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## The Three Witnesses

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**Abstract:** The Three Witnesses fulfilled the function of bearing living testimonies of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. They became witnesses when they received a heavenly manifestation in June 1829.

Aaron, and the duties incumbent upon the bearers thereof, are to be emphasized by special observance in all congregations of the Latter-day Saints throughout the world. To all be it said: Rejoice and be supremely glad, for the everlasting Gospel is again operative upon the earth with all its ancient blessings, privileges, and powers!—J. E. T.

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## THE THREE WITNESSES

TO BEAR RECORD of facts of which they have personal and direct knowledge is the especial function of witnesses, and as such they figure in an important way in the affairs of men and play a no less vital part in the dealings of God with His children. In every gospel dispensation divinely chosen men have testified concerning the glorious things which they, through the power of God, have both seen and heard, and this in obedience to the Lord's command, for in His wisdom it has been ordained that the truth shall be established by the solemn witness of men chosen to behold the glories of God and to testify thereof. Those so commissioned and chosen then become verily witnesses for God; and a rejection of their testimony constitutes a spurning of the word of the Lord, for a direct witness of the revelations of God is empowered, and, indeed commanded, to declare those things to the world in His name. Such was the commission given to the Apostles of old—those who had been eye-witnesses of the Christ's marvelous works among men—and one of His last injunctions to them prior to His sacrificial death upon the cross was that they should bear witness of Him. See John 15: 27.

In this age the Lord provided that the authenticity of the Book of Mormon be attested by servants called of Him, who should receive such manifestations that they would be able to proclaim unto the world that the book is verily a divinely inspired translation. Thus in 1829 was the promise given to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

But this generation shall have my word through you;

And in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you.

Yea, they shall know of a surety that these things are true, for from heaven will I declare it unto them.—Doctrine and Covenants 5: 10-12.

In fulfilment of this promise Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris, in answer to fervent prayer, received a heavenly manifestation in the month of June, 1829, when an angel descended in a pillar of light and displayed to the gaze of these men the inscribed plates, and a voice from heaven declared to them that the record was true and had been trans-

lated by the gift and power of God. In rapture Martin Harris, who theretofore had struggled against skepticism and mistrust, exclaimed: "It is enough! Mine eyes have beheld the glories of God!"

Following this manifestation the three gave to the world the testimony that has gone forth in every edition of the Book of Mormon, witnessing to all men that they had beheld the plates; that they had seen the engravings thereon; and that the voice from heaven had attested the correctness of the translation.

The character and integrity of these witnesses, as also that of the eight other witnesses, who solemnly avouched that they had beheld the plates and had seen the characters thereon, were above reproach. Moreover, they were men of conservative judgment and calm reasoning.

They were not naturally enthusiasts in the matter of religion; nor were they men who could be deceived. They were of Puritan ancestry and demanded the conviction of their reason before yielding their faith. That reason once convinced, they were men of such exalted courage that they dared the ridicule of the pulpit and the anger of mobs, to voice their convictions and to yield adherence to the Gospel. . . . Conservative in character, thrifty in habits, they were not of a class who would venture from any slight motive to excite the hatred of a world which they knew would deem itself outraged by their avowal.—*From Joseph the Prophet*—GEORGE Q. CANNON.

The Temple Block, Salt Lake City, has long been renowned not only for the great Temple, the far-famed Tabernacle, the beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers that there abound, but also for its monuments of historic importance. Word now comes from Salt Lake City that a magnificent monument of granite and bronze, erected to perpetuate the memory of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, has just been completed. It is placed but a few feet behind the bronze figures of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Patriarch Hyrum Smith. It stands ten feet six inches high, and is divided into three sections at the top; on the face of each section is an oval plaque showing in relief the head and bust of the respective witness. Below is a larger plaque, bearing the full text of the testimony of the three. In the upper left hand corner the Prophet Joseph Smith is depicted as on the Hill Cumorah receiving the plates from the Angel Moroni. At the upper right hand corner the Prophet and the Three Witnesses are shown, viewing the gold plates. On the opposite side is another large bronze plaque, bearing the figure of John the Revelator on the Isle of Patmos, and below is the text of the prophecy, recorded in Revelation 14: 6, that in the hour of God's judgment an angel should bring the Gospel to earth as a warning to all nations.

On April 2nd, the day preceding the opening of the Ninety-seventh Annual Conference, services were held at which President Heber J. Grant officiated and offered the dedicatory prayer.



The unveiling of the monument was done by Josephine Smith, great-granddaughter of Patriarch Hyrum Smith. The artist who fashioned the monument is a native Utahn, Avarad Fairbanks. His ability has recently won him the highly coveted scholarship awarded by the Guggenheim Foundation.

Thus has been completed a work of art of high merit, which will preach, in its silent but eloquent and convincing way, the message of the testimony of the Three Witnesses to the thousands who visit Temple Block every year.—WALDO L. OSMOND.

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## THE ULSTER CONFERENCE

*(Concluded from page 295)*

Outstanding features of progress were embodied in a survey of the Ulster District for the last half year, read by President Kendall D. Garff at the afternoon assembly. The four traveling missionaries have devoted 994 hours to tracting, have distributed 13,848 tracts, 1,841 pamphlets, 29 copies of the Book of Mormon and 31 other Church books, have engaged in 1,742 gospel conversations, and have canvassed 10 towns and villages. Following the report President Garff discoursed on the Book of Mormon, speaking particularly of the Lamanites. He told of the present degraded condition of these people, the American Indians, asserting that they are nevertheless of the blood of Israel and that their redemption as a people awaits their acceptance of the Gospel. Elder Seth P. Leishman showed by citations from latter-day scripture that communication between the Lord and His prophets is indispensable to the guidance of His Church.

The significance of John the Revelator's prophecy respecting the restoration of the Gospel in the last days was the subject of the Mission President's afternoon address. The speaker defined the meaning of the "Gospel", showing that it is the announcement of good news or good tidings, and, in the specific or theological sense, the good tidings of the salvation of men through the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Elder Boyd W. Madsen, the first speaker at the evening gathering, cited the scriptural truth that God is not the author of confusion, but that His house is a house of order. We welcome the attention of all men to the fruits of "Mormonism", said Elder Elmer D. White, who summarized some of the outstanding facts which proclaim the character and achievements of this people. The Relief Society is the oldest organization for women in the world, stated Sister Talmage; she then told of the aims of this benevolent organization, pointing out that its chief purpose is implied in its name. In addition to ministering unto those in distress, it seeks to provide for the intellectual and spiritual uplift of its members, she explained.