

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

"Then Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my work, then are ye my disciples indeed;

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

IN DEFENSE OF THE MISSION OF JESUS CHRIST

We have heard during this conference from a number of the speakers concerning the condition that prevails throughout the world; a condition of unbelief in the mission of Jesus Christ and a division among those who profess to follow him. Some of those who have spoken at this conference have read from the Scriptures wherein the prophets of old refer to the condition which should prevail in the dispensation of the fullness of times. One of the speakers this afternoon read from the Book of Mormon certain prophecies concerning the latter days, which prophecies are very dear to me. In fact, as I read this volume of Scripture I am impressed more and more with its sacredness, with the message which it contains in defense of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gospel which has been restored in the dispensation of the fulness of times for the salvation of souls. This record endears itself to me more and more day by day as I see unfolded the fulfillment of prophecies uttered by these prophets who now speak from the dead, and from the dust to the nations of the earth, crying unto them repentance, and calling upon them to believe in Christ.

PROPHECY CONCERNING CONDITIONS THAT WOULD PREVAIL

I am going to read one or two other verses from a prophecy that was uttered several hundred years before the coming of Christ, concerning conditions that would prevail in the world in this our day:

"For the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger, and perish;

"For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

"And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.

"Yea, they are grasped with death, and hell; and death, and hell, and the devil, and all that have been siezed therewith must stand before the throne of God, and be judged according to their works, from whence they must go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment."

THE MISSION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

That is the condition we find in the world today, just as Nephi declared it should be; but the mission of the Latter-day Saints is to

preach Christ and him crucified. The passage from the 8th chapter of John is a key by which we may know the truth, and by which we may walk in the light and in the understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, neither faltering, nor turning to the right hand nor to left, but pursuing our steady course in righteousness and in truth, in full knowledge that Christ lives and that he has spoken, that he has revealed the power of the Priesthood, that he has organized his Church, and that there is salvation upon the face of the earth for all who will repent and receive the gospel. We shall know the truth if we will only do his will, and the truth will make us free. There is no virtue in doubt. The man who doubts concerning the principles of the gospel, the revelations of the Lord, the plan of salvation, is unfortunate. There is no reason for it, because as I have said, the key has been given unto us by which the door may be unlocked to knowledge so that men may say: "I know," and all doubt is removed.

CONCERNING DOUBTS AND DOUBTING

I have been very grateful to the Lord for one blessing that I have received that I suppose was born with me, and that is the blessing of faith in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in his mission. I do not doubt. I have always accepted fully, and received the inspiration, I believe, through the Spirit of the Lord, that these things are true, and I hope that I may always walk in the light, that I may always possess this spirit and this understanding. I know there are those even among us who are not so fortunate, they do have doubts arise in their minds, they are troubled at times. Many things pertaining to the dispensation in which we live, the revelations of the Lord, are to them mysterious, they cannot square them with other things that they have heard, or perhaps accepted, which are given through the spirit of man. The safe course is to follow the revelations of the Lord. It matters not what men have said, it matters not what they may teach in their own wisdom, if that is in conflict with the revelations of the Lord we need not accept it, for we have, as has been pointed out: "The more sure word of prophecy," by which we need not stumble nor falter nor be in doubt. Occasionally some one arises who feels that it is his duty to inform the world that the old members of the Church are still faithful in the doctrines that were taught by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and by President Brigham Young, but that the rising generation is departing from such things, that the children of these fathers are turning from the teachings of their fathers, as they put it. I am here to testify that this is not true. There may be, of course, and are, those among us who are not faithful, who do turn from the footsteps of their fathers. It has always been so. We may expect that in some cases it will continue, but so far as the Latter-day Saints are concerned, the majority of them will not turn from the faith of their fathers. It is not destined that such should be the case, for when this gospel was restored the Lord declared through his servants who

came from the heavens with the message of salvation, that the gospel was restored for the last time, and that it must grow and increase and the knowledge grow and spread until it shall fill the whole earth. That is the destiny of the thing the world calls "Mormonism." So they are wrong in their conclusions when they expect the children to depart from the teachings of their fathers.

Now to return to the question of doubt, and the testimony of the truth: I desire to read to you a few passages upon this point which I consider to be significant and worthy of consideration. These words were uttered in the early years of the organization of the Church:

"As faith, then, is the principle by which the heavenly hosts perform their works, and by which they enjoy all their felicity, we might expect to find it set forth in a revelation from God as the principle upon which his creatures here below must act in order to obtain the felicities enjoyed by the saints in the eternal world."—*Lectures on Faith*, 7:6.

"And again:

"Let us here observe that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not sought, nor will he seek, his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.

"It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God, and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they, in like manner, offer unto him the same sacrifice, and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him.

"It was in offering sacrifices that Abel, the first martyr, obtained knowledge that he was accepted of God. And from the days of righteous Abel to the present time, the knowledge that men have that they are accepted in the sight of God is obtained by offering sacrifice. And in the last days, before the Lord comes, he is to gather together his saints who have made covenant with him by sacrifice. (Psalm 1, 3, 4, 5': 'Our God shall come and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'

"Those, then, who make sacrifice, will have the testimony that their course is pleasing in the sight of God; and those who have this testimony will have faith to lay hold on eternal life, and will be enabled, through faith, to endure unto the end, and receive the crown that is laid up for them that love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I would like to read all of this, but I will only take certain parts of it:

"But those who have not made this sacrifice to God do not know that the course which they pursue is well pleasing in his sight; for whatever may be their belief or their opinion it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty in their mind; and where doubt and uncertainty are, there faith is not, nor can it be. For doubt and faith do not exist in the same person at the same time; so that persons whose minds are under doubts and fears cannot have unshaken confidence; and where unshaken confidence is not, there faith is weak; and where faith is weak the person will not be able to contend against all opposition, tribulations, and afflictions which they will have to encounter in order to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; and they will grow weary in their minds, and the adversary will have power over them and destroy them."—*Lectures on Faith*, 6:7-12.

MEANING OF SACRIFICE

I believe that to be true, and let me add that in these passages that I have read, the term "Sacrifice" does not mean that we are to inflict punishment upon ourselves. It does not mean that we are to be persecuted, or to deprive ourselves of comforts and blessings; of mortal life, not in the least, but that we are willing to place upon the altar all things, even our lives, for the kingdom of God, and that we will accept in fulness all the principles of the gospel and put them into practice. Sacrifice of the world? Yes, if you want to call it such, and the things of the world, to a concentration of the mind and action upon the things of the kingdom of God, and therefore again I repeat that he who will do the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine. All doubt will be removed from the mind of the faithful believer, and he will stand in perfect light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He will be able to declare unto all the world: "I know, for God through his holy Spirit has revealed it unto me." That is the privilege of every member of this Church, and where a man doubts the truth then there is evidence, as it has been pointed out, that he has not accepted in his heart the fulness of the gospel, or he has not put it into practice to its fulness, and therefore has not reaped the benefits and blessings which otherwise would be his. We stand firmly for the truth in the face of the conditions now prevailing in the world, and teach mankind, and call upon them to repent of their sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That all men may repent and accept him as the Redeemer of the world, the Only Begotten Son of God, I pray, for his is the only name given under heaven by which we may be saved. This is my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

ELDER REED SMOOT'S HEALTH AND LABORS

I rejoice in the very wonderful attendance we have had today in this building, and in the Assembly Hall, and regret that we do not have accommodations for those who have been upon the ground. I have been made happy in the testimonies that have been borne thus far