

humility, is my prayer, which I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A sacred solo, "Light of the world," was sung by Cyril Martin.

ELDER CHARLES H. HART

Of the First Council of Seventy

The Apostle Paul, in the opening words of his epistle to the Hebrews, testified as follows:

"God, who in sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son."

And so we testify that in this generation the same God has spoken through his Son, and through the prophets unto us. Just as it was necessary to supplement the revelations of the Old Testament by the revelations of the New Testament, to which the Apostle Paul testifies, so was it necessary to supplement the revelations of both the Old Testament and the New Testament by the revelations to us in our generation.

The history of this American volume of scripture, this modern volume of scripture, known to us as the Doctrine and Covenants, shows that the Prophet Joseph Smith and also his associates placed a high valuation upon the message, upon the doctrines given to us. Soon after the organization of the Church, indeed about three months afterwards, Joseph was concerned in getting the revelations together for the purpose of publication. In November, 1831, a conference was called at Hiram, Ohio, for the purpose of having these revelations sent down to Missouri and published at the printing office of the Church, then established at Independence, Missouri. On the afternoon of that day, November 1, 1831, there was given to the Prophet Joseph the revelation now embodied as the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, known as the preface. It is so designated in the revelation. This revelation alone is very strong corroborative proof of the divinity of the work through the Prophet Joseph.

Elder Whitney spoke of the Book of Mormon as being one of the strongest corroborative evidences of the divinity of the Master. And so as to the Doctrine and Covenants we may say that it is a very strong book of corroborative testimony in support of the divinity of this latter-day work.

Dr. Eliot, the president emeritus of Harvard, has given us a volume of prefaces of the notable books of the world. Volume 39 of this five-and-one-half-foot library, as it is sometimes called, is a volume devoted entirely to prefaces—prefaces that are deemed worthy to live after the books themselves to which they are prefaces in some instances have lapsed into obsolescence. After considering the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants in the light of the literary standards of the world as to what a preface should be, and after comparing

it with the outstanding prefaces of the books of all time, I discover it to be a very remarkable document. I have read it over scores of times, and the oftener I read it the more powerful and beautiful does the language seem to me. I am persuaded that the testimony in support of so-called "Mormonism" is not dependent upon any one single bit of evidence, but upon the cumulative effect of all the corroborative evidence we have in support of this divine latter-day cause.

The brethren having in charge the bringing forth of the Doctrine and Covenants safeguarded it very carefully. It was not sufficient for Oliver Cowdery alone to take the manuscript from Ohio to Missouri, but by revelation a companion was designated as his assistant in carrying that message. Ex-Governor Harding, of Utah, a Palmyra boy, in an affidavit furnished for an anti-"Mormon" publication in the 50's gives us a very beautiful picture, to my mind, of the way Joseph and his associates safeguarded the precious manuscript of the Book of Mormon. He testifies that he saw Joseph, Oliver and Martin walking through the woods each day in the morning, with a "take," as the printer calls it, of manuscript to be delivered to Mr. Grandin, the printer of Palmyra, sufficient copy for the day; and the same three men again in the evening walking through the woods to receive back the precious manuscript which the printers during the day had placed in type.

Some of the brethren felt that it was not such a very difficult thing to produce one of these revelations. They saw these revelations and realized that they were coming through the Prophet Joseph more or less in his language, and yet with wisdom above that of man, and a notion prevailed with some that it was not a very difficult thing to produce such revelations. Then the test was given of the Lord, just as surely a test, although not so spectacular, as Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal. This is the language of the Lord in making that test:

"And now I, the Lord, give unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments which are lying before you. Your eyes have been upon my servant, Joseph Smith, Jr., and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and you have sought in your hearts knowledge that you might express beyond his language; this you also know.

"Now, seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him that is the most wise among you;

"Or, if there be any among you that shall make one like unto it, then ye are justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true;

"But if ye cannot make one like unto it, ye are under condemnation if ye do not bear record that they are true.

"For ye know that there is no unrighteousness in them, and that which is righteous cometh down from above, from the Father of lights." (Doc. and Cov. 67:4-9.)

And there was one wise man—Church history suggests that he was very wise in his own estimation—Brother McLellan, who was really foolish enough to undertake to produce something that would read somewhat like one of these revelations, and added to his knowledge the

folly of attempting the impossible. Just as the great John Marshall, justly estimated the greatest jurist that the United States has ever had, failed upon a challenge by his preacher, to produce a parable comparable to one of the parables of our Lord and Master.

There were many testimonies in support of the divinity of the revelations. The first book published was known as the Book of Commandments, afterwards changed to its present title. The Presidency in the proposed issuance of that volume, testified thus:

"We do not present this little volume with any other expectation than that we are to be called to answer to everything advanced, in that day when the secrets of all hearts will be revealed and the reward of every man's labor given unto him."

Later the great body of the priesthood divided into departments, each with a spokesman, and strongly testified to the divinity of that book of revelations and to Joseph as a prophet. The following testimony was prepared and presented at a conference, November, 1831, it being intended to have it signed and printed in the Book of Commandments:

"The testimony of the witnesses to the Book of the Lord's Commandments, which commandments he gave to his Church through Joseph Smith, Jr., who was appointed by the voice of the Church for this purpose: We therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth, and upon the islands of the sea, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost shed forth upon us, that these commandments were given by the inspiration of God and are profitable for all men, and are verily true. We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world, in which we rejoice exceedingly, praying the Lord always that the children of men may be profited thereby." (*History of the Church*, Vol. I, page 226.)

This testimony to the truth of the Book of Commandments was concurred in by the leaders and other elders present at the conference where it was presented. It may have been signed also. It was carried to Missouri, but owing to the fact that the printing press was destroyed by a mob before the Book of Commandments was all printed, the testimony does not appear in the part of it that was printed; but it was concurred in by all the leading brethren present at the conference, among them being Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jr., Sidney Rigdon, William E. McLellan, Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, Lyman E. Johnson, and others. (See *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 222 and 226.)

As we look for individual items of testimony, having as I say this cumulative effect of making a case beyond all controversy to those who are willing to listen to the truth, we have such evidence as was referred to by President Grant in his opening speech—the testimony of the great premier of England, Gladstone, a man disinterested and certainly competent to give that testimony. And the testimonies continue up

to this time in support of the revelation to Joseph contained in section 101, Doctrine and Covenants, verse 80, to the effect that the constitution of this land was established by wise men raised up unto this very purpose—not only the view the great Gladstone had, but modern lawyers in convention assembled express similar views in reference to the inspiration of this great work. Honorable Michael J. Doyle, in the convention of the Commercial Law League of America, held July 13th, 1925, said:

“It is not to be expected that any product of mere human brain can escape all criticism or will be an absolutely perfect document. But so far as human genius could reach, the testimony of the intervening years has established that never before in the history of man’s endeavor to uplift man has there been presented to civilization or to humanity a document so inspiring of the rights of posterity and the rights of freedom, as the document which followed the Declaration of Independence on that hot Fourth of July, 1776. I agree with the many writers on the subject who say that we have much reason to believe that the brain of these men, sitting there in that solemn assembly, was touched by a divine spark when they gave to the world and to posterity that marvelous document.”

A federal judge who sometimes sits in our own city, Judge Page Morris, had this to say with reference to the Constitution not long ago:

“The Constitution of the United States is the greatest document the world has ever known, and if it is not divinely inspired it is nearer to it than any other human document I know of.”

The very manner of giving these revelations indicates that Joseph had divine assistance. Parley P. Pratt testified to the giving of these revelations, but time does not permit to read his testimony, but it was in substance to the effect that there was no interlining, no reviewing, no reading back, no corrections, but he simply dictated it, so that a person writing longhand could conveniently take it, and when his dictation was through the revelation was complete.

My own testimony is that the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants are beyond the wisdom of man. That is true of the least revelation. Take, perhaps, the shortest, the second section, outlining all our great temple work in the turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers and the hearts of the fathers to the children. That is above the wisdom of man, as also the 20th, 107th, 84th, and 124th, sections, the four great charters of the Priesthood, or revelations on the Priesthood, which, by the way, the priesthood here assembled should be very familiar with, as many of them no doubt are, and other revelations, too numerous to mention, such as the 59th, the 93rd, 76th, 87th, 88th and 89th sections. Indeed any one of them is above the wisdom of the young man Joseph, and above the wisdom of any of his associates, and above the wisdom of the world today. That is my testimony, and I bear it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The congregation sang the first and third verses of the hymn, “Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah.”