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Testimony from the Book of Mormon

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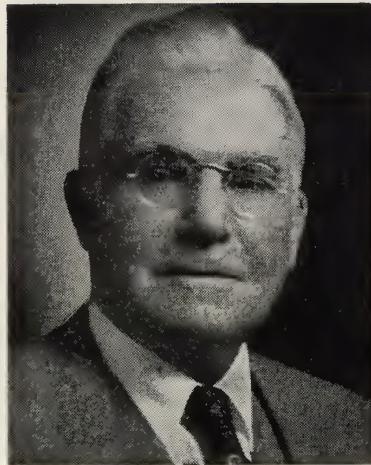
Abstract: Elder Charles A. Callis presents his testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

Testimony from the

BOOK OF MORMON

By Charles A. Callis

OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE



CHARLES A. CALLIS

Address delivered at the Friday afternoon session of the 117th semi-annual general conference October 4, 1946, in the Tabernacle

"I CAN no more remember the books that I have read than the meals that I have eaten," said Emerson, "but they have made me." To countless thousands, who have basked in the spirit of the Book of Mormon, the truth that Joseph Smith spoke comes home to their souls. He remarked that "a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its [Book of Mormon] precepts, than by any other book."

The Nephite record testifies in a heavenly spirit to the truth that the Bible is true. They are one in God's hand to confound false doctrine and to establish peace in the hearts of men. This sacred book tells us that little children are alive in Christ. They need no baptism until they become accountable for their actions. For many years a great many good people believed in the doctrine of "infant damnation." They didn't understand; but the Book of Mormon brought into the world, into the hearts of men and women, the peaceable thought that children, though unbaptized, do not go to Hades.

A few years ago these people met in solemn convention, and the action they took was a credit to their righteousness and to their sense of the justice of God. They passed a resolution repealing the doctrine of "infant damnation," and what a beautiful thing they did when they made that decision retroactive. President Woodrow Wilson, himself a member of that great body of good people that decided against the doctrine of "infant damnation" and declared "the decision retroactive," laughed and said, "Think of all those dear little babies that have been burning in hell so long; now they will all be released."

The Book of Mormon teaches the nobility of service. What is man without work? Work is known by the angels of God. They are immersed in its atmosphere, and that service is eternal. He is a poor "Mormon" elder, hardly worth his salt, who believes that when he goes to heaven, he will sit in inactive endless bliss. Centuries before he was born in the flesh, according to the Book of Mormon, Jesus said:

... for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. (II Nephi 29:9.)

And in another place he said:

For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. (Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1:39.)

Think of it, brethren and sisters, our work is immortal. As Brigham Young said, "This life is a part of eternity."

I think the spirit of the Book of Mor-

mon with respect to the character of Christ's work is wonderful. It entrances the soul. One of the prophets said of him:

... for it behooveth the great Creator that he suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh, and die for all men, that all men might become subject unto him. (II Nephi 9:5.)

My brothers and sisters, we do become subject to men in the flesh by the work of the ministry, but in God's own due time the people will look upon us as saviors upon Mount Zion, and they will become subject in a heavenly way unto those who taught them the gospel.

I think that the most wonderful being on the earth is a wife and a mother. To be a wife and a mother transcends in glory and in service all the missions she can perform, that is, preaching missions. And a mother, uncrowned by any visible diadem, is crowned with a diadem of affection: she becomes subject unto her children, and by and by

they become subject unto her. Joaquin Miller, the poet, said:

Beneath our forty stars is she
The purest woman, sweetest, best,
Who loves her spouse most ardently
And rocks the cradle oftenest:
Whose home is filled, whose heart is fed
With halo of a baby's head.

The Book of Mormon teaches us a glorious economic system. For nearly two centuries after the ascension of Christ, the people were covered with a mantle of the prosperity of Christ. There were no poor, no rich, no one in bonds, and I think that meant the bondage of debt, for debt is a grievous bondage, and we should steer clear of it. For two centuries they lived in peace; they had no strikes; industrial disturbances were not known; but by living the spirit of industry by the golden precepts of the Son of God they prospered and grew in the prosperity of Jesus Christ. God hasten the day when we shall work—the rich and the poor in the kingdom of peace—submitting our troubles to arbitration, for I know that deep down in the hearts of the captains of industry and also of the laboring men, there is an inherent desire to do unto others as they would have others do unto them. We let selfishness repress this feeling that God has placed in our hearts.

In the Book of Mormon we read of the great intermediate state, the great principle of immortality. Horace Greeley lost a boy five years old, and he said to a friend (I haven't time to quote it all):

Now all that concerns me is the evidence . . . that we shall live with and know those we loved here. . . . If I felt sure of the point of identifying and being with our loved ones in the world to come, I would prefer not to live long.

In our hearts, inspired by the Book of Mormon, by its holy and matchless spirit, and it is the spirit of Christ which runs through the Book of Mormon like a golden thread, we know that we shall meet our loved ones, be recognized by them, and we will recognize them, and throughout eternity, believing that God is a God of work, we shall work with him as co-laborers.

A Presbyterian minister caught this flash of glory in service, and in a hymn which he composed, he said:

We serve no God whose power is spent,
Who rests amid his firmament.
Our God his labors but begun
Toils ever more with powers unspent.

GOD be praised for the glory of the resurrection, the beauty of eternal life, the knowledge that we shall live

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world in the last days to establish the only true Church of Jesus Christ, which Church is endowed with power from on high to bring salvation to the human family. I also bear witness that President George Albert Smith is also a prophet of the Most High and that he holds the keys of the priesthood just as the other holy prophets have done. I humbly pray that God will bless us all in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHARLES A. CALLIS

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with each other, with our wives and our children, with our friends, and live with them in perfect understanding. Did not Paul speak of the whole family in heaven and on earth? These great sections are going to be joined by the eternity and glory and power of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.

The Book of Mormon prophets give great comfort to this nation. They declared that this nation was set up by the Almighty and should be pre-eminent among the people of the world. It is pre-eminent in glory and in power, but alas, there are corroding and corrupting influences that are trying to sap the strength of this great republic. This republic is the house of our fathers, our fellow citizens, our friends, and our brothers, and with them we shall stand, by the grace of God, to contest the supremacy of any communist or foreign-born element who seeks to destroy the Constitution.

The testimony that the Book of Mormon gives us last of all—no, not last of all—from the first page to the last page, is that Jesus is the Christ. If we serve God, this nation will survive, but listen to this solemn warning: Moroni told the people of his day that this was a land of promise, and that God would not suffer any nation to dwell on this earth except they serve him, for if they departed from him they should be swept into the oblivion which lawlessness always provides.

Listen to Moroni's warning:

... this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, [this is of our day he is speaking] that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done. (Ether 2:11.)

Here is the warning of a prophet of God. He gives a glorious promise with this solemn warning attached.

Fellow citizens, shall we heed this voice of warning? Shall we bend our necks no more to the bondage, to the yoke of sin, but rising in the full fruition of righteousness, in the strength of God, may we stand before him, acceptable as a nation, correct in government,

lenient to the poor, righteous in the sight of God; and, oh, how happy we shall be, and then, as Webster said, it shall not be written that this nation had a "decline and fall," for God is our strength.

The spirit and the main purpose of the Book of Mormon is

... to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. (Book of Mormon, Title Page.)

May I humbly answer to this glorious declaration by testifying that I know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. He is the resurrection and the life, the author and the finisher of our faith, and if we will obey his commandments, this nation shall prosper and with him all of us shall go into eternal glory, is my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ALBERT E. BOWEN

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There is no more justification for permitting an organized group to stop a farmer carrying his own produce, the fruits of his own toil, to market and tip over and break his truck and destroy his foodstuffs unless he will take on and pay another driver whom he neither wants nor needs, than there is for permitting a man whose son has been killed, perhaps in a brawl, to go out and without investigation kill the perpetrator of the death.

There is no greater right in an organized body to obstruct public streets or to throw picket lines in front of entrances to places of work and hold others out by violence, intimidation, threat, and injury than there is in any person whose property has been stolen to retrieve it by force of arms, killing or maiming if need be in the process.

Neither does it help the cause any to say, even though true, that workers have in the past suffered gross wrongs. An evil is never cured by transferring the power to perpetrate it from one set of hands over into the hands of those on the opposite side. Wrong is just as sinister and just as fatal to orderly living when perpetrated by one side to a controversy as if perpetrated by the other. Former wrongs are not righted by the commission of new ones by the other party.

Our method of handling these industrial disputes belongs to the age of barbarism and is a national disgrace. So long as we tolerate law defiance, disorder, private usurpation of the right to redress wrongs, we have no right to be castigating other nations for their delinquencies or to assume the role of instructor to them. If we cannot maintain domestic order, how may we hope to achieve international order, or to have persuasive influence in establishing it?

THE crying need of this age is for men of stature and character in the seats of power—men who have the intelligence to discern the right and the courage to pursue it without regard to personal consequences to themselves or their ambitions, men who will not succumb to the lure of expediency, but who dare to stand on principle though they stand alone. There are too many favor-currying little men sloshing around in positions requiring big men of unwavering integrity to fill them.

Why should great cities be thrown into darkness and their citizens exposed to the marauder because two contending parties choose to be belligerent? Why should water shipping and land transportation be stopped and whole innocent populations be reduced to hunger and cold and privation because two private parties, or perhaps only one of them, sets up its imperious will regardless of the good of the law-abiding public?

If laws are needed to define the rights, privileges, and obligations of the respective contenders, let such laws be passed, but let them be fair, impartial, and unbiased laws. You will never cure the evil with laws that shackle one of the disputants while leaving the other to roam at large with unrestrained license to do evil. If tribunals be needed to administer and enforce the laws, let them be impartially constituted, not packed with personnel so biased that their decision may with certainty be predicted before the cause is heard. And when a judgment has been rendered by a duly constituted tribunal, let that body not be dissolved and its judgment vacated under pressure and another tribunal set up to render the kind of decision the dissatisfied party wants. That practice only brings the whole system into disrepute and the government itself into contempt.

The authority of law must be preserved, orderly procedure maintained, the rights of the unoffending but suffering public made secure regardless of the wishes of the contending parties or the pressures they may bring to bear.

ANOTHER reason for the appropriateness of this discussion here is that the whole future of freedom of religion is at stake. There is war between the concept of a free people under a free government and totalitarian government with its inevitable stifling of individual freedom. That warfare involves religion. If the insufferable and inexcusable condition now prevailing is not corrected, then free government will give way to some form of totalitarianism, whether the despotism of one man or of a class or group or even of the state will not much matter. And totalitarianism must always destroy religious liberty. Free government as we have known it, what commonly now is spoken of as our democracy, is foundationed in the great spiritual principle of the supreme importance of the individual and the divine derivation of

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