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“New Witnesses for Christ”

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Abstract: The sacred mission of the Church and the Book of Mormon is to bring all nations to Christ. The book gives an account of Jesus’ visit on the American continent and provides a new witness for him.

killed—these would falter in their evil designs before a knowledge of the divine origin and destiny of every human being, of his God-like nature. Righteousness would increase in the earth. We prattle about the brotherhood of man, but true fraternity can be realized only upon the acceptance of all men as our very brothers, possessing equal rights with us. There should be a comprehension of the innate greatness of every dweller on earth, of the possible attainment by the humblest man of an infinitely high goal. Such knowledge, widespread over the earth, would refine individual conduct, make men take thought before action, and would help bring about peace, the world's greatest need.

A sense of individual responsibility grows out of an understanding of man's relationship to other men and to God. The world is in serious need of a compelling sense of personal, individual responsibility. As men are, so is the social group. A righteous nation is but the assemblage of righteous men. National prosperity is but the sum of personal prosperity. When each man sets his own house in order, the whole world will be in order. There is much talk of governmental or other organized provision for our wants, material and spiritual, when in reality our greatest needs must be satisfied from within ourselves. To lean upon others for support enfeebles the soul. By self-effort man will attain his high destiny. It cannot be placed as a cape upon his shoulders by others. Upon his own feet he must enter the Kingdom of God, whether on earth or in heaven. By conquest of self he shall win his place in the everlasting glory of God's presence.

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

He is a very son of God, endowed with God-like power, who, if he respect his divine origin and high destiny, may bring to pass the long sought reign of righteousness on earth.



JOHN A. WIDTSOE

"NEW WITNESSES FOR CHRIST"

By MELVIN J. BALLARD

of the Council of the Twelve

THE Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has a sacred mission to perform in the world. One of the most important features of that mission is to provide new witnesses to this doubtful and skeptical generation that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the very Son of the living God, who died for men and is still interested in them and presides under his Father over the destinies of this world. We proclaim with John that by him, as the Father's representative, was the world made. In the character of Jehovah before he dwelt among men in the flesh, he was the Spokesman of his Father, Elohim, delivering the commandments, inspiring the prophets and ultimately coming to dwell among men in the flesh, thereafter to be called Jesus Christ. He gave himself as a ransom to save the world and mankind; first, from the consequences of the fall which brought mortality and death. He brings us to immortal and eternal life. And through our obedience to his Gospel he redeems us from the consequences of our own sins.

But his interest in this world did not end when he had performed his great sacrifice. He is the Savior of all men, no matter where or when they have lived upon the earth. To his disciples at Jerusalem he said:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." (John 10:16.)

It is generally agreed now that when he spoke those words there was a mighty multitude of people living in this western world. He was their Savior and knew of their existence.

Prominent among the witnesses this Church produces to support the testimony of the disciples at Jerusalem concerning Christ and his ministry is the testimony of a nation living upon this western hemisphere which was visited by him after his resurrection. Unto them he said, "Ye are the other sheep of whom I spake." Great destructions had occurred in this land at the crucifixion of Christ. The multitude who survived were standing about one of the temples marveling at the great changes which had taken place. The following account of this visit is recorded in the Book of Mormon, the Bible of America, Third Nephi, 11th chapter:

"And it came to pass that while they were

thus conversing one with another, they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven; and they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice; nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice it did pierce them that did hear to the center, inasmuch that there was not part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn.

"And it came to pass that again they heard the voice, and they understood it not.

"And again the third time they did hear the voice, and did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were toward the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came.

"And behold, the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them:

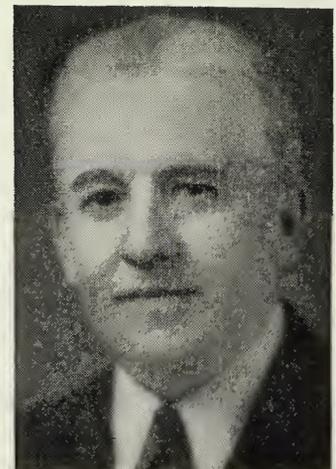
"Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.

"And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him. and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant. for they thought it was an angel that had appeared unto them.

"And it came to pass that he stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people saying:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me. and have glorified the Father in taking upon



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me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words the whole multitude fell to the earth; for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven.

"And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them saying:

"Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

"And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come.

"And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

"Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him." (3 Nephi 11:3-17.)

Jesus Christ spent three glorious days with the peoples of America. He organized his Church and taught them the same doctrine he had delivered to his disciples in Jerusalem. As he left them he promised to come again. This historic visitation is supported by the traditions of all the Indians of America who have the same story that their fathers were visited a long time ago by a fair God who taught his Gospel and blessed them promising to return again. The conquest of Peru and Mexico by a handful of white men was possible because of this tradition of the promised return of the white God.

And now another witness which this Church furnishes that Jesus Christ not only lives but that he is as deeply interested in this generation as he was in them of old is the witness of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery that on the third day of April, 1836, one hundred years ago, in the Kirtland Temple, built by divine command to provide a place for the Lord's appearance, the following event occurred:

"We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber.

"His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father." (Doctrine and Covenants 110:2-4.)

He further announced that the purpose of his visit and the sending of prophets of ancient times, who held keys of authority, was to inaugurate the dispensation of the fulness of times spoken of by the prophets, wherein all keys and authority of all former dispensations were to be reintroduced among men in the building and establishment of Christ's kingdom triumphant in the earth to which he would come to rule and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords for a thousand years, as the prophets had foretold. Jesus announced in this dispensation, therefore, that the hour had come when a great and marvelous work was about to commence among men, wherein everything would be shaken that could be shaken and only the truth would stand, and that the prophecies of old were about to be fulfilled, when the Spirit of God would be poured out upon all flesh and old men should

dream dreams and young men should see visions (Joel 2:28), and that as a result of it men would see wonders in the heavens and upon the earth.

What has happened in this world since that visitation a hundred years ago is in part at least a realization of the promise, for greater human progress has been made in the development of science in the last hundred years than in all the preceding ages combined. Surely the Spirit of God has been poured out upon all flesh, and men have caught visions of the secrets of God and the materialization of these visions has produced wonders in the heavens and upon the earth. The Lord's hand is in all that is now going forward. The conflict between good and evil will be fierce but out of every struggle will come the victory of the right and of the truth. Every man-made institution that stands in the way of God's purposes will be shaken and fall to the earth, and his Kingdom shall come and his will be done upon earth as it is in heaven.

Let all believers in Christ doubt not, for he delayeth not his coming, neither has he gone afar and forgotten us. Let us all join in continuing the glorious warfare to win this world for Christ, its rightful Ruler.

I bear witness that I know that he lives and that he is the Redeemer of the world. When that day shall come that I may stand in his presence and hear his voice, or like the doubting Thomas, thrust my hand into his wounded side and hands, I shall not know any better than I do today that he lives and that he has visited the earth in this age in the reintroduction of his glorious Gospel in its fulness and that it shall be triumphant in the earth. God speed the consummation of this happy event. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING JOSEPH SMITH

OLIVER COWDERY, most intimate associate of the Prophet Joseph Smith during the days of Book of Mormon translation, has left some interesting notes on the Prophet's character contained in a series of letters written to W. W. Phelps for the *Messenger and Advocate* in 1834-1835. Although Oliver Cowdery later was excommunicated from the Church, he never denied these things or any others pertaining to the personal character of Joseph Smith or the divine origin of his work, and he was later rebaptized into the Church.

"... In consequence of certain false and slanderous reports which have been circulated, justice would require me to say something upon the private life of one whose character has been so shamefully traduced. By some he is said to have been a lazy, idle, vicious, profligate fellow. These I am prepared to contradict, and that too by the testimony of many persons with whom I have been intimately acquainted, and know to be individuals of the strictest veracity, and unquestionable integrity. All these strictly and virtually agree in saying that he was an honest, upright, virtuous and faithfully industrious young man. And those who say to the contrary can be influenced by no other motive than to destroy the reputation of one who never injured any man in either property or person.

"... I have been told by those for whom he has labored, that he was a young man of truth and industrious habits. And I will add further, that it is my conviction, if he never had been called to the exalted station in which he now occupies, he might have passed down the stream of time with ease and in respectability, without the foul and hellish tongue of slander ever being employed against him. It is no more than to be expected, I admit, that men of corrupt hearts will try to traduce his character and put a spot upon his name; indeed, this is according to the word of the angel; but this does not prohibit me from speaking freely of his merits, and contradicting those falsehoods—I feel myself bound so to do, and I know that my testimony on this matter will be received and believed, while those who testify to the contrary are crumbled to dust, and their words swept away in the general mass of lies when God shall purify the earth.

"For the present I close, with a thankful heart that I am permitted to see thousands rejoicing in the assurance of the promises of the Lord, confirmed unto them through the obedience of the everlasting covenant.

"As ever your brother in the Lord Jesus,

"OLIVER COWDERY."