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Dear Brethren, Sisters, and Listeners:

INDIVIDUAL REVELATION

Recently I was asked if I thought the Lord would not have something to say to the people of the Church at this Conference, of course through his prophets. "If there was ever a time when divine revelation was needed, it is now," my questioner remarked. Apparently he did not have in mind one of our fundamental doctrines relative to revelation. It was stated by President Joseph F. Smith in these words:

"The spirit of inspiration, the gift of revelation, does not belong to one man solely; it is not a gift that pertains to the Presidency of the Church and the Twelve Apostles alone. It is not confined to the presiding authorities of the Church; * * * and it is the right and privilege of every man, every woman, and every child who has reached the years of accountability, to enjoy the spirit of revelation. * * * It is the privilege of every individual member of the Church to have revelation for his own guidance, for the direction of his life and conduct—" (Gospel Doctrine, page 42).

In further explanation, President Smith said,

"Every individual in the Church has the right to enjoy the spirit of revelation—for his own good—to exercise these gifts and these privileges in the conduct of his own affairs, in bringing up his children in the way they should go, and in the management of his farm, his flocks, his herds and the management of his business" (Gospel Doctrine, page 43).

These truths relative to revelation are generally understood by the Latter-day Saints but they are also sometimes forgotten. Is it not greatly encouraging, however, to know that we may get light and wisdom from God our Father to guide us aright in solving our individual problems and to help us in our private affairs? If we can be so fortunate as to have wisdom enough to manage well our personal affairs and to carry acceptably our particular responsibilities, why should we worry about revelations to the Church?

REVELATION TO THE CHURCH

Respecting this type of revelation, President Smith said on another occasion:

"So far as I know there is not an ordinance of the Church now enjoyed or practiced that was not revealed to the Church by the Prophet Joseph Smith. I know of no new doctrine that has been revealed. Principles that were revealed to the Prophet Joseph have grown and developed more fully and clearly to the understanding; but we have received nothing new that I know of." (Gospel Doctrine, page 43).

But on another occasion in speaking on this same subject, President Smith said:

"There is a great deal that has been revealed that has not yet been lived up to, I assure you. There is a great deal yet remaining to be learned. * * * There is a great deal that has been revealed through the Prophet Joseph and his

associates that the people have not yet received in their hearts, and have not yet become converted to as they should. When we obey and are capable of observing the precepts of the Gospel and the laws of God and the requirements of heaven, which have already been revealed, * * * then there are other things still greater yet to be revealed to the people of God." (Gospel Doctrine, page 44.)

Weak as we are, disobedient as we are, hard hearted and stubborn as we are, I wonder if it would not be more becoming of us to fear new revelation than to desire it. Of course we believe "God will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to" his kingdom. But I fear that we are not yet ready for or worthy of the revelation of these things. What do you think about it? .

But of course we do believe in continuous revelation, in the doctrine that God lives and that he reveals his will to worthy individuals who believe in him and who obey his commandments. Especially do we believe that God makes known his mind and will concerning the Church, its membership and the world generally through his prophet, the President of the Church. At this point let me illustrate my meaning by an example.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS QUOTED

In the Christmas edition of the *Deseret News*, December 19, 1931, the First Presidency of the Church published their "Christmas Greetings." May I read some excerpts from these Greetings?

"With the coming of Christmastide and the dawning of a new year, we are confronted with a bankrupt world—a world in which the nations, as well as individuals, find themselves fettered with the bonds of debt. A universal depression exists, the like of which has never before prevailed under similar conditions.

"With banks overburdened with money, thousands of honest toilers are unable to pay the grocer. With elevators bursting with wheat, industrial workers are without bread. With warehouses over-stocked with sugar which cannot be sold, children cry for the sweets which they so much crave but cannot procure."

And the Greetings continue:

"The prophet Isaiah, referring to the age in which we live, tells us that a time of tribulation will come from which none shall escape. He says: 'It shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with the master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.'"

And then the Greetings continue with these cheering words:

"Notwithstanding the confusion which at the present prevails in this world of ours, we have much to be thankful for, and we can look confidently to brighter days."

But what are the conditions? They are clearly stated in the Greetings as follows:

"If the people of the world will turn to God, and acknowledge His Son, our Redeemer; if each citizen of our country will put away selfishness, strife and bitterness; if men who enact our laws will be governed by the necessities of all of the people, and not of a favored few; if every citizen will pledge himself to rigidly observe the laws, and uphold the men who frame and execute them—"

Then what will happen if these conditions are all fulfilled? Listen, I beg of you, to the glorious promises of the Greetings:

"The sun of prosperity will shine again, and peace and plenty will prevail from the rivers to the ends of the earth."

But what if these conditions are not fulfilled and we continue as we have been doing? I reply in the language of the Greetings:

"If the extravagant expenditure of money by our government, our states, our counties, and municipalities, and citizens, as it has prevailed during the past few years, is to continue; if heavier burdens of taxation are to be saddled upon the people; if murders, robberies, racketeering, the appointment or election of dishonest men to office, and other violations of the law are to go unpunished—"

Then what will be the consequences? Hear, I pray you, these fateful words of the Greetings:

"Chaos must be our inevitable heritage."

To all of you who are looking for or desire the word of the Lord applied to the conditions of this very hour, I most earnestly commend these Greetings. And may I remind you that the document, part of which I have just read, was signed by the Presidency of this Church, Heber J. Grant and Anthony W. Ivins, who are mouthpieces of God to this people. And do not forget, I beg of you, that President Grant holds all the keys, authority, rights and powers of the holy priesthood that were ever given to any man that lived upon the earth.

And so to me these Greetings are an expression of God's will to us, to the world. They are in very deed a revelation of his will to the Church, as authoritative and as scriptural as any passages in the Holy Bible. Extravagant claims, do you say? Well, they state my deep and honest convictions relative to this point.

HOW TO WIN THE FAVOR OF THE LORD

And what must we do to win God's favor in order that "the sun of prosperity shall shine again," a desideratum for which all the world is longing? Let us read the document over and over until the conditions are unforgettably impressed upon our memories. Briefly paraphrased, we must observe the two great commandments and make the Golden Rule the actual motto of our lives.

CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

Why are we, the country, the world, in our present fix? Because we have forgotten and disobeyed our Creator and God. The words in the Greetings are my scriptural authority for this declaration. My thinking leads me irresistibly to the conclusions expressed in the document.

In this "depression" the people as a whole are perhaps not unjustly suffering. We live in a world governed by law. There are so-called natural laws—divine laws—as well as human laws. A violation of law entails, in justice, a recompense. Hence, we suffer, in general, not because God whimsically afflicts us, but because of violation of some kind

of law or laws. The idea I have in mind is related to the declaration in Section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 20-21.

"There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated."

It follows, of course, that if we violate law we shall have to suffer the consequences. Justice requires this.

We live in a world of plenty—there is plenty of food, plenty of clothing and shelter or the means of making them; yet there are millions of God's children who are hungry, ragged, and cold at this very moment. And why? Many reasons can be given, but in the last analysis, they are reducible to one—selfishness. And through his servants, the Lord lays down as one condition for the return of prosperity the elimination of selfishness in our inter-relations.

Of the many "cures" for the "depression" that I have read, except the one just quoted, not one is based upon unselfishness. In fact, selfishness appears to be the most prominent characteristic of most of these "cures" and for that reason none of them will "cure." God's inspired servants have made this plain, and reason, too, tells the thoughtful that they are right.

UNSELFISHNESS THE CURE

The return of peace, happiness, and prosperity to all the people demands a basis of stability. But this can never be until all who are able to work have work to do, until there is a job for everyone. And a workable plan that will provide a job for everyone at a living wage, must have unselfishness as its outstanding characteristic. I can find no logical escape from this conclusion. And so far as I can see, no workable plan can go into effect until our political, financial, economic, industrial and labor leaders get together around a council table and agree. If this is true, why do they not do it? Selfishness is the answer. And selfishness will always be a controlling factor until the two great commandments are dominant in the minds and hearts of men. We demand that the federal government reduce expenses and balance the budget. And have you observed that every proposition made in Washington to reduce federal expenses in Utah meets with our violent protest? We wish the government to reduce expenses elsewhere but to increase them in Utah. Why? Is not selfishness the answer?

And we want the budget balanced. This means the government must raise more money. How? The only way seems to be by some form of increased taxation, but we protest every suggestion to increase our taxes. Apparently we are far, very far, from a willingness to live the "Golden Rule." We are willing for the other fellow to be taxed, but protest being taxed ourselves.

BANK FAILURES

Let me give you another illustration, a delicate one I admit. There

have been many bank failures in this intermountain country during the past year. The closing was due in most cases, probably, to a "run on the bank." Now of course when we think a little about the matter it is clear that no bank can immediately give back to depositors all their money. Some of it is always loaned out on time accounts, and borrowers are not able to pay on demand. Hence if all the depositors make a run on a bank they will inevitably force it to close. Now what causes a run? Selfishness, of course. If the bank is in distress, let the other fellow lose. I want my money and so rush after it, hoping to beat the other fellow to the bank. If in this matter all depositors were to live the Golden Rule there would be few, if any, losers and few, if any, bank closings. This is a self-evident fact.

THE EIGHTEENTH AMENDMENT

Another illustration: Certain powerful interests in the United States are carrying on an intensive campaign, designed to nullify or eliminate the 18th amendment to the constitution of the United States. Vast amounts of money, it is said, are behind the active but deceptive propaganda to effect this result. And why do some people want the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors again legalized? Once more I assert, selfishness is the dominating motive. Selfishness is at the bottom of all law violation, of depravity, and crime. And if selfishness shall continue as the ruling motive in human affairs, chaos will result. This is the conclusion of the Greetings.

Some people are simple enough to believe that legalizing the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors in the United States will bring back prosperity to the country. Are England and Germany prosperous? As well say a man can lift himself by his boot straps. Can a country drink itself into prosperity by imbibing narcotic beverages? Reason stands aghast at such a proposition. And the fact that the governing board of a powerful local organization gives support to such an idea does not rob it of its absurdity. Further, 2.75% beer cannot be made and sold in this country without violation of the 18th amendment, because 2.75% beer is intoxicating, a fact unquestionably established by scientific investigations. (See *How to Live*, p. 366.)

THE LORD'S WAY BEST

Now the sooner we believe the Lord's way is the best way, the better it will be for us, the country and the world. It is not only the best way, it is the only way to secure permanent prosperity. If we do not accept this truth and act accordingly we shall continue to suffer, for the Lord will not be mocked. His prophets have spoken.

May the Lord give us eyes to see, hearts to feel, minds to understand and wills to do, so that the clouds of adversity shall roll away, the sun of prosperity shall shine again, and peace and plenty shall prevail "from the rivers to the ends of the earth," I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.