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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters and friends, I use this salutation advisedly, for I realize that I am not only addressing a large congregation of men holding the priesthood, and officers of leadership in the Church, but another group, possibly larger than this, that is on the outside listening in, made up of faithful men and women of the Church, and possibly some who are not members of the Church. I salute them, and you, my brethren, as my friends.

TRUE FRIENDLINESS

I have a friendly feeling toward all those who hear my voice, and toward all mankind. I hope that feeling is reciprocated. I would like to do something for my friends, but what can I do? I remember the Apostle Peter on one occasion when there was an afflicted person pleading for aid, said, "Money I have not, but such as I have, I give freely unto you. Be ye healed." And he was healed.

Money I have not to give to my friends who are so numerous, but as a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ I would point the way to those who have not understood the way of life and salvation—the way into that narrow path that leads to that goal. And to those who have entered the path I would counsel them to neither deviate to the right nor to the left, but to pursue a straight-forward course, that when they reach the end of the trail they will not be disappointed with their life's work.

Quoting from Whittier's "Maud Muller":

Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GOSPEL

I desire to add my testimony to the testimonies of my brethren of this conference, for I have a testimony abiding in my soul, and I know without any question that the work in which we Latter-day Saints are engaged is the work of the Lord, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the power of God unto salvation unto all those who accept it and live according to its precepts. It is the same as that which was instituted in the councils of heaven before the world was. It is not a new gospel, but the old one restored.

It is the same as Christ our Lord taught and lived, and by living it made him what he was in life and what he is after life, enthroned in glory at the right hand of our Father in heaven. It is intended to make us like him and to save us with him, and it will do so if we follow in his footsteps, and walk in the light as he is in the light, loving the Lord and keeping his commandments, and this I admonish all my hearers and myself, that it will be the efforts of our lives so to do.

It involves the accepting and receiving of certain principles and ordinances, the keeping of certain commandments, the obeying of the laws of God, performing acts of service to our Father in heaven, and to his children here on the earth, the making of sacrifices, the forming of family relations, ties that are to exist throughout the eternities, to live and serve the Lord by faith and not by sight, putting our trust in him, living by every word that proceedeth forth from his mouth.

There is reward ample, that of forgiveness of sin, a wonderful blessing innate in the gospel of Christ; the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection with the just, and eternal life and exaltation in the kingdom and presence of God the Eternal Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

The Savior said to his disciples:

In my Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:2, 3.)

That would be a good enough place for you or for me.

It is written: ". . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9.) And it is also written that if we love the Lord we will do his work and his will and that will make for our satisfaction. There is satisfaction in having been right, and disappointment in having been wrong on any question which we may have considered; especially is that true where others have considered the same question and their views and ours differ. The more important the question under consideration, the greater the satisfaction if right, and the greater the disappointment if wrong.

TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH COMES THROUGH REVELATION

The most important question that has ever engaged the attention of man is that of religion, or salvation; of what it consists, and how it may be attained. There is no other question that has received the attention of so many people, and on no other question has there been such a diversity of opinion. Hence, the many religious organizations upon the earth today.

The time is to come when every knee is to bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. Then, if not before, as sure as there is a God in heaven and life beyond the veil—and there is nothing surer—then men will know, all men will know the truth pertaining to religion and salvation.

But it is not necessary that we wait until that time, for to know the truth pertaining to salvation the Lord has given us the key to this knowledge, when he said:

. . . My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:16, 17.)

How would we know? By the revelations of God through the Holy Ghost. The same as Peter received the light and knowledge. When Christ our Savior asked his disciples: "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus 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. (Matt. 16:17.)

It was revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost.
It is written:

... No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (II Peter 1:20, 21.)

There is the secret—holy men of God, enjoying the Holy Ghost, under its influence, gave to us the scriptures, ancient and modern, and it is a commandment of the Lord that we search the scriptures, for in them they "testify of me."

The people of the world of mankind today have not that Holy Ghost that was enjoyed by those holy men of God who gave us the scriptures. If they had the Holy Ghost, in the same degree of power that was had by those holy men who gave us the scriptures, then they would understand the scriptures just as did those men who gave the scriptures to us.

THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST

We are not only to receive the Holy Ghost, being born again, the way the Lord has designed that it should be and has been in the days of the primitive Church, but we are to live and labor so as to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, and he will not dwell in unholy tabernacles.

The scriptures tell us no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. And what man knoweth the things of man save by the spirit of man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man but by the spirit of God.

"And the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned."

There is a difference between the natural man and those who understand the things of the Spirit of God. One has been born again and the other has not. The rich man, Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night professing belief in him, saying that he knew he must be a teacher sent of God for no man could do the work that he did, except God be with him, received this reply:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3.)

Nicodemus not understanding how it would be possible for

a man to be born again, the Savior replied: ". . . Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.) That is the explanation of being born again. We hear it on the day of Pentecost, when the assembled multitude of different nationalities in their own tongues heard from the mouths of the disciples of Christ, under the power and influence of the Holy Ghost which was manifest there in a remarkable degree, that he who had been crucified was indeed Christ, the Savior of the world, and being converted and convinced, and having faith, they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Peter answered 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." (Acts 2:38.) There is no other way prescribed by the Lord of heaven by which we may have the Holy Ghost, by which the scriptures have been given, by which they can be interpreted and understood.

THE NEED FOR A TEACHER

So these people who have not taken the course—and they are numbered by the thousands—I suppose hundreds of thousands who have never heard of the gospel—since they have not received the Holy Ghost in the way the Lord has appointed, they need a teacher. We have a splendid example of that where an angel of the Lord appeared to Philip, and told him to go down south to the way leading from Jerusalem, to meet a certain Ethiopian who had been up to Jerusalem to worship and was returning to his home in Gaza, Ethiopia. Philip did as he was required, and as this man came along in his chariot—for he was a wealthy man, a man of high repute, the treasurer to the queen's treasury in Ethiopia—he had the Bible open upon his knees to the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and Philip hailed him and asked him if he understood what he was reading. "How can I," said he, "except some man shall guide me?" He invited Philip into the chariot, and he sat beside the Ethiopian and taught him the gospel. When they came to a place that had plenty of water, he said: "Here is water. Why should not I be baptized?"

Philip said: "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest." He professed belief in Jesus Christ, and Philip and he went down into the water, and he was baptized by Philip. When they came up out of the water, Philip was caught away by the Spirit of God.

A teacher is needed.

I refer you, my friends, to the case of Saul of Tarsus. Jesus Christ had to take him in hand. And Saul, after he became an apostle of the Lord, declared that what he did in persecuting the

Church, he did conscientiously, thinking that he was doing God service.

It takes something more, brethren and sisters and friends, than education and learning to comprehend and understand the things of the Spirit of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A SINCERE TESTIMONY

I bear you my testimony in all sincerity. I know that this work is true. I know that God lives, a glorified and exalted personage, having a body of flesh and bones and spirit as tangible as man's, all-powerful in heaven and in earth; the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. He is the Eternal Father of all men. Jesus Christ is the First-born in the spirit and the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh; he is the only name under heaven by which mankind may be saved. No man can be saved in the kingdom of God without believing on the name of Jesus Christ and in the efficacy of his atonement.

By the same token I know that Joseph Smith is a mighty prophet of God, raised up in these last days, and through him the Father and the Son have revealed themselves anew to the world of men, and Joseph Smith was succeeded by Brigham Young, and each of the presidents of this great Church of Christ, in his day and time, has been inspired and led by the Lord, supported by faithful men, the general authorities of the Church, and faithful Latter-day Saints, and this work has grown and prospered and will continue to do so until the Son of Man shall come to take his kingdom and reign upon the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

I bear to you, my brethren and sisters and friends, this testimony in the authority of the holy priesthood as a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, in his name. Amen.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I need your sustaining help, my brethren, and that of my Father in heaven, whenever I stand before you.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF JOSEPH SMITH

Since we met here at general conference six months ago, we have observed the anniversary of an event of great importance to this Church and people—the one hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith. During the last few months I have been reading, and am still reading, all that I can find pertaining to Joseph Smith, both that which he himself has spoken or written and that which has been spoken or written concerning him.