”<sup>23</sup> “God himself, . . . because he was greater, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself.”<sup>24</sup>

In his sermons and instructions, often centered in passages from the Bible seen in the new light of the Restoration, Joseph Smith was making known to us the answers to life’s most universal questions—questions that are evoked in the Bible but are answered fully only through modern revelation: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Although these are biblical questions, it is the scriptural restoration that provides answers to them and to many more like them.

### ASSESSING THE SCRIPTURAL RESTORATION

Three concluding thoughts are in order concerning the scriptural restoration:

First, Joseph Smith produced more scripture than anyone else in history. We cannot say with certainty that there never was a time in which there were more pages of scripture available than we have now. But I give it as my opinion that we have more revelation publicly available to us today than anyone else in the history of the world has ever had. The scriptural restoration not only touched every dispensation of the gospel, but it also restored vital knowledge concerning each one. Moreover, it shed light on virtually every important scriptural person who ever lived prior to our day. Joseph Smith said: “The dispensation of the fulness of times will bring to light the things that have been revealed in all former dispensations, also other things that have not been before revealed.”<sup>25</sup>

Second, we get our doctrine from modern revelation. The Lord made this matter clear when he told Joseph Smith, “This generation shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10). I know of no doctrine for which we would turn first to the Bible for the clearest and best answers or explanations. President Marion G. Romney taught:

In each dispensation, from the days of Adam to the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has revealed anew the

principles of the gospel. So that while the records of past dispensations, insofar as they are uncorrupted, testify to the truths of the gospel, still each dispensation has had revealed in its day sufficient truth to guide the people of the new dispensation, independent of the records of the past. I do not wish to discredit in any manner the records we have of the truths revealed by the Lord in past dispensations. What I now desire is to impress upon our minds that the gospel, as revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, is complete and is the word direct from heaven to this dispensation. It alone is sufficient to teach us the principles of eternal life.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the Restoration is bigger and greater than most Latter-day Saints have imagined. Most of us undervalue it and do not appreciate what it has done. It was with good reason that the future founder of the Disciples of Christ, Alexander Campbell, complained in 1831 that the Book of Mormon dealt with, and provided answers for, all the important gospel controversies of his generation.<sup>27</sup> If Campbell lived today, he would find that the Book of Mormon and the other revealed sources also answer questions that were not even thought of in his time but are important issues now. The work of the Restoration is “one of vast magnitude and almost beyond the comprehension of mortals,” a work “worthy of arch-angels; a work which will cast into the shade the things which have heretofore been accomplished.”<sup>28</sup> As Joseph Smith said, the people whose names and lives are recorded in the Bible foresaw our day. “They have looked forward with joyful anticipation to the day in which we lived; and fired with heavenly and joyful anticipations, they have sung, and [written], and prophesied of this our day. . . . We are the favored people that God has made choice of to bring about the Latter Day glory. It is left for us to see, participate in, and help to roll forward the Latter Day glory, ‘the dispensation of the fulness of times, when God will gather together all things that are in heaven, and all things that are upon the earth, even in one.’”<sup>29</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–97), 1:3; capitalization standardized.
2. See Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:69.
3. *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, 707.

4. See Joseph Smith—History 1:36–41; Malachi 3 (“part”); Malachi 4:1–6; Isaiah 11:1–16; Acts 3:22–23; Joel 2:28–32.
5. The articles are in the form of letters addressed to W. W. Phelps; “Letter IV. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.,” *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, February 1835, 77–80; “Letter VI. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.,” April 1835, 108–12; “Letter VII. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.,” July 1835, 156–59.
6. For a list, see Kent P. Jackson, *From Apostasy to Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 103–4, 114–15 nn. 2–7.
7. See the discussion and references in Jackson, *From Apostasy to Restoration*, 105–13.
8. Despite what opponents of the Book of Mormon claim, the historical sources overwhelmingly confirm Joseph Smith’s account of its coming forth. A recent attack on the Book of Mormon in Grant H. Palmer, *An Insider’s View of Mormon Origins* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), depends on a bias of disbelief in the miraculous and repeats many of the same criticisms that have been attempted unsuccessfully since 1830.
9. See Royal Skousen, “How Joseph Smith Translated the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7, no. 1 (1998): 22–31.
10. Royal Skousen, personal communication.
11. See Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004); and Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible—A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).
12. See Doctrine and Covenants 124:89; *Times and Seasons*, July 1840, 140. See also Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 1:341, 365; 4:164. The title *Inspired Version* refers to the edited, printed edition, published in Independence, Missouri, by the Community of Christ.
13. Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi, 2 John, and 3 John.
14. The evidence suggests that his final word revisions were in place by the summer of 1833, or not long thereafter. From then on, the Prophet endeavored to see to its publication, but that effort did not prove successful in his lifetime (see Robert J. Matthews, “Joseph Smith’s Efforts to Publish His Bible Translation,” *Ensign*, January 1983, 57–64).

15. Latter-day Saints are generally unaware of those changes, because, for the most part, only changes with doctrinal significance were selected for the footnotes in the Church's publication of the Bible.
16. Bible references are to the biblical passage at which the JST change is made, not to the Community of Christ Inspired Version.
17. *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, 703–6; March 15, 1842, 719–22; May 16, 1842, 783. Elder John Taylor wrote the next year: "We had the promise of Br. Joseph, to furnish us with further extracts from the Book of Abraham. These with other articles that we expect from his pen . . . we trust will make the paper sufficiently interesting" (*Times and Seasons*, February 1, 1843, 95).
18. Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, comp. and ed., Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 378. In quotations from this source, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling have been standardized when necessary.
19. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 64.
20. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 357.
21. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 9.
22. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 346, 360; see also 345, 351–52, 359.
23. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 247.
24. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 360.
25. *Times and Seasons*, October 15, 1841, 578.
26. Marion G. Romney, "A Glorious Promise," *Ensign*, January 1981, 2.
27. Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger*, February 7, 1831, 93.
28. *Times and Seasons*, October 1840, 178–79.
29. *Times and Seasons*, May 2, 1842, 776.