

Then say what is truth? 'Tis the last and the first,
 For the limits of time it steps o'er:
 Though the heavens depart and the earth's fountains burst,
 Truth, the sum of existence, will weather the worst,
 Eternal, unchanged, evermore.

ELDER DAVID O. MCKAY

AUTHORIZATION OF CHRIST TO WITNESSES OF HIM

"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

These men who were to be witnesses were eye witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the principal fact to which they were to bear witness in all parts of Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

THE REALITY OF CHRIST AS DEITY

My beloved brethren and sisters, in the world today belief in Jesus Christ is too perfunctory, too conventional. The reality of Christ as Deity does not seem to possess the souls of men. The resurrected Lord is a something apart from most men's lives. I think I cannot better illustrate this thought than to read a few lines written by one of the soldiers in Flanders, when he was in the midst of shot and shell and facing death. Writing of the Christ he says:

"We had forgotten you, or very nearly,
 You didn't seem to touch us very nearly.
 Of course we thought about you now and then—
 Especially in any time of trouble—
 We knew that you were good in time of trouble—
 But we are very ordinary men.

"Now, we remember, over here in Flanders—
 (It is not strange to think of you in Flanders)—
 This hideous warfare seems to make things clear.
 We never thought about you much in England—
 But now that we are far away from England—
 We have no doubts, we know that you are here.

"We think about you kneeling in the Garden—
 Ah, God, the agony of that dread Garden—
 We know you prayed for us upon the cross.
 If anything could make us glad to bear it
 'Twould be the knowledge that you willed to bear it—
 Pain, death, the uttermost of human loss!"

Too many in the pseudo Christian world today can say as truthfully as the soldier:

"We had forgotten you, or very nearly—
 You do not seem to touch us very nearly."

The reality of God the Father, the reality of Jesus Christ, the

risen Lord, is a truth which should possess every human soul. God is the center of the human mind as surely as the sun is the center of this universe, and once we feel his Fatherhood, once we feel his nearness, sense the divinity of the deity of the Savior, the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ follow as naturally as the day the night, and as night the day.

HOW MAY WE KNOW GOD AND FEEL HIS NEARNESS?

How may we know God, how may we feel that nearness to him? That is the question that young men are asking today. Boys and girls are not naturally irreligious; they are not profaners because they love to be. I know they seem indifferent, but in their very hearts, they are asking these eternal questions, and they long for the answer.

ONE WAY, TO THINK, TO REASON

There are three ways, among others, to which we should like to ask the young men of Israel, particularly, to seek their God and to feel his nearness. One is to think, to reason. Reason though only an insecure guide will lead us to him. However, "Dim as the borrowed rays of moon and stars to lonely, weary, wandering traveler—is reason to the soul," but it is a guide, and too few men use it positively with a desire to know the truth.

ANOTHER, TO ACCEPT THE WITNESS OF MEN OF INTEGRITY

Another pathway is to accept the witness of men who have known him, who have seen him. I think we pay too little attention to the value of these witnesses. I have read in your presence this morning the authorization of Christ to his apostles who were to be witnesses of him. The very first act of the Twelve after Christ's ascension was to choose a man from among those who had been eye witnesses of Christ's resurrection. That was what they wanted the apostle to be who was to take Judas' place. (Read in the first chapter of Acts)—a witness of his resurrection. Mind you, many men in the world today accept Christ as a great teacher, but that is not the fact which is going to transform their souls. He was a great teacher, the greatest teacher of men, but he was also God. Through him we know God; through Christ, God reveals himself to men. It is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world of whom I speak when I plead for young men to come close to him and to think of him as a reality after his death, after his burial. Of the resurrected Christ were the early apostles to be witnesses in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Now let me here say that we ought not to question the integrity of these men. I believe in them, I cannot believe that they wanted to deceive, I cannot believe that they were deceived, I cannot. In measurement of time we are a long way from them, I know, but if we study carefully their lives and their histories we

shall find that their testimonies are reliable and that the integrity of their lives is unquestioned. To emphasize the value of their testimony, let me call your attention to what Mr. Roger W. Babson, author of **Fundamentals of Prosperity** has written about integrity, how our entire social structure is built upon it:

"The first fundamental of prosperity is integrity. Without it there is no civilization, there is no peace, there is no security, there is no safety. Mind you also this applies just as much to the man who is working for wages as to the capitalist and every owner of property. Integrity however is very much broader than the above illustration would indicate."

Before this quotation, he shows that there is no value at all in the bank book, no value in the deeds and mortgages that we hold.

"The value of them lies in the integrity of the lawyers and stenographers who draw up the papers, in the integrity of the officer and clerks who sign the documents, in the integrity of the courts and judges who would enable us to enforce our claims; in the integrity of the people, the citizenship who will stand behind that enforcement, and make our claims legal and valid."

"Integrity," he continues, "applies to many more things than money. Integrity requires the seeking after as well as the disposing of truth. It was their desire for truth which founded our education institutions, our sciences and our arts. All the great professions, from medicine to engineering, rest upon this spirit of integrity, and only as they so rest can they prosper or even survive."

TESTIMONY OF MEN WHO SAW THE RESURRECTED CHRIST

These men who were to be witnesses declared before their enemies, the very men who had put Jesus Christ to death on the cross, that they had seen the risen Lord. I will first read Peter's testimony given immediately after the resurrection:

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know;

"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

"Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it . . .

"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Ah, but the doubting critic says, and he says conscientiously, if we had absolute proof that this was Peter's testimony, it would have force. But remember, he says, that the Acts of the Apostles were not written until eighty years after Christ, or nearly half a century after the event of which Peter testified took place. Right. But let us remember also that in the severe test to which modern science has put all these ancient scriptures during the last half century, especially every ancient document that purports to contain any witness of the resurrected Christ, many documents have been thrown aside as spurious, the "Acts of John," the "Acts of Andrew," the "Acts of Peter," and others, have been thrown aside,

but the **Acts of the Apostles** has emerged from that criticism with its **authenticity established**. Then we know that the author—we accept Luke as the author, and that, too, is fairly well established—Luke received the witness personally of the men who saw Jesus Christ after he was resurrected. We know that Luke was in Rome with Mark, and we know that Mark was in Jerusalem at the time that these great events took place. It is not thoroughly established but it is quite certain however that Mark was the young man who ran into the Garden the night of the betrayal. We know that Luke was in the house of Philip, the evangelist, and stayed many days at Caesarea. We know that at that time he went to Jerusalem, he conferred with James who presided over the Church at Jerusalem—James the brother of the Lord, who had accepted the gospel after the resurrection. The testimony of James, Luke heard, and in all probability the testimony of Peter, because Peter was there as one of the leaders when Luke went up to Jerusalem on that occasion, and he would hear first hand Peter's testimony. Men were living, five hundred of them at that time, who had seen the resurrected Lord. What about the integrity of men, integrity of witnesses? What right had Luke to suspect them? He did not, he accepted their testimony as valid, and their testimony of the resurrected Lord convinced him of the divinity of the work of Jesus Christ to which he subscribed and of which he became a member.

He heard from Paul, day after day and night after night, the testimony that he gave, and if there is any question about the direct testimony of Peter we have the direct testimony of Paul in the oldest recorded testimony extant, older than the Acts—a testimony written in the first twenty-five years of the Christian church. Paul testifies that he saw the risen Lord. With that testimony you are all acquainted. He further testifies that the risen Lord was seen of Cephas (Peter), "then of the Twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time."

I cannot doubt that testimony. Why can the world? This testimony is of the **resurrected** Lord, not Jesus the teacher, not the Jesus of Nazareth, who went about as any other Jew, but Jesus the Lord, the Redeemer of mankind.

THE MODERN TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH SMITH

Let me call your attention to another witness nearer to us than the ancient apostles—the testimony of Joseph Smith the prophet. This comes closer to us. These other men are a long way from us in measurement of time. Joseph Smith testified that the risen Lord appeared to him, that he was introduced to the boy prophet by the Lord himself, the Father, who said, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." If that testimony stood alone it would be, as Christ said his

testimony would be, of no avail when he spoke of himself. If Jesus were the only witness it would not be of force, but he had also God's testimony and the Scriptures. And so, Joseph Smith has other witnesses whose integrity cannot be questioned. Of Joseph's wonderful testimony I have not time to speak, I am merely suggesting a line of thought that young men may follow and come nearer to Christ if they will be conscientious and true, and not "play pranks with their souls," but be honest as Joseph Smith was honest, and as these other men were honest to death in their testimonies.

THREE WITNESSES CORROBORATE THE VISION OF JOSEPH

Three witnesses corroborated Joseph Smith's wonderful vision, and in that testimony which they give they bear record of another truth, the immortality of man. For if Jesus Christ lived after death, and the angel Moroni came as these three witnesses declared, then you and I shall live after death! Man is immortal. Oh, what a wonderful revelation, what it means to men who now but perfunctorily and in a conventional manner accept the gospel of Christ! These three men testified:

"Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have **seen the plates** which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for **His voice hath declared it unto us.**"
 "Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, Martin Harris."

I will not take time to read all.

One of the most pleasant features of an interesting and profitable visit that I recently made with President B. H. Roberts through the Eastern States mission, was our coming in contact with scenes in early Church history. When we were at Palmyra I read in one of the local papers a testimony, or memorandum, given by a man who knew these three witnesses personally. He has never joined the Church, but in that local paper I read this testimony of the integrity of one of these witnesses:

John H. Gilbert, on September 8, 1892, the man who set the type of the Book of Mormon, says this of Martin Harris:

"Martin Harris was a good farmer owning a farm of about one hundred and fifty acres about a mile north of Palmyra village, and had money at interest. Martin, as everybody called him, was considered by his neighbors a very honest man."

Martin, the honest man, says to the world, "God's voice declared to us that the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated are true; an angel of God came down and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the records." "A very honest man," bears the witness, why should we doubt it?

I rejoiced at the last meeting in Pittsburgh to hear President Roberts bear witness in a most inspirational meeting, that he heard

David Whitmer, another of the three special witnesses, testify in these words of the book:

"Young man, if that book (pointing to one of the early editions of the Book of Mormon) is not true, then there is no truth in this, God's world."

The integrity of these three witnesses cannot be successfully questioned. Men who heard these testimonies direct from the witnesses themselves are with us, and their witness is true.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

But there is a greater witness than the witness of men, great as that is. If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater, for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath witness in himself." There is a witness of the Spirit. God does reveal today to the human soul the reality of the resurrection of the Lord, the divinity of this great work, the truth, the divine and eternal truth, that God lives, not as a power, an essence, a force, as electricity, but as our Father in heaven. Oh, why do men try to make that power, recognized by science and religion everywhere, a mere force. I sometimes wish that such men would kneel down and try to pray to electricity. Imagine trying to pray to electricity! You can't do it, and yet that is one of the greatest known forces. You can, however, pray to God the Father, a personal being. God reveals to the soul his existence. He reveals the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to earth to give to men the great reality of the existence of God and his Son; and in that spirit and with such witness in my soul I bear testimony today that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of the world:

"I know that my Redeemer lives,
 What comfort this sweet sentence gives,
 He lives, He lives who once was dead;
 He lives, my ever living head.
 He lives, all glory to his name!
 He lives, my Savior still the same,
 O the sweet joy this sentence gives,
 I know that my Redeemer lives."

God help us and all the world to sense the reality, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is established among men, and through obedience to it the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man may become realities to every son and daughter of Adam. God hasten the day when that testimony will be real in every heart, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

I feel very humble and never have I felt more than I do today to rejoice in the revelations of the Lord, especially in those that have come to us in this dispensation. It has caused my heart to