

Knowing that in the not far distant future I must stand in the presence of my Maker to give an account of the days I have spent upon the earth and realizing how serious it might be to me if I did not speak the truth, I testify to you that I know as I know that I live that this is God's work, and I bear witness of it in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

There came a time, in the life of Paul, when he found the Church beset with just such difficulties as have been referred to as existing, in some instances, with some members of the Church today, and to his associate in the ministry, Timothy, he said:

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

On another occasion it is recorded in Matthew that:

"There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

THE GIFT OF GOD WITHIN US

Christ regarded the bestowal of the Holy Ghost upon the membership of the Church, as the fundamentally important thing he could do for them after he had concluded his own personal ministry. He would not even allow the apostles to go forth and preach without that endowment from on high; but after the Holy Ghost was come he would fully qualify them to understand the truth, he would endow them with power to preach it. And what a marvelous change came over the lives of these men when they were endowed with this power from on high!

The membership of this Church have received that same companionship. How important it is for us today, as perhaps never before, to stir up the gift of God that is in us, that has been given us through the putting on of the hands of those authorized servants of God, that we, by the guidance of that holy inspiration, may be able in these troublesome times, as has been so well stated here this afternoon, to enjoy the gift of discernment, to see and understand the spirits that are in the world.

LEST YE BE DECEIVED

In the forty-sixth section of the book of Doctrine and Covenants I read the following:

"But ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not

be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are of men, and others of devils.

"Wherefore, beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;

"For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts."

SEEK SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

I believe, as I have observed, that there has never been a time when we needed spiritual guidance as we need it today. This is truly a time when the wisdom of the wise has perished in material things, and the understanding of the prudent is hid. I am sure that the Lord gave the gift and power of the Holy Ghost to the membership of the Church for their guidance and comfort in all things, even as he has indicated in the revelation I have just read.

I believe that it is the privilege of the membership of this Church to seek that guidance, even in material things. There is a key given in the ninth section of the book of Doctrine and Covenants, which would be very profitable for the Latter-day Saints to follow even now. You remember the circumstance of Oliver Cowdery translating portions of the Book of Mormon, and then all became darkness to him and he could not proceed. He inquired of the Lord to know why it was, and the answer came that he had taken no thought save it was to ask the Lord, and left the burden of responsibility there.

"Behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.

"But if it be not right, you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong"—

that shall turn your heart away from the thing that you had contemplated.

You do not know what to do today to solve your financial problems, what to plant, whether to buy or sell cattle, sheep or other things. It is your privilege to study it out; counsel together with the best wisdom and judgment the Lord shall give you, reach your conclusions, and then go to the Lord with it, tell him what you have planned to do. If the thing you have planned to do is for your good and your blessing, and you are determined to serve the Lord, pay your tithes and your offerings and keep his commandments, I promise you that he will fulfil that promise upon your head, and your bosom shall burn within you if the thing you have planned to do is right, and you shall know by the whisperings of the Spirit that it is right. But if it is not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought, and your hearts will be turned away from that thing.

DECEPTIONS OF THE ADVERSARY

I know of nothing today that the Latter-day Saints need more than the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the solution of the problems

of life. I know also that that same unerring wisdom of the Holy Spirit can detect the deceptions of the adversary. I have been led recently to feelings of pity for groups of people who have been deceived by lying tongues, by deceptive spirits.

I was in Independence the other day with Brother Bennion, visiting the mission, and stood by a foundation that has been partly made and has been filled with earth as the rains have been washing in the excavations. I conversed with groups of people who claimed to have received revelations to build a temple there, and had now come to confusion, split up and divided. Across the lot is a large building, partly completed, erected by another group who claim they have had visions and revelations, and they are in the midst of confusion, doubt and uncertainty.

As I look back over the history of this Church, I find that the Prophet himself had to rise up against those who sought to displace him. When Brigham Young became President of this Church he said: "Let any who want to lead a party away do so, and raise their hand against God's authority. They will not prosper." His words have been fulfilled. Whether it is in connection with those factions that have broken away and gone off to Texas, or anywhere else; they have come to naught, and they will come to naught. Those who broke away in this country, under the name of Morrisites, or Godbeites, or any other "ites"—what has become of them? Oh, that men and women would be wise enough to see what will happen to those who seek to steady the ark!

The Lord promised long ago that the majority of the leadership of this Church never would lead this people astray, and they never will, and they are not leading this people astray today. Every faction that rises will come to naught, just as sure as you and I live.

How my soul rejoices to see this work progressing, developing, going forward, although there are these deceptions. Yes, the elect would be deceived, if it were possible, by the miraculous things that sometimes appear among others. There were those, in the days of Christ, who healed the sick and followed not after him, and some of the disciples wanted to know if they should not rebuke and restrain these who were thus manifesting certain power. Christ told them to leave them alone; they were not competitors of his.

It does not disturb me to see evidences of this character today elsewhere, because here is the light, here is the truth, here is the power of God, and here is the authority of the holy priesthood. I am sure that every Latter-day Saint who is observing the commandments of the Lord, not seeking for these things, to consume them upon his own lusts, will have witnesses and testimonies of the Holy Spirit that will guide him to detect the falsehoods, to detect the deceptions that are at work.

USING NEW METHODS

We are in a period of peace, so far as the Church is concerned, from the outside. You who have been attending these Conferences

now for the last few years have been hearing the warning from this stand, that when the time of peace came to the Church, and there was no enemy from the outside, we should not be lulled into a sense of security, feeling that the battles were all fought and won, and that the enemy had quit the field; for he would pursue new methods in seeking to destroy this work. He has not succeeded in injuring it by mob violence.

I went over part of the trail with Brother Bennion the other day, where Zion's camp traveled during the Missouri troubles. I stood at the spot where the Prophet, chained, uttered that great rebuke to the guards; I stood at the shrine erected to General Doniphan, who was ordered to execute the Prophet, but had the courage and manhood to refuse to do it. As I contemplated the struggles and sorrows and difficulties and the journeys and the hardships of the hundred years, my soul rejoiced that under all these trials the Church was not shaken. There stood men and women in its ranks with clear vision, with understanding, and with determination to stand or to die for the truth. They stood like beaten anvils, unafraid, and have preserved to us our heritage, blessings and privileges of faith and standing in the true Church until this hour.

But the enemy is not arraying persecution against us from the outside just now. Nevertheless, he is at work, seeking to deceive within, for he will by new methods try to destroy this people; but he shall not succeed any more than he succeeded through persecution or mob violence. I am sure that the great heart of this Church is sound, that we are of a sound mind, and that there is no fear for Zion, for her future is glorious.

A PERIOD OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

My visit to two missions since the last Conference inspired me with the thought of great things that are to come to this Church. We have not begun to die, but we are entering into a period of growth and development that will be extended, and thousands, yea, countless thousands of the blood of Israel who have not yet been touched, will be found. God is opening the work among the nations of the earth. More people have been listening to our messages than ever before. Places are being thronged, and I see him at work preparing for the fulfilment of his great purposes, for Zion shall arise and shine, and those who seek to stop her progress will be as helpless as the dogs that bark; while the Church, the mighty caravan of God, goes on majestically towards its destiny. No power can retard its progress.

The only fear that I have is for us as individuals. The work will go on. It will succeed. It will fulfil its holy purposes. The great secret is, shall I keep the light burning clearly in my own soul, to see and understand the course that I am to take; that shall keep me on the good ship Zion, and not fall overboard or run off with some whim or will or notion of someone else.

MEN OF GOD

I declare to you, with all sincerity of heart, that I know, personally, that the declarations that President Grant made concerning the honor, the integrity and the faithfulness and devotion of these leaders, are true. I know it. They are men of God. They are not living double lives. They are living what they have taught the Latter-day Saints to live, and thank the Lord you know it. We don't need to argue it with you, for you have a witness, a testimony in your hearts, that convinces you that it is the truth.

Yes, glorious things await Zion, and the evil one knows it, and he will try, if possible, to stop the work, try to divide our ranks. He will try to disturb us, but he shall not succeed. These little disturbances will pass. The work will go on. God's glorious purposes will be accomplished. I am as sure of it as I am that I live. I bear witness and testimony of it to you this day, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me, my brethren and sisters, to find that my feelings are in complete harmony with those expressed by the speakers in this Conference, both this forenoon and this afternoon. I know that they have spoken the truth, that they have counseled us in righteousness, and if we will obey this counsel our lives will be happier and we will be more secure in our salvation.

MEN OF GOD

I have known all of the Presidents of the Church except the Prophet Joseph Smith. I was sixteen years of age when President Brigham Young died. I have been personally acquainted with his successors, and with many of the noble men of this Church who have been associated with them in the conduct of the affairs of the Church.

I have seen the work prosper and grow, and truth triumph, and I know that these men have been men of God, including those who stand at the head of the Church today. I am glad to be associated with them and to be in harmony with them, because I know they are worthy servants of God; I know that they are trying to live their religion, to live by the principles and the doctrines which they teach. I hope that you will not discover in my remarks anything that would lead you to think otherwise than that I am in complete harmony with them.

I want to say that although I did not have the privilege of knowing the Prophet Joseph here in the flesh, yet I know, just as well, that he was a prophet of God, divinely called and inspired, and the work which he brought forth is evidence of that fact.

SEEKING SALVATION

I know that the Gospel is true. I have proved it from many