

You fathers and mothers are not living for yourselves any longer; you are living for your children. Then express in good deeds, in the making of good laws your desire to have your children protected by every safeguard, and ere long the Millennium, whose sun is already brightening the hills of coming time, will dawn upon us and peace and joy shall be in every heart, and the Redeemer shall reign from the rivers to the ends of the earth. War shall be abolished. God hasten that day, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER MELVIN J. BALLARD

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

On one occasion the Master, speaking, as you will find it recorded in Matthew 7th Chapter, 21st verse, said "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

LEARNING OF GOD'S WILL ESSENTIAL

I regard it as the responsibility of every man and woman who has the holy privilege of dwelling upon this earth, provided by someone who gives us our life, our being and existence in this world, to learn the purposes of the Almighty in placing us here, to learn the will of God, and to do it. Apparently it is difficult, however, for men in this age to interpret the will of God. In past times it has been clearly understood; however, now there is misunderstanding and that will has been confused. No one will dispute the right of the Creator to determine the terms under which men have their right of living in this world and also in a world that is to come. Under our law we grant to any person who holds property the right to set up in a will the terms under which children or heirs may inherit. No matter how much we may disagree with the conditions we cannot inherit unless we subscribe to the terms of the will. So, no matter how much we ourselves may disagree with the will of the Almighty he has the right to set up the terms, and he that attempts in any other way to inherit shall be regarded as a thief and a robber.

As I have said, the difficulty is that men do not understand the will. It is confused by the multitudes who seek to interpret it, one saying, lo, this is the way, and another some other way; and so hundreds of institutions claiming to represent the Lord and interpret his will confuse the minds of men. I regard every word that Jesus Christ gave men as essential for their proper understanding of the will and purposes of the Lord. I believe that Jesus Christ preached at least a thousand sermons. He was constantly at work and that would have been no more than an average of a sermon a day. I cannot think of a single utterance that fell from his lips that is not important to the understanding of men in this day, as well as in the day when it was given. Unfortunately we do not

have all these precious words. They were not recorded until years after they were uttered. These gospels were compiled many years afterward, and only out of the dim memory of 30 or 40, and in some instances 60 years, was the story that Christ gave men recorded. If we eliminate the duplication of that story, all that Jesus gave us, so far as it is recorded, could be confined to seventeen pages of the New Testament. This could be read in an hour and fifteen minutes.

And then there are the addresses of the apostles who made clear many questions concerning which men's minds are now confused and we have only fragments of these addresses.

AUTHORITY TO INTERPRET DIVINE WILL PROVIDED

It was the design and the purpose of the Almighty to leave someone on the earth to interpret his will and to execute it. If you discover that the will of your father or your grandfather names you as an heir, you must secure your interest and enter into it in the proper way. You cannot subscribe to the terms of the will in the presence of your friends and then possess the property. You must go before a competent judge, one with the authority to represent the dead owner or maker of the will, and in his presence conform to the terms of the will, and he gives you the right and title in behalf of the original owner who has passed away.

Just as this is true in the affairs of men it is also true in the things of God. There must be someone who can properly interpret and legally execute the will of God. It was clear in the minds of the Apostles that they were vested with the right and authority to represent the Master. And these twelve men whom he called and selected also had authority to execute his will. For this reason Paul said in Ephesians, Chapter 4, Verses 11 to 13:

And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith.

Here was authority appointed to interpret the will, so that one should not say "I am of Paul," and another "I am of Apollos." Is Christ divided? No! He himself said once to those who followed him that if they were not one they were not his; and he earnestly prayed that they might be one.

But we know that these apostles were taken by death, and we also know that they left no successors. I know that here is a controversial point.

AUTHORITY NOT BESTOWED UPON SUCCESSORS

I desire to repeat what I said in this pulpit August 12, 1928, and for twenty-five years have been proclaiming. (Brother B. H. Roberts used effectively a similar argument in 1931 in his radio address.) The men of that generation knew more, far more, about what Christ intended and what the apostles actually did than we know from the witness and testi-

mony of the Twelve themselves. I propose to show that the authority vested in the Twelve, with three of them at their head—Peter, James and John—was not bestowed upon successors. First of all, if Peter did go to Rome and establish a branch of the Church and appointed the first Bishop as his (Peter's) successor in the apostleship he would have told his associates of the Twelve about it. There is no record that he made any such reference. He did come back and tell them those very remarkable circumstances under which the Gospel went to the Gentiles and every other circumstance of importance, but of this more important matter—far more important for his associates in the Twelve to know about, that he had appointed a successor to himself to whom they must look—he made no such explanation and reference. So I reach the conclusion that the Twelve did not know or recognize these Bishops of Rome as Peter's successors. Neither did the people of the Church, because following the death of Peter the Church looked to the surviving apostles, and the last of these was John the Beloved, and though he was banished on the Isle of Patmos they still looked to him. They sought him and rescued him and brought him back, and he went from church to church and they heard his word as the very word of God. They did not recognize the Bishops of Rome as Peter's successors, but this John, the surviving apostle.

JOHN RECOGNIZED AS THE LEADER

The Lord himself did not recognize these Bishops of Rome as Peter's successors, but he did recognize his surviving apostle John who, as one of the Presidency, held the keys of the kingdom with his associates Peter and James; for upon the Isle of Patmos the revelations of the Lord were given to this apostle setting forth the will of God to the churches of Asia, and showing what should come to pass in the last days.

Now do not understand that I do not regard these Bishops of Rome as good men in the Church of Christ. The first Bishop of Rome, a local officer, was Saint Linus who presided from the year 67 to the year 79 after Christ. He was succeeded by St. Cletus. He presided from 79 to 91 over that local branch of the Church. He was succeeded by Saint Clement, the first, who presided from the year 91 to the year 100 after Christ. They were faithful, good men in the Church of Christ, local officers but not Peter's successors or presiding officers over the Church. And this John outlived all three of these Bishops of Rome and was still upon the earth when they were dead and gone. The Church and God recognized him as the leader, the last of all the apostles, and no one sets up a claim, so far as I know, of authority coming to them from this John. It is necessary to dispose of him in order to bring these Bishops into a place of presiding authority.

RESTORATION OF AUTHORITY ESSENTIAL

This leads me to say therefore that it was essential, since those who had the authority to interpret the will of God and to execute it had

passed away, to reestablish it upon the earth. It has been the proclamation of this Church now for more than one hundred years that the holy apostleship that was once given by the Master to the disciples of old has been restored. We proclaim that in this generation Peter, James and John did come to the earth and lay their hands upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and bestowed upon them the holy apostleship with all of its rights and authority; and that every man who has been ordained an apostle in this Church, each and all of them, has received his authority in an unbroken chain back to those who held the keys from the Master himself; and further that one hundred years ago last month the Council of Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ was once again established in the earth. From that day until this they have been officiating with the right and the authority to interpret the will of God. These volumes that I hold in my hand, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, contain those precious things which Jesus once gave to men that were not recorded and have been given again. He has made clear his will by these revelations.

I do not stand with my associates to claim that we are perfect men at all, but I know these men from President Grant down to the last of those who hold the holy apostleship, and I know they are men who have the love of God in their hearts. We may have our imperfections, but I know that the inspiration of the Almighty vindicates our claim. Those former apostles of Christ, most of them from the humble walks of life, were lifted up by the power of their holy calling to become giants in the earth and their words of wisdom are quoted and shall be until the ends of time.

DELIVERANCE FROM PRESENT ILLS THROUGH OBEDIENCE

So, my brethren and sisters, the men who have led this Church claiming the right of the apostleship have shown a wisdom and power beyond the ordinary man. If this generation had listened to them we would have been in an age of peace, happiness, and brotherhood long before this time. I want to say to you Latter-day Saints, so near as we are to men bearing this holy authority, many of us have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not. I call upon you to listen to these men whom God has appointed to interpret his will and to execute it. There is no peace or safety for the Church except in following their leadership. God has vindicated them in the past, he is vindicating them today, and thus we are custodians of the sacred will of God and have the right and authority to speak in his name. We have no motive in our hearts except the love of men. In our hearts is the same love that was in the heart of him who loved men so much that he died for them. We have in our souls a desire to bless and not to curse; and especially you Latter-day Saints, whether you be rich or poor, I want you to know that in the hearts of these men there is no spirit to disregard the humblest of your wants or needs, and that if you will listen to their counsel in this conference as they shall be prompted and inspired to call your attention to matters of vital import-

ance, the needs of the hour, and follow that counsel, I promise you in the name of the Lord deliverance from your own difficulties and peace and safety and ultimately salvation in the kingdom of God. May he grant it to us through obedience to his divine authority reestablished in the earth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

May the Lord grant me his spirit while I stand before you. I recall a very important passage in that matchless sermon, the greatest of all sermons—the sermon delivered by the Saviour of the world upon the Mount. This particular passage seems to me to be all inclusive. Said he—“Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” It seems to me that this comprises the entire sermon, but what a wonderful undertaking it is to become perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. That is the true goal towards which every true follower of Christ should strive.

The difficulty in attaining his perfection is great, and sometimes people stand appalled at the very thought of it. Did the Lord really mean that we should become perfect? Do not accuse our Saviour of being guilty of folly or of teaching that which he did not expect to be followed.

There are two things that are positively essential to the attainment of that goal for, without them, it would be impossible. The Lord knowing this endowed us with those two things that we might become perfect. What are they? They are: First, “The Free Agency of Man” and second, “The Knowledge of Good and Evil.” They are fundamental with us. The Lord inspired the writer of the Declaration of Independence to put them into that wonderful document, wherein it declares that “all men are created equal and *have been endowed by their Creator* with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” These are the things that are essential to the attainment of perfection.

Let no one think that they constitute perfection, nor that the freedom of will—the power to think, to determine and to do the thing one wills is perfect salvation. It is not. Nevertheless these two things are positively essential to the attainment both of perfection and salvation itself; but whether we shall reach that goal or not depends entirely on the use we make of them. If, in the exercise of our free agency, we choose the good and reject the evil, we are surely preparing ourselves for salvation; but if on the contrary we choose the evil and reject the good, we are just as surely on our way to damnation.

These two things are God-given attributes. We inherited them from our divine parents. They are not the gift of any government—they are our inalienable rights with which we have been endowed