

ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

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MY DEAR brothers and sisters: This is my third anniversary and seventh time that I have been honored with the privilege of standing in this position. I assure you that the timidity is just as great today as it was seven conferences ago. When I realize that the Prophet of God, who opened this glorious conference this morning, in his wisdom, humbly sought divine aid as he occupied this position, as the others have done who have succeeded him, I more than ever realize the need for that assistance, and I am brought to a consciousness that there is not anything that we do in this Church if we have desire to aid and assist, to benefit and bless people but what we should act under the inspiration of our heavenly Father.

Another anniversary—it was forty-five years ago on the seventh of this month, since I was privileged to land in Salt Lake City with my father, he having accepted the gospel just shortly before I was born in the little town of Oldham, England. I am grateful that he still lives at eighty-one and has a testimony of the divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ and in this thing called "Mormonism."

We have heard servants of God bear their testimonies that this is his work in which we are engaged, and I believe therein lies the strength of this Church. When I make that statement, I am mindful of the fact that there is great strength in the missionary program of the Church, which is a great voluntary service. I am conscious of this because I have had the privilege of touring the New England Mission going as far as St. Johns, Newfoundland. In the past two months I have been all the way from the West Coast to St. Johns, Newfoundland. I have heard testimonies of those newly converted to the Church, and I have heard testimonies of those who have been stalwarts through the years. It is recorded by the Psalmist David:

Blessed are they that keep his testimonies,

and that seek him with the whole heart. (Psalm 119:2.)

Yes, I am also mindful that there is great strength in the evidence we have from people paying their tithes and offerings that this work of the Lord may grow and progress. I believe that the strength of this Church lies in the individual testimony which people may possess if they will but conform their lives to the teachings of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am mindful of this vast congregation here this afternoon and also the vast congregation—the capacity of which we know not—who will be listening in over the radio and those who may be viewing over television. I trust that in the few moments I occupy this position I may bring you a message that will be of value and of worth in assisting you to seek for a testimony.

I have heard so many people say, and you have had the same experience I am sure: "You seem so positive in your testimony or in your statement that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ." I am positive in my testimony, but I want to assure you that it is not in the spirit of egotism or self-exaltation whatsoever—only in the spirit of humility. I would call to your attention the experience which the Savior had on one occasion when he approached Peter and the other disciples when he had been mistaken for many other personages,

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matt. 16:13-19.)

Would you say that was a positive testimony that Peter had? He knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. That came unto him by divine revelation. It can come unto every individual who has a desire to serve God, to know his commandments and be submissive to his will and be obedient to the same. Anyone may possess a positive testimony.

Again on another occasion, on the day of Pentecost the Savior had commissioned his disciples to go forward and proclaim his doctrines. They had the power and authority necessary to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to administer in the ordinances thereof which pertain to the salvation and exaltation of our heavenly Father's children.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. (Acts 2:36-40.)

I believe that applies in this dispensation in this year 1954, as it did almost two thousand years ago when that positive declaration was given by Peter.

After the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he appeared in the upper chamber on one occasion and, oh, they were glad to see him—to receive their Lord. He gave them these con-

soling words in which we, today, might find comfort: "Peace be unto you."

Then the same day at evening, before the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (John 20:19-29.)

I have not seen the Master Jesus Christ, but I have a firm conviction and testimony that he lives. I know that I have been blessed as I go about in my humble, weak way endeavoring to fulfil assignments which come to me by those in authority. I cannot deny that God and his Son Jesus Christ have been with me to bless me that the people might be fed the bread of life.

I am grateful for a positive testimony.

In conclusion I should like to give you a positive testimony from the Old Testament. The Prophet Job had suffered much, and yet his testimony was sufficiently strong that he had the power to subdue and rise above and overcome

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the weaknesses of the flesh because the Spirit of the Lord had taken precedence in his life. So indelibly did he desire his testimony to be inscribed upon the hearts and minds of men that he said:

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though

my reins be consumed within me. (Job 19:23-27.)

Yes, my brothers and sisters and friends of the radio and television audience, you may also have a positive testimony that God lives and that Jesus is the Christ, the divine Son of God our heavenly Father, and I trust that those who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness may have a desire within their hearts to accept truth, for all truth emanates from God our eternal Father.

This is my testimony to you today, and I bear it in humility and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HENRY D. MOYLE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL.—This statement presupposes two fundamental facts (1) the former existence of the gospel upon the earth; (2) its loss—disappearance, etc. Was there a divine church? It is as much our mission on earth to proclaim the existence of the gospel in earlier dispensations as anything can be. The world today wonders why we sent missionaries to so-called Christian nations rather than confine our proselyting efforts to the so-called heathen nations. The answer is important. Christianity so-called has lost the knowledge of the true gospel of Jesus Christ as established in former times.

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (Matthew 24:4-5.)

We go into the world to teach them the former as well as the latter-day gospel of Jesus Christ. Did not the prophets Isaiah and Micah say:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall

go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. (Isaiah 2:2-5; see also Micah 4:1-3.)

Not many years ago in Knoxville, Tennessee, I saw a sign done in bronze on the corner of a bank building which read in substance: "The Church around the corner teaches the old-fashioned gospel of Jesus Christ." This very attempt on the part of this great church to distinguish itself from other present-day churches is evidence sufficient of the necessity of missionary work to be done among those professing faith in new-fashioned religions conceived of men and among those who deny all faiths, deny even the existence of God. We have a mission to preach the gospel—the existence and the true conception of God to our fellow men, the establishment of his Church upon the earth by his Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot, in fact, proclaim the restoration of the gospel without proclaiming its pre-existence. The restoration must bring back that which was originally established. Something else would not be a restoration; neither can you restore that which is already here.