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Abstract: Talks about the role of witnesses. God gave the same commission to the Book of Mormon witnesses in the new dispensation as he did to the ancient witnesses.

What a wonderful promise! And it appears to me that little do we appreciate it! Then again he says:

“Because we are his sons and daughters he loves us and he has forgiven us our forgetfulness to this holy law in the past, but he will not forgive you and me any longer. I say it in the name of the Lord. He will not forgive this people any longer if we continue in this dilatory way of paying tithing. We will be scattered just as the people of Jackson County were. It is true, just as God is true.”

I call your attention to the fact that this comes from the one who had the right to speak in the name of the Lord and give commandments. He goes on further to say:

“Those who will not observe this law are not entitled to the blessings.”

I shall not take time, much as I would delight in doing so, to read farther, because in this expression which I have already presented there is food enough for thought to keep us busy in our reflections regarding our duty in this matter for many days to come.

OBSERVANCE OF THE SABBATH

One or two other items. Our attention has been called to the fact during this Conference that we are living in perilous times. There is sin, there is distress everywhere and disregard of the commandments of the Lord. He has given us another commandment, and that is that we regard the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Who does it? Do the people of this nation? Do the people of other nations? I have been in some parts of this land where on the Sabbath day people worshipped, but here among us we find Babylon in all its glory, all its wickedness; and we are face to face with temptation, with sin, with enticement of various natures to lead us from the path of truth and from the worshipping of the true and the living God.

The Lord has pointed out in the revelations what we should do on the Sabbath day to keep this day holy. We should not go to picture shows, nor go to places of amusement, nor spend our time foolishly; but in thought and in reflection and in study, in consideration of the things of the kingdom of God. What more can be said? I leave these thoughts with you, fragmentary they are.

May the Lord bless and guide the Latter-day Saints and keep them in the path of righteousness, in the path of humility, in the path of truth. We must uphold the standards of Zion. May we do it, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER BRIGHAM H. ROBERTS

Of the First Council of Seventy

The Twelve Apostles, the First Council of Seventy, and the mission presidents, who have addressed you in this Conference, as already stated, met together during last Wednesday, to hear reports and consider matters pertaining to the missions of the Church. I had the pleasure of attending that meeting.

I call your attention to the fact that this was the gathering of special witnesses for the Lord. That is particularly true of the quorum of the Twelve, who are designated as the "special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ;" and also the Seventy, the Council of Seventy, and as a matter of fact of all the Seventies of the Church. They were not all present, but those who were present were among "these special witnesses of Jesus Christ." And also these mission presidents, by reason of their appointment, are witnesses of the Lord, and preside over the work of proclaiming the Gospel in their respective fields of labor.

During that meeting, I think more than at any other time, I was impressed with the dignity, with the importance and the glory of those who are witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. What do we mean by that general term, "Witnesses for Jesus Christ?" I think sometimes we leave it in that generalized statement, and fail to appreciate just what is meant by it. I want to express some thoughts in relation to that.

What is it to be a "witness for Jesus?" One of the best examples that I can recall just now is given in the experience of St. Peter. When on the coast of Caesarea, on one occasion, the Christ seemed to be a little anxious to know what men thought of him—whom men thought him to be. So he inquired of those disciples that were around him. Some thought he was John the Baptist, raised from the dead. Others, one of the old prophets who had reappeared. They got about that far when the Christ, with some earnestness, put this question: "But whom say ye that I am?" Then St. Peter spoke up, as perhaps was his place, by reason of his age and his position in the quorum as the chief of the apostles—he said: "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God." That was his testimony. And the Christ said unto him:

"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. * * *

" * * * And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

I do not intend to go into a discussion of that tremendous statement. I merely call attention to what it is to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. First and foremost must be the great truth, and it must become the testimony of the witness: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." That is one item at least of our lesson of being witnesses. It is to testify of the sonship of the Christ to God, the eternal Father.

Also to be a witness of him is to testify that he is the revelation of God to man, for so he is. If men would hold before them a vision of God the eternal Father they need only refer to the glorious resurrected Christ, as he stood before the disciples in Galilee, where he met them by appointment, after his resurrection; and from his glorious condition of a resurrected, eternal personage, he said:

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

And so we are to speak of him, as witnesses for him, that he is the Son of God, and the revelation of God to men; also that he is the Redeemer of the world, through the resurrection from the dead. Redeemer of the world because it is a redemption that will come unto all people, saint and sinner; for "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and the being "made alive" is as broad as the death through Adam. So men are assured of this resurrection, because it was imperatively necessary to pass through the portals of death in order to reach the stage, through resurrection, where God carries out his great purpose of bringing to pass the "immortality and the eternal life of man;" meaning the race.

So Jesus is the Redeemer of the world from death. Of that we are assured. But also he is the Savior of men, the Savior of individual men, by bringing repentance of sin within their power, and salvation from the consequences of sin, through forgiveness, in the symbols of his death and resurrection in baptism; also to bring individual men into union with God, through the Holy Ghost, so that the lives of men may be linked up to the source of light, intelligence, power, glory, progression—united to God. So the Christ is the "Savior of men," in that he has made salvation possible unto them, every one who will believe, and repent of his sins, and thus come unto God.

To bear witness of these truths concerning the Christ is to be the witness of Christ in relation to all these things. What a privilege thus to be witnesses for God! And how fundamentally important is all this to the children of men, that they should know these things; that they should come to a knowledge of the way of salvation! I glory in the greatness, in the immensity of such a mission as this.

But there is still a closer and a dearer thing coming out of all this, and that is the association it brings to us with the Christ himself as a witness; for St. John, in his revelation, declares that "Jesus Christ is the faithful witness," the first witness, the greatest witness of all. It is our privilege to stand in the throng of which he is the leader, and what could be more honorable, greater or more desirable than to be one with Jesus Christ, as a witness for God?

And then the definiteness of the Christ's mission as a witness. You perhaps will recall, at these suggestions, the language of the Savior when teaching Nicodemus some of the supposed mysteries of the Gospel. At the conclusion of his interview with him he said:

"We speak that *we do know*, and testify that *we have seen*; and ye receive not our witness."

What an upbraiding, and what definiteness of God's chief and leading witness!

He has presented the same thought to us also in his conversation with Pilate, who was seeking every possible opportunity to deliver him from the unjust clamor of the Jewish multitude, who charged that he had committed blasphemy by proclaiming that he was the Son of God. And then, in order to influence Pilate more greatly, they charged the Christ with claiming to be a king: "He who claims to be a king is not

Caesar's friend," said they; and this touched Pilate more nearly, because he must maintain the attitude of patriotism toward Caesar. Hence this declaration of the Jews sent Pilate into the inner court to inquire carefully of Jesus if he were a king. "Well," Jesus said, "my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my disciples would fight, that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this world." "Thou art a king, then?" said Pilate, and Jesus, as if despairing of making him understand, said: "Thou sayest I am a king," as if he would say, "Let it go at that." Then he made a declaration that is most thrilling:

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, *that I should bear witness unto the truth.*"

That was greater than being a king, to be a witness of the truth. And he added now, not—"and ye receive not our witness"—as in the case of Nicodemus, but said, "Every one that *is of the truth, heareth my voice*"—they who are of that spirit of truth would hear his words, and so will they by that same power of self-evidence, that goes with the truth, hear all his witnesses who proclaim the truth. And "they who are of the truth" will be attracted to it, and ultimately find their places in the great body of the Church of Christ.

Well, all this, to my mind, stamps with importance and glory those who are called to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they share with him the high honor of bearing testimony to the truth, by the power of truth.

The Savior, in the dispensation when he established his atonement for the sins of the world, and brought to pass the beginning of the resurrection from the dead, chose special witnesses. These were the Twelve apostles. And after he had chosen these apostles and sent them into the world, then he "called other seventy," and giving a like commission to them, sent them into the world to be his witnesses. To both these classes he made these declarations, in substance:

"He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

It is a true principle; and conversely: those who reject you reject me, and those who reject me reject my Father also.

To these men he gave power that they should heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead even, heal the lame, open the eyes of the blind, and pronounced woe upon those who rejected these, his witnesses. They went forth as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Seventy returned they were very joyous about what their experiences had brought to them. "Why," said they unto the Lord, "even the devils are subject unto us through thy name;" and Jesus raised up his eyes and glorified God in that hour, that he had revealed his great truth to the simple, and to the humble among men. It hadn't fallen upon the great, who stood in the establishments of learning in those days, but the revelation had come to those who, comparatively, might be thought of as

“babes and sucklings” in knowledge. God had exalted them through the spirit of knowledge which comes of faith, rather than from the learning of men.

He said to these men, whom he sent into the world, that “He that repenteth and is baptized shall be saved; and those who do not repent, and consequently will not be baptized, they shall be damned.” Now, I have no disposition to soften that word. Let it stand, in all its ruggedness. You may put all the “cons” before it you please, but there it is, and whatever “damnation” may consist of, it will fall upon those who do not hearken to the message that God sends to them, and I leave those upon whom it falls to render this definition as they please. But whatever it is, that is it; it is “damnation;” so let it stand!

Well, we happen to be associated with a new dispensation of this Gospel. Men in early Christian centuries at least, fulfilled the great prophecy of Isaiah—speaking of the last days—when he said that men in those days would “transgress the law, change the ordinances, break the everlasting covenant,”—and the blood of Christ is spoken of as “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” It is that covenant with Christ, who brings salvation through his Gospel to the world that he sealed with his blood, and that is the “everlasting covenant.” God’s prophet, speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, seven hundred years before the coming of the Christ, declared that men would break that covenant, and if broken, the only possible way to ever re-establish it is to renew it through a new dispensation of it.

We happen to be the witnesses and the heralds to proclaim that this dispensation of the Gospel has been renewed in our days, to bring to pass the final fulfilment of all the dispensations from Adam to now, and weld them into one, that should consummate the work of God in relation to the salvation of men and the redemption of the world.

How does this matter of being witnesses appear in this new dispensation? It began as of old. Men had departed from God, changed his ordinances, broken the covenant, and the only way to go about re-establishing all this is to give the new dispensation and raise up new witnesses to its truth. The Lord took one in every way prepared to be chosen and educated by him, and made a witness for himself and for the Lord Jesus Christ. To Joseph Smith, as you all know, both Father and Son appeared in the commencement of his ministry. With them he conversed; he saw—he heard them, and had most definite knowledge concerning God—the Father and the Son—and received at that time the promise that he would be an instrument, in the hands of God, in accomplishing some of his great and mighty purposes in these last days.

God had established a witness among men, one who could speak with positiveness; who through the senses of sight and hearing, together with the responsive pulsation of soul, could say: “I know God lives, for he spoke unto me and I beheld him. His Son Jesus is the Christ,” and he could say it with all the positiveness that ever St. Peter could—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And it can be applied to Joseph Smith: “Blessed art thou, Joseph, for flesh and

blood hath not revealed that unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. . . . And on this rock will I build my church." And now, in this dispensation of the fulness of times, truly the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church of the Christ, not only in this time but in all times. Men forgot that the Church of God began in the days of Adam, and the method, and the means by which all men could become the sons of God was revealed to him; and those who reacted in faith to the message of God, through all time, constitute the redeemed in the Church of the living God in heaven, and there shall nothing prevail against that church, from first to last.

We shall see the consummation, that is, this dispensation of ours shall see the consummation of God's work, against which the gates of hell have not prevailed and cannot prevail.

Then another mighty stride forward was made, when God revealed the scriptures of the American continent, and brought them to the knowledge of men. He raised up witnesses to bear special testimony to that great event. And these three whom he favored with what is called a "miraculous testimony"—a vision from heaven in relation to these things—he told them that they would be called upon to choose other witnesses, even twelve. So it came to pass in this new dispensation that twelve were chosen as special witnesses. Then groups of seventy special witnesses were to follow them in the great work of preaching the Gospel in all the world. I would like to dwell a little on that, but time will not permit.

I can only ask this question: Must the same consequences follow the testimony of these witnesses in the new dispensation as those in the time of the Christ? Yea, verily! Brother Rudger Clawson has read to us just now how some of these things will be. Let me hastily say: God gave unto them the same commission he did to the ancient witnesses. He named the same consequences that would follow their proclamation of the truth: He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Those that believe not, and are not baptized, shall be damned. The same positiveness—and I don't undertake to make any limitations about it.

Then he enumerated the great blessings that were to follow their preaching and bearing witness of the truth, for God said:

"As I said unto mine apostles, [meaning the ancient ones] even so I say unto you, for you are mine apostles, even God's high priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends. Therefore, as I said unto mine apostles I say unto you again, that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of his sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost."

What man is authorized to say that of a group of witnesses he is sending out into the world? It is in the first great promise to be fulfilled, also that they shall have power to impart the Holy Ghost.

Then further on:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe—In my name they shall do many wonderful works; in my name they shall cast out devils; in my name they shall heal the sick; in my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf; and the tongue of the dumb shall speak. * * *

"But a commandment I give unto them, that they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world; for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation."

Pointing to these so-called miraculous gifts and their fulfilment, what a testimony to those who accept the Gospel! Yet they are not to prize those things above other great spiritual truths, namely, for one thing, receiving the Holy Ghost. That is more than equal to all these spiritual gifts named.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, they who believe not on your words, and are not baptized in water in my name, for the remission of their sins, that they may receive the Holy Ghost, shall be damned, and shall not come into my Father's kingdom where my Father and I am."

I think that must be the "damnation" spoken of above. At least they can not attain unto the rewards that come with obedience to the Gospel.

And then the Christ continues on speaking of these witnesses, that they shall labor in the spirit in which the ancient apostles—the former witnesses—labored. When he traveled with them in the world, he neither suffered them to take purse nor scrip with them in their mission, but taught them to rely upon the Lord, and promised they should not be darkened in mind or limb or joint, but he would sustain them in their missions. Being without money is no excuse for the witnesses who are to go forth in the name of the Lord in the New Dispensation. They are to preserve the same spirit of earnest, sacrificing devotion to the work as in ancient times.

The revelation (Doc. and Cov., sec. 84:79-91) dealing with these things in the New Dispensation says:

"Behold, I send you out to prove the world, and the laborer is worthy of his hire.

"And any man that shall go and preach this Gospel of the kingdom, and fail not to continue faithful in all things, shall not be weary in mind, neither darkened, neither in body, limb, nor joint; and a hair of his head shall not fall to the ground unnoticed. And they shall not go hungry, neither athirst.

"Therefore, take ye no thought for the morrow, for what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed. * * *

"THEREFORE, LET NO MAN AMONG YOU, FOR THIS COMMANDMENT IS UNTO ALL THE FAITHFUL WHO ARE CALLED OF GOD IN THE CHURCH UNTO THE MINISTRY, FROM THIS HOUR TAKE PURSE OR SCRIP, THAT GOETH FORTH TO PROCLAIM THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

"Behold, I send you out to reprove the world of all their unrighteous deeds, and to teach them of a judgment which is to come.

"And whoso receiveth you, there I will be also, for I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, and my spirit shall be in your hearts, and mine angels round about you, to bear you up.

"Whoso receiveth you receiveth me; and the same will feed you, and clothe you, and give you money.

"And he who feeds you, or clothes you, or gives you money, shall in nowise lose his reward.

"And he that doeth not these things is not my disciple; by this you may know my disciples."

To my surprise I see the time is up. I would like to dwell upon these matters a little longer, if it were possible.

I was delighted with the suggestions made by Elder George F. Richards here yesterday, in regard to widening the mission force in various mission fields. Now that we are in the midst of this so-called "financial depression," it becomes increasingly more difficult for the Saints in Zion to provide the funds for a mission for their sons and daughters, especially if asked to make the provisions from the beginning of it to the end of it, before they start. I want to make a suggestion or express a thought I have upon the subject, and that is that these witnesses for God I think should learn to trust more in the Lord and his promises—summon up the faith of the Gospel and be willing to face the world with faith in God, and depend upon him more and more for supplying their needs, while preparing the hearts of the children of men for the coming of the Lord as in the beginning of our work.

The Lord bless Israel and sustain the witnesses of this dispensation as in former dispensations, increase their power so that when they go forth to speak it will not occur to the children of men to question their truth but to know, by the response of the spirit in their hearts, that these are witnesses sent of God—in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

Mr. H. A. Smith of Arizona, who has been addressing the Commercial Club, is here in the interest of a tariff on copper. We wish him God-speed in getting it. I do not think I could get one vote against a tariff on copper.

I wish to say, incidentally, do not go wild over a lot of books that claim the world is coming to an end in a few days. The scriptures tell us that no one knoweth. I am sure that some of the people who are wasting days, weeks and months of study trying to frighten themselves to death will not be successful.

The Choir rendered the anthem "Inflammatu8," solo part by Sister Laurinda Brewerton.

Elder Heber J. Meeks, President of the Kanab Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock.

AFTERNOON MEETING

The closing session of the Conference commenced promptly at 2 o'clock, Sunday afternoon, April 10th, the attendance at this meeting being similar to that at the morning session, large crowds of people who were unable to gain entrance to the Tabernacle, having assembled in the Assembly Hall and on the Tabernacle grounds, where they listened to the proceedings as they were broadcast by radio.

President Heber J. Grant presided.

The Choir and Congregation sang the hymn, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning."