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**Elder Brigham H. Roberts**

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speak of this, my brethren and sisters, in order to refer your minds to past history, and to call your attention to the fact that had these institutions been supported in the spirit in which they were established under the direction of President Young, they would have been sources of wealth and of help to us today and great benefit to all the people in this region. Z. C. M. I. also is an institution that was established under President Young's counsel and management, and it has gone forward to a wonderful degree of prosperity, because it has had the loyal support of the people, and I trust it will continue to have it.

We are certainly blessed of the Lord today; we have been blessed every day and every hour since we obeyed the Gospel, and entered into covenant with Him, provided we have kept that covenant. When I look over the statistical reports of our missionaries laboring in every land of the globe where they have been sent I rejoice exceedingly. The missions already established are growing in importance, the Seventies and the Elders are going out and unstintedly giving the best powers of their manhood to develop this cause, to proclaim the truth, and to scatter the seeds of the Gospel for the redemption of the human family far and wide in the nations of the earth.

I testify to you today that Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith was His Prophet, and will ever be the President and leader of this dispensation. I testify that our President today, and those who are associated with him are the men our Father has chosen to lead us and to guide the destinies of Israel at the present time, to push forward the work with strong hands and mighty power. That the blessing of the Lord and the Spirit of His presence may rest upon this conference throughout, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

#### ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS.

Among the things important for the Saints of God to understand, among the things important for the world to understand respecting the Lat-

ter-day Saints, is the relationship that we sustain to the religious world; and I do not know that there is anything to which I could devote the few minutes at my disposal to better advantage than pointing out that relationship, if I can obtain, through your faith and mine, the liberty that comes from the possession of the Spirit of the Lord.

The first revelation that the Lord gave to the Prophet Joseph Smith had a bearing upon this subject. You remember that the Prophet went to the Lord to ascertain which of all the sects of religion was His church, desiring, of course, to unite himself with that church which the Lord would designate as His. In reply to that question the Lord, in substance, said that they were all wrong; that He did not acknowledge them as His church; and told the Prophet he must join none of them, but promised that in due time He would use the Prophet as His instrument in the establishment of His Church in the earth. Because of this great revelation, by which the errors of ages were swept aside and the ground cleared for the re-establishment of the Church of Christ among men, it has placed us in a way in an attitude of antagonism to the religious world. We have been resisted to some extent because of this attitude of antagonism; and it is quite possible that we ourselves have not understood the true relationship in which we stand to the religious world, by more or less of misapprehension respecting this great revelation. I rejoice in the plainness and emphasis of this revelation, because from it I am made to realize that there is a very important reason for the existence of the work with which we are identified. I am glad to know that "Mormonism" did not come into existence because its founders chanced to disagree with prevailing notions about the form or object of baptism; that it did not come into existence through a disagreement as to the character of the government of the Church. From the revelation referred to I learn that "Mormonism" came into existence because there was an absolute necessity

for a new dispensation of the Gospel, a re-establishment of the Church of Christ among men. The Gospel had been corrupted; its ordinances had been changed; its laws transgressed, its truths so far lost to the children of men that it rendered this new dispensation of the Gospel of Christ—miscalled “Mormonism”—necessary. I say that I rejoice in the fact that “Mormonism” came into the world, and exists in the world today, because the world stood in sore need of it. But does this re-establishment of the Church of Christ, this new dispensation of the Gospel, which we have received, make our relationship to the children of men one of unfriendliness? I answer, No. On the contrary our relationship to men is one of absolute friendship and anxiety to do the world good. We ought to understand that. We do understand it. And it is important that the world should understand it, that they may come to regard us in our true light, as friends of humanity, and not enemies.

If you will look through some of the revelations given in the early history of the Church, you will find that from time to time the Lord was under the necessity of correcting the ideas of the brethren respecting their attitude towards religious world. The Lord said to Martin Harris, by way of correction:

“Thou shalt declare glad tidings, yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see. And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers. And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sin by baptism and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost.”

The Prophet also from time to time found it necessary to correct the Elders of the Church in respect of their attacking other churches. At Kirtland, in 1836, when many of the Elders were upon the eve of taking their departure for their fields of labor he instructed them as follows:

“While waiting [for the Sacrament] I made the following remarks: The time that we were required to tarry in Kirtland to be endowed would be ful-

filled in a few days, and then the Elders would go forth, and each stand for himself . . . to go in all meekness, in sobriety, and preach Christ and Him crucified; not to contend with others on account of their faith or systems of religion, but pursue a steady course. This I delivered by way of commandment; and all who observe it not, will pull down persecution upon their heads, while those who do, shall always be filled with the Holy Ghost; this I pronounced as a prophesy.” (History of the Church, vol. II, p. 431.)

In other words, because the Lord has opened the heavens and has given a new dispensation of the Gospel, it does not follow that His servants or His people are to be contentious; that they are to make war upon other people for holding different views respecting religion. Hence this caution to the Elders of the Church that they should not contend against other churches, make war upon their tenets, or revile even the revilers. At an earlier date still, the Lord had said to Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer:

“If you have not faith, hope and Charity, you can do nothing. Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil. Take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness.” (Dec. & Cov. Sec. 18, 19-21.)

“The church of the devil” here alluded to I understand to mean not any particular church among men, or any one sect of religion, but something larger than that—something world-wide—something that includes within its boundaries all evil wherever it may be found; as well in schools of philosophy as in Christian sects; as well in systems of ethics as in systems of religion—something that includes the whole empire of Satan—what I shall call “The Kingdom of Evil.”

This descriptive phrase, “the church of the devil,” is also used in the Book of Mormon; and while in attendance at a conference in one of the border stakes of Zion, a question was propounded to me in relation to its meaning. The passage occurs in the writings of the first Nephi. An angel of the Lord is represented as saying to Nephi, “Behold, there are save two

churches only: the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil." The question submitted to me was, "Is the Catholic church the church here referred to—the church of the devil?" "Well," said I, in answer, "I would not like to take that position, because it would leave me with a lot of churches on my hands that I might not then be able to classify." So far as the Catholic church is concerned, I believe that there is just as much truth, nay, personally I believe it has retained even more truth than other divisions of so-called Christendom; and there is just as much virtue, and I am sure there is more strength in the Roman Catholic church than there is in Protestant Christendom.

I would not like, therefore, to designate the Catholic church as the church of the devil. Neither would I like to designate any one or all of the various divisions and subdivisions of Protestant Christendom combined as such church; nor the Greek Catholic church; nor the Buddhist sects; nor the followers of Confucius; nor the followers of Mohammed; nor would I like to designate even the societies formed by deists and atheists as constituting the church of the devil. The Book of Mormon text ought to be read in connection with its context—with the chapter that precedes it and the remaining portions of the chapter in which it is found—then, I think, those who study it in that manner will be forced to the conclusion that the Prophet here has in mind no particular church, no particular division of Christendom, but he has in mind, as just stated, the whole empire of Satan; and perhaps the thought of the passage would be more nearly expressed if we use the term "the kingdom of evil" as constituting the church of the devil.

I understand the injunction to Oliver Cowdery to "contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil," to mean that he shall contend against evil, against untruth, against all combinations of wicked men. They constitute the church of the devil, the kingdom of evil, a federation of un-

righteousness; and the servants of God have a right to contend against that which is evil, let it appear where it will, in Catholic or in Protestant Christendom, among the philosophical societies of deists and atheists, and even within the Church of Christ, if, unhappily, it should make its appearance there. But, let it be understood, we are not brought necessarily into antagonism with the various sects of Christianity as such. So far as they have retained fragments of Christian truth—and each of them has some measure of truth—that far they are acceptable unto the Lord; and it would be poor policy for us to contend against them without discrimination. Wherever we find truth, whether it exists in complete form or only in fragments, we recognize that truth as part of that sacred whole of which the Church of Jesus Christ is the custodian; and I repeat that our relationship to the religious world is not one that calls for the denunciation of sectarian churches as composing the church of the devil. All that makes for untruth, for unrighteousness constitutes the kingdom of evil—the church of the devil. All that makes for truth, for righteousness, is of God; it constitutes the kingdom of righteousness—the empire of Jehovah; and, in a certain sense at least, constitutes the Church of Christ. With the latter—the kingdom of righteousness—we have no warfare. On the contrary both the spirit of the Lord's commandments to His servants and the dictates of right reason would suggest that we seek to enlarge this kingdom of righteousness both by recognizing such truths as it possesses and seeking the friendship and co-operation of the righteous men and women who constitute its membership.

Running parallel with these thoughts, I may be pardoned if I call your attention to a remark I made in one of these general conferences some time ago, to the effect that when misrepresentations are made of us, or our faith, or when persecution arises against us, it must not embitter our minds, or make us feel hateful toward our fellowmen, or lead us to regard the whole world as

our enemies. We must keep the sweetness of our own disposition. The language of the Savior wherein He says, "Marvel not if the world hate you: it hated me before it hated you, if you were of the world, the world would love its own," etc., I contended then and believe now that the truth of that declaration will be more plainly seen if we read it in this way: "Marvel not if the worldly hate you." If the ungodly, if those who make and love a lie—if such classes as this hate you, marvel not; for they were the classes that hated the Christ and the light and truth that He brought into the world, because their deeds were evil, and His light and truth were a reproof to their evil ways. And as we say concerning the "kingdom of evil," so we say with reference to those who hate the truth and make war upon the righteous, they are not of any one class, or confined to any one sect or division of the religious world, but, unhappily, are found here and there among all classes of people, among all Christian sects, among all religions and sects of philosophy. We ought to rightly divide, not only the word of truth, but the wicked and the ungodly from those who in common with us are seeking to know God and to keep His commandments. And there are millions who are hungering and thirsting for that knowledge; and we from time to time shall find them and lead them into God's temple of truth, where they shall be satisfied at the feast that the Lord is preparing for all those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

The purpose of the Lord in instituting His Church in the earth is very beautifully set forth in one of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, as follows:

(I discover that I do not readily find the passage, and so I pass it for the moment.) The thought that I desire to express and leave with you, however, is this, that as in the matter of physical warfare so also in the matter of theological contention, I believe it is proper for the Latter-day Saints to renounce war and proclaim peace; not

to take such a course as would excite the antagonism of the world, but seeking rather such ground-work of truth as may be held in common between them and ourselves; for the Lord has brought forth His work in the last days, not for the purpose of subtracting from such truth as men may possess, but to add to that truth, to increase it, to enlarge it, until at the last God, through the agencies He has appointed, shall gather together in one system all truth.

The passage I was looking for is kindly handed to me, and is as follows:

"If this generation harden not their hearts, I will establish my Church among them.

"Now I do not say this to destroy my Church, but I say this to build up my Church.

"Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my Church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.

"But it is they who do not fear me, neither keep my commandments, but build up churches unto themselves to get gain, yea, and all those that do wickedly and build up the kingdom of the devil; yea, verily, verily, I say unto you, that it is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center."

I read this in confirmation of the word I spoke, saying that the purpose of God in the introduction of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times was not to destroy any truth that existed in the world, but to add to that truth, to increase it, and to draw together all truth and develop it into a beautiful system in which men may rest contented, knowing God and their relationship to Him, knowing of the future and their relation unto it.

We should present our message to the world in the spirit of peace, charity and longsuffering; and avoid contention; for as our Book of Mormon tells us, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of God. I would the world could understand the unselfishness of our motives in presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them; if they could only know that our only desire was that they should come to a knowledge of the great principles of

truth that are so comforting to us; that we desire their repentance and acceptance of the fulness of the truth, only that they might find favor with God, and share in our hopes of that eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world was—if our fellowmen could be made to understand that this was our only purpose, it seems to me that many of the barriers that now separate us from our fellowmen would be broken down, and we would be able to reach the hearts of the people. I believe that as time passes and we become wiser in the methods of work we adopt, we will do that more and more, causing yet, not only hundreds of thousands but millions of our Father's children to partake of those great blessings that the Gospel has brought to us. To make known these truths and to make the children of men participate in the blessings that we ourselves enjoy, we yearly send hundreds of our Elders to the various nations of the earth. They sacrifice the fond associations of home, the society of wives and children, parents and friends; they sacrifice professional advantages and business opportunities; and sometimes sacrifice health and even life itself to proclaim to the world the truth which God has made known to us—enduring the world's reproach and contumely, because the world does not understand them nor their message; and there is still need, of the prayer on our part, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." For the benefit of those who have passed away from the earth without a knowledge of the great truths and saving power of the Gospel of Christ, we rear costly temples, whose spires pierce the skies of our beloved Utah; and within them at great sacrifice of time and means the saints of God assemble to apply the principles of the everlasting Gospel to those who have passed away without the privilege of accepting them while upon the earth. A more completely unselfish work than this does not exist among men. On every hand the work of God bears the stamp of unselfishness upon it. Our Book of Mormon says: "The laborers in Zion shall labor

for Zion; for if they labor for money, they shall perish." So through all the communications of God to His people shines the glorious principle of absolute unselfishness. Not only is it to be found in the words of our books, but a like testimony is written in the works of the Latter-day Saints—in their actions. Everywhere unselfishness abounds in the Church of Christ, both in theory and practice. Now, if we can only get the people of the world to understand this fact of unselfishness—this very genius of Mormonism—if they could be made to know that Mormonism is here to do good, to raise mankind from the low levels on which they walk to the higher plains where God would have them walk, that they might have sweet fellowship with God, much of our difficulty in preaching the gospel would disappear. That the Lord may hasten the day when the world shall know the Saints and the work of God better, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem, "Lift up the voice in singing."

#### ELDER J. GOLDEN KIMBALL.

In the few minutes I occupy I desire to talk about the Lord's army. You know the Lord has an army, "Soldiers of the cross," just as the United States has a regular standing army. The Church of Latter-day Saints has an army of soldiers numbering, approximately, 8,000. They are minute men, so-called. It is their duty to preach the Gospel, continuously, among the children of men. They belong to the regular army of the Church; they are not volunteers; and whenever called by divine authority, to go to the nations of the earth, they are expected to be ready and prepared to go. This army of the Lord's soldiers go out and battle against the kingdom of evil, which Brother Roberts has been talking about. Now, my experience has taught me that the kingdom of evil is not going to lie down quietly while we are kicking it. You will generally find that enemy quite ready for a fight.