

tion. I plead for that interpretation to come through the auxiliaries of the Church, as well as from the priesthood of the Church. I think it is the highest degree of misfortune when young folks, kindly disposed toward the gospel and the Church, are not given adequate opportunity to understand it and to appreciate its great, beautiful truths.

We have all been inspired by the testimonies which have been given during this conference. I have been thrilled as I have heard men stand in this pulpit and declare that they know that God lives and that Joseph Smith was his prophet. As I have heard their voices ringing and reverberating through this building, I have shaken and trembled with a sense of obligation, and with a great feeling of joy—an obligation in knowing that all my brethren and sisters must have the opportunity of understanding the gospel and coming to a knowledge of its truth and divinity in the same form and in the same fervor with which our brethren have expounded it and borne their testimonies; and a great feeling of joy that that same testimony rests with me. I appeal to you, my brethren and sisters, you who manifest your great interest in the work of God, by coming here to the general conferences of the Church; I appeal to you, not for your own good particularly, but for the good of the thousands and thousands who are not here, who cannot be thrilled and inspired by these glorious testimonies, to carry back the message of this great gospel to them, to make it appeal to them, to make them know that there is nothing narrow or constricted in it and that there is nothing in the way of their going forward with the utmost progression in the development of all truth, and in the understanding and comprehension of the great principles of truth which God intends should be revealed for the guidance and direction of all the human family.

GOD GIVE US VISION AND UNDERSTANDING

God bless the young people. God give them vision and understanding to see the great truth and beauty of this gospel, and God bless the older ones that they may be sympathetic, compassionate, kind, tolerant, merciful and loving, that these young people may not perish without the faith. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

I think it well for us at times to look at ourselves and take stock to determine what we are, and this both as individuals and as an organization. We may need a mirror to show just how we look as individuals, and I pray you if you use one, be sure that it is a right mirror, unwarped, and that your eyes be clear, that we may see ourselves as we are. And it is well to look at the Church, not that we need separate ourselves from it for the occasion, but to look at it impartially and get its proper perspective in relation to other organizations.

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF SOME ESSENTIAL POINTS IN CHURCH HISTORY

If it were possible to show by means of panorama or the moving picture, the essential points connected with the history of the Church of Jesus Christ, going back no farther than the apostolic dispensation of old, we would see first a scene of wondrous activity and sacrifice. The apostles, who had been ordained under the hands of Jesus Christ, and those who had been called into the council of the apostles afterward, and the seventies who had been marshaled for their work, and the bishops and the elders and the priests, teachers and deacons—these we see at work, going amongst the people and spreading the gospel, spreading it so thoroughly that Paul was able to say in his day that practically every soul had heard it, by which I understand that he meant that every soul had had a chance to hear of it, to learn something about it. As the scene changes we see there many others who followed in the footsteps of the apostles, so far as their energy and devotion and authority to labor was concerned. Then we see confusion coming into the Church, partly because of oppression and almost indescribable persecution from without, partly because of the threatening disruption from within.

THE GREAT APOSTASY

There was an apostasy, and a great one, not the first one by any means in the history of mankind, but a great falling away, an apostasy of individuals from the Church in countless numbers, and then the apostasy of the so-called church itself, turning away from the ways that had been laid down as the government of the church, corrupting the ordinances established by divine authority, pandering to the so-called philosophy of the day, introducing the elements of paganism and heathenism to make their worship more spectacular and more attractive, until we see as we look at the changing scene, that there is only the outward form of godliness and not one flash to tell us of the power thereof.

THE PERIOD OF SPIRITUAL DARKNESS

Then as the panorama moves, comes the period of darkness, spiritual and mental. For, mark you, the mind is an attribute of the spirit; and as spiritual powers dwindled, mentality became deficient and the dark ages loomed. The sombre cloud failed to arouse faith and trust, but deepened the gloom of unbelief. We see people struggling in the midst of darkness trying to get out of the jungle. Men were sent unto them to help, men of God, seeking to lead them back into the light, to some extent, but they had a hard time. The Church had become apostate and tyrannical. It had undertaken to rule by autocratic methods. It claimed the right to tell men what to do and to force them to do it on penalty of loss of life or limb, and the confiscation of their goods. It undertook to dictate unto nations, unto

kings, what they should do, and professed to absolve subjects from all allegiance to their rulers if the rulers failed to obey the behest of the church so-called.

THE LIGHT OF GOD IN THE RESTORATION

The centuries passed and by and by a light appeared; a glorious illumination broke forth; and the word of God was heard again, for God the Eternal Father—I speak it without reservation or modification—that Being after whom we have been formed in physical, mental and spiritual image, did appear upon the earth unto the lad Joseph Smith. And with the Eternal Father stood the only Son whom he had begotten in the flesh, Jesus the Christ, who affirmed that the authority and power to speak and to act in the name of God was not at that time upon the earth. Then followed the promise that it should be restored and in time, even as the prophets of old had foreseen, angels came to earth ministering unto those who had been chosen, and bestowing upon them by the same outward ordinance as was observed of old, by the laying on of hands, the power and the authority not only to speak but to act in the name of the living God, according to the order set forth.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has not sprung from any "mother church." The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is no sect; it owes no allegiance to any other religious society, call it by the name of church or what you will, on the face of the earth. It does not claim to possess the Holy Priesthood by direct and uninterrupted descent from Peter of old, but it does claim that Peter, accompanied by his associates James and John, the three who constituted the presidency in the organization of the apostolate of old, did come by instruction of the Lord and did confer upon men here upon the earth the authority they possessed and which they exercised in the flesh before their martyrdom. We speak that plainly. I know it shocks the ears of some who may not have prepared themselves to receive it; and yet, wherein is the inconsistency? We proclaim the fact and also proclaim that the apostasy was a reality; and others admit it, theologians, scholarly men, and even churches. Though you have heard it before, I wish to draw your attention to that solemn declaration by the chief of the Protestant churches, the Church of England, made soon after the time of its creation—for it was created by act of Parliament. But there were wise men and good men numbered in the organization, and that church declared, about the middle of the sixteenth century, in its homily on the peril of idolatry, as follows:

"Laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children of whole Christendom—an horrible and most dreadful thing to think—have been at once drowned in abominable idolatry; of all other vices most detested of God, and most damnable to man; and that by the space of eight hundred years and more."

THE CHURCH OF GOD ESTABLISHED ANEW

That, I take it, is good testimony as to the actuality of the apostasy. We proclaim the restoration which the prophets of old said should follow the apostasy. The Church of Jesus Christ has been established upon the earth anew, through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith the Prophet and his immediate associates in the ministry. It is the Church of Jesus Christ brought to earth again, established anew as had been predicted, I repeat; and its mission is the preparation of the earth for the great consummation, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this restored church has been placed, by divine ministration and ordinance, the authority of the Lesser and of the Greater—or of the Aaronic and of the Melchizedek Priesthoods, with the several offices thereof and the several duties, responsibilities and powers pertaining to each office as of old.

THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT

That it was and is something new, and yet something old, as it is in fact eternal, was set forth by the Lord in a revelation given in April, 1830, just after the organization of the Church. There were people who had joined other churches. Many of them had been and were devout. They had been baptized, some of them by sprinkling and some of them by pouring, but they called it baptism, and some of them by immersion; and they raised the question as to whether they could not become members of this Church now by application and profession of faith alone, affirming that it was unjust that they should be required to be baptized again. In this claim they plainly forgot that the outward form of baptism can be performed by anybody, but that baptism as an ordinance acceptable unto the Lord requires the power and the authority of the Priesthood which he has given. Therefore the Lord said:

“Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.

“Wherefore, although a man should be baptized an hundred times it availeth him nothing, for you cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses, neither by your dead works.

“For it is because of your dead works that I have caused this last covenant and this Church to be built up unto me, even as in days of old.

“Wherefore, enter ye in at the gate, as I have commanded.”

I have read from Section 22 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Isn't that in line with the declaration our Lord made while he talked in the flesh, even the Christ, known as Jesus of Nazareth, who was acknowledged as a marvelous prophet whose teachings were full of wisdom? On one occasion, amidst circumstances which the rest of the chapter will give unto you, he spoke these words recorded in the 9th Chapter of Matthew, beginning with the sixteenth verse:

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

The Judaism of that day was a travesty on the law that God had given. Many believed in part of what Christ said, but they wanted to tack it on to the Judaism of the day; they wanted to make the word of God conform to their philosophy, or with their sophistry, or with their man-made precepts, and the Lord warned them: Do not put a new piece of cloth on the old garment, it will tear it away and make a more hideous rent than there was before. Do not put that newly fermenting juice into old leathern bags, for that was the nature of the bottles of that day. You know how quickly old leather breaks. Don't put it into such bottles, for the fermentation will burst the bottles and the good wine will be lost and the bottles will be entirely ruined. There was to be no compromise with the semi-pagan doctrines of the day, nor was there to be any compromise between the principles of the gospel of Christ and the teachings of men not conforming therewith, the doctrines of men that have been evolved in the minds of men without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit—no compromise!

THIS CHURCH LED BY REVELATION AND INSPIRATION FROM HEAVEN

We are tolerant, tolerant in the extreme. We grant unto every man the right to worship after his own conscience, even as we claim it; but we do not compromise by the acceptance of the views of men in an attempt to mingle them with the doctrine of Christ, and call it all the word of God. The Lord has spoken and is speaking. I bear you solemn testimony that ever since the reestablishment of the Church in 1830, this Church of Jesus Christ has been led by inspiration and revelation from the heavens. This is the day in which you witness such. The Lord is not leaving his Church to itself. He is speaking in the ways best known to him, and inspiring and leading those whom you sustain as your leaders. Follow them and be safe. May the Lord be with us in carrying out the determination for a better life which we have formed in this conference, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

PETER'S ADVICE TO THE SAINTS OF OLD

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.