

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

(Of the First Council of Seventy and President of the Eastern States Mission)

On the title page of the Book of Mormon there is a statement made of the purpose for which the book was written. Part of the explanation is as follows:

“—Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that *Jesus* is the *Christ*, the *Eternal God*, manifesting himself unto all nations—”

That book was published in the Spring of 1830. At that time, I feel very sure in saying, the conviction of those who considered themselves Christians, was practically unanimous in the conception that Jesus Christ, in some way, was divine; and not only divine, but also in some way, the manifestation of God to the world. And ye: we find in this preface of the Book of Mormon a statement that this book had been written and preserved to come forth in the last days to establish the conception of Jesus Christ as “*The Eternal God*,” and many marvel, doubtless, that such a statement as this should be made.

What more witness or testimony could the world need than is to be found in the New Testament scriptures, to the fact that Jesus is the Christ and God? You doubtless will recall the question that Christ asked the Pharisees with whom he had been in controversy. Turning questioner himself, he said to them: “What think ye of Christ?”—having in mind the Anointed One whom the whole nation of Jews were expecting—“Whose son is he?” And they quite readily answered: “The son of David.” “How then,” said the Christ, “doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, *The Lord* said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he, then, his son, And no man was able to answer him a word.”

Then, on another occasion, when in controversy with the Jews, the Savior said: “I and my Father are one,” and then they took up stones to stone him. Jesus answered them: “Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?” And the Jews answered: “For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God,” and this, of course, was in their view, blasphemy. The Savior answered them saying: “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God, If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the

works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

St. John's testimony is to the same effect; namely:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and it goes on to tell us that,

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." * * *

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

And so, you might continue to point out from the New Testament scripture how the Christ is proclaimed to be one with the Father, and possessed of all power, as he himself declared, both in heaven and in earth; and is named in the Holy Trinity as being equal with God, the Father, and with God, the Holy Ghost; the three constituting the Godhead of heaven and of earth. Yet, notwithstanding all these testimonies of the New Testament scriptures, God brings forth a new volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon, which we are learning to call the American scripture, the word of God to the ancient inhabitants of this land of America. He brings that forth and points out in it that the greatest purpose of all in bringing it into existence and preserving it, is to testify to both Jew and Gentile in the last days, that Jesus is *the Christ, the Eternal God*.

In the eastern states of late, there has arisen a great controversy about this very subject—*viz*, is Jesus Deity? A very noted rector in the diocese of New York, Dr. Grant, in January, in one of his Sunday services, announced that "Jesus was not Deity," but man. His bishop, Bishop William T. Manning, immediately took him to task, pointed out that he was out of harmony with the creed of the great Episcopal Church, and that he ought either to recant the things he had uttered, or else he ought to resign. The doctor declined to resign, though he did modify somewhat the positiveness of his statement that Jesus was not Deity. In his reply to his bishop, he merely said that he did not know of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and believed that the historical gospels that best set forth his life, did not attribute to him Deityship. It is a kind of drawn battle between the rector and his bishop; but it discloses the fact that there were quite as many people in that diocese who sided with the rector as against the bishop; and it also disclosed the fact that the ministry was about equally divided on the subject. This agitation that thus arose, extended throughout all the country, not only among Christians but the Jews also have participated in it. And the discovery is made, and it is safe to make the statement, that not more than one-half of those who bear the name "Christian" do really believe in Jesus Christ as Deity. I am very sure that it is the general mental attitude toward the Christ, that he is merely the "prophet teacher of Nazareth," and not at all God.

That is as far as I may now lead your reflections upon this sub-

ject; but is it not marvelous that a book should be brought forth, about one hundred years ago that would carry in it testimony and witness for the Deityship of Jesus Christ, when there was no earthly reason for believing, when the book was brought forth, that it would have any such emergency to meet as we now see rising in the modern, Christian world?

I thank God that he thus anticipated the need of the religious world concerning a true knowledge of God; that he brought forth, as from the dust, the testimony of sleeping nations to the great central truth of the Christian religion, the important fact that Jesus Christ is indeed God, manifest in the flesh; and has, in our day, more than doubled divine testimony that Jesus, the Christ, is both the Redeemer of the world and, under the direction of the Father, the Creator of it and the sustaining power of it; also the vital force, that gives life to all things; and likewise the intelligence-inspiring power; and above all the love-manifested power; the love revealed that God has for all the children of men, in which manifested love, we may hope for the continuation of effort upon the part of the Divine powers, to bring the children of men unto God. May the Lord grant it, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang, "Now let us rejoice."

Elder Joseph A. West offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p. m.

AFTERNOON SESSION

The meeting began at 2 o'clock p. m. President Heber J. Grant announced that the Provo Tabernacle choir, under the direction of J. R. Boshard, would sing, "Hark the glorious dawn."

After the singing, Elder Joseph H. Dean, of Shelley, Idaho, offered the opening prayer.

The choir sang, "O Holy Father."

PRESIDENT RUDGER CLAWSON

My brethren and sisters, I have rejoiced greatly in the spirit of this conference. We have listened already to some very fine instructions and some pointed testimonies which were faith-promoting. I desire that the same good spirit that has actuated the other speakers may also be with me.

THE PRINCIPLE OF REVELATION VITAL

No more important topic has been touched upon at this conference than the principle of revelation, which is vital to the salvation of the souls of men. It would be difficult to imagine the true Church