

ELDER CHARLES H. HART

Of the First Council of Seventy

I need the sympathy and faith of this audience and the blessings of the Lord if there is to be fulfilled during the short time that I stand before you the earnest prayer in which you joined this afternoon, that the spiritual feast might be continued. I trust that it may not be marred, but that if possible it may be added to.

John, in his first general epistle, uses this language:

"For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."

It has been made clear by the remarks of the brethren during this conference that there are two classes of witnesses, the first, the Divine witness, as spoken of very clearly by Elder Whitney, and also by other speakers during this conference, and human witnesses, mentioned particularly by Elder David O. McKay. The first great class is illustrated in the last chapter of Moroni, which is the last chapter in the Book of Mormon, wherein we are told that by the power of the Holy Ghost the truth of all things may be made known unto us, and the formula is given for obtaining the power of the Holy Ghost as that witness—by prayer to God the Eternal Father in the name of Jesus Christ, with a sincere heart, with real intent and with faith in Christ.

Human witnesses are provided for as shown by the twenty-seventh chapter of II Nephi. The importance of this class of witnesses is emphasized by the promise of the three witnesses and eight witnesses in support of the divinity of the Nephite scriptures. In the scriptures we have human as well as divine testimony to support the truth. I appreciate both classes of evidence. I am impressed with the testimony of Mary, the mother of the Master. Her testimony is recorded in holy writ in language that has always thrilled me when I read it. Of all the witnesses except the great testator, the Holy Ghost, it seems that Mary, the mother of Jesus, should know as well as anyone the divinity of her son. Her testimony is recorded in the first chapter of Luke, beginning at the forty-sixth verse, when she realized that she was favored above all women, as the angel had informed her. She exclaimed:

"My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

"For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name."

Elizabeth, her cousin, had the same witness. She knew that Mary was greatly favored above women. The same divine testimony came to Joseph, and he understood the honor that had been bestowed upon him and upon his espoused.

A little later, Simeon was privileged to perform the law, and when he takes the babe in his arms he feels that the honor is sufficient for him; that he is now ready to depart. He exclaims, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine

eyes have seen thy salvation, which God hath prepared before the face of all people, a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

There was also the promised son of Elizabeth to testify to the coming of the Master, the voice crying in the wilderness, calling to repentance and announcing that there came one after him whose shoe latchet he was not worthy to stoop down and unloose, He who was to baptize with fire, as he, John, was baptizing with water.

Then there was Jesus' marvelous ministry. At twelve years of age, the boy in the temple asking and answering questions with the wise men. Later the matchless Sermon on the Mount, after hearing which the people were astonished because he taught them not as the scribes, but as one having authority. Then his wonderful ministry of which a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, could say to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God for no man could do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

And yet after all testimonies of Jesus' ministry we have reached an age when study and scholarship seem to darken these great truths. Those of us who have accepted as a reality the introduction of the Son by the Father to the Prophet Joseph, the revelation upon which the restoration of the gospel is founded, can scarcely realize the darkened condition of the minds of some so-called Biblical scholars. I am not in the habit of repeating things that are not constructively helpful, but it is not enough to be satisfied ourselves, but we have the duty of assisting the world to come to a knowledge of the great truths which we rejoice in. There were published in some of the recent magazines of international value the remarks of a professor of one of our great institutions, upon this subject of the divinity of the Master—a man who had written a good deal concerning Jesus, and yet who seemed to become more darkened the more he wrote, because in an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, on Jesus, he asserted that the divine incarnation is alien to the teachings of Jesus Christ and to those of the original disciples, and that we cannot longer regard the teachings of Jesus as of unique authority or of permanent validity. These critics profess to give greater weight to the so-called synoptical gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, than to the writings of John or of Paul. Since reading this assertion of this professor I have re-examined the sayings of Jesus as recorded in some of the synoptical gospels, particularly Matthew, to see whether it was possible that I had been mistaken all this while in the thought that these gospels did give indication that Jesus proclaimed that he was the Christ. We have had some of these instances testified to during this conference. The answer to the question that he asked his disciples as to whom men said he was—the final answer of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and the reply of approval by the Master, when he said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

And yet in the light of such scriptures there are so-called pro-

fessors who will declare that it is alien to the teachings of Christ that he claims incarnation, or to be the Messiah of the world.

I have noted many passages of scripture, particularly from Matthew, that indicate he was more than mortal. For instance, in the raising of the boy with the palsy, when he said: "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and then, reading the thoughts of the Pharisees, questioning that he had that power, he asked them whether it was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or, "Arise and take up thy bed and walk?" He performed healings under circumstances that one could not doubt that he had the power also to forgive sins.

When the mother of Zebedee's children came to him and asked the privilege for one of her children to sit upon his left hand and one upon the right, he told her that privilege was not his to bestow, but was the right of his Father.

He spoke of ascending in glory.

I shall not take time to refer to any considerable number of these instances, but just a few to illustrate how presumptuous and blasphemous it would have been for the Savior, had he been a mere mortal, to have assumed the authority and uttered the words that he did, in the authority of his high calling as the Messiah and the Redeemer of the world. He spoke of the time when the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him. "Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Again, at the time of his crucifixion, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" And then the circumstances of the administering of the holy sacrament to his disciples, and the concluding commission to them: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have given you, and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." What presumption would it have been to so speak, if he had been merely human?

These professors shy at the teachings of St. John, although his gospel has been called the most influential book known to the literature of the world, a book, by the way, which is replete with testimonies pertaining to the divinity of Jesus. Let me quote a few of these:

"I and the Father that sent me."

"Ye neither know me nor my Father."

"That which I have seen with my Father."

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

"I am the Light and the Life of the world."

"I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world."

"The glory which I had with thee before the world was."

"The Word was made flesh."

"In whom dwell all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Many more expressions along this line, are found which time will not permit to call your attention to. But there is much, particularly

in the writings of John, in support of his claim of Messiahship, which some modern writers, in the sterility of their learning, seem to take pleasure in denying. There is a type of mentality which seems to think it an indication of freedom and independence on their part to deny the most vital and well established truths.

The testimony of the divinity of Jesus by the Prophets of old, you are no doubt familiar with. The expression of Isaiah taken from the ninth chapter of this prophet: "For unto you a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall rest upon his shoulders, and he shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

May the Lord help us to cherish this precious testimony which he has given unto us of the Prince of Peace, this Mighty God, our Savior and Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOHN WELLS

Of the Presiding Bishopric

This conference has been one of joy and pleasure to me, and I have listened with appreciation to the doctrines, teachings and instructions of my brethren. These meetings give us all new life, new vigor, a new outlook, new thoughts and new resolves; and I believe that we shall go home from this conference filled with the bread of life.

When President Grant announced the great missionary movement and the call for one thousand mature men to go on missions for short terms, it filled my soul with gladness. I saw these vigorous, mature men, able defenders of the gospel, accepting this call, coming to Salt Lake, being set apart under the hands of the servants of God; I saw them arriving in the various fields of labor, receiving counsel and advice from their mission presidents; then going forth to the villages, hamlets, and the great cities of this land, and perhaps of other countries, preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and crying repentance to all people.

I saw these devoted men, and perhaps women, knocking at the doors of the people's homes, offering tracts, soliciting entertainment, sometimes being rebuffed and sometimes welcomed; delivering tracts which convey the gospel's message to those who will open their doors. I saw them on the street corners, addressing ever-shifting and changing congregations; in the civic centers, in the parks, upon steps of public buildings; and, in fact, wherever the police will permit them to preach. I saw these men, happy and thankful for the privilege of raising their warning voices once more to the inhabitants of this and other lands.

As a result of this preaching and tracting the hearts of some will be truly touched by the message of the gospel; some will stop and listen; others will invite the missionaries to call; still others will hear the message through their friends. A few words will sink