

secure the remission of our sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost which is the spirit of truth that leadeth unto all truth, and if we get it and keep it by right living, it will surely lead us to the "Tree of Life" which is the "Love of God" the fruit of which tree is sweet beyond all comparison. "The Tree of Life" is also known as the "Well of living water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14.)

Attaining to these heights means perfection.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

May the Lord safely pilot us into that haven of safety even the "Love of God" where perfection reigns supreme.—Amen.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers sang an anthem, "The Lord's Prayer," after which the benediction was pronounced by Elder Charles S. Clark, President of the Cassia Stake.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock.

FIRST DAY

AFTERNOON MEETING

The second session of the Conference commenced at 2 o'clock, Friday afternoon, April 5.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers furnished the music for this meeting.

The congregation joined with the Relief Society Singing Mothers in singing the hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder Richard C. May, President of the Minidoka Stake, offered the opening prayer.

An anthem, "The heavens are telling," was sung by the Relief Society Singing Mothers.

ELDER STEPHEN L. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I desire to speak on "Orthodoxy" or more definitely on the subject, "Being Orthodox."

I am led to believe that this subject is timely and of some general importance by many expressions which have reached me, coming from both young and mature people in the Church, which seem to indicate that there is something of an aversion to being considered orthodox. Not infrequently does one hear it said, "Yes, I am a member of the Church. I think it is all right, but I don't pretend to be orthodox."

TRUE DEFINITION OF ORTHODOXY

The manner of making such a statement, or others like it, usually carries the implication that the one who takes this position regards being

orthodox as something of a stigma or blot on his intelligence. He seems to think that orthodoxy is opposed to broadmindedness and indicates contraction of view. From the technical definition of the word, of course, this interpretation is erroneous. Orthodox means, "correct or sound in doctrine; holding the commonly accepted faith."

I am not, however, particularly concerned with the technical misinterpretation in the use of the term,—what interests me, and I believe it to be important, is the attitude on the part of members of our Church which prompts them to seemingly take some pride in the assertion that they do not hold to the "commonly accepted faith."

CLEAR THINKING NECESSARY

I can not help believing that much of this attitude results from misconception of Church doctrine and illogical thinking in consequence thereof. I feel sure that many who express skepticism are not really as skeptical as their talk would indicate, and that some who think themselves skeptical could easily remove their doubt by a little clear thinking. There is something else that both parties need which I will mention later.

Now what is requisite to be "correct and sound in the doctrine" of our Church? To what must we subscribe? In answer to this question I might, with propriety, quote the thirteen Articles of our Faith, which have stood as our guide for such a long period of time and which are so comprehensive and enlightening. But I am not going to do this. I am going to try to simplify and condense the answer. The answer I propose is this: Accept Christ and Joseph Smith. I mean, of course to accept the Savior for what he said he was, and likewise to accept Joseph Smith for what he said he was. If we can really do this, our doctrine will be orthodox.

INTELLIGENT BELIEF CONSISTENT

One can not accept the Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ without acknowledging the Eternal Fatherhood of God—nor the Father and the Son as revealed, without the Holy Ghost. There is certainly no consistency in accepting Christ as Lord, without accepting the whole of his Gospel as divine. I have never been able to understand how intelligent, educated men could reconcile the logic or illogic of accepting the authenticity of that portion of the record of the Savior which sets forth his incomparable teachings and philosophy, and at the same time, deny the correctness of the same record which proclaims his Divine Sonship and Lordship. What justification is there for credence in a part of the record and not all of it; or believing some of the things the Master said and not all that he said? I admit that it may be easier, in that it requires less faith, to accept some parts, rather than other parts, but from the standpoint of the authenticity and validity of the record itself, which is admittedly the source from which we obtain our knowledge and information of the Christ, how can one part be true

without all being true? To that question I have never been able to discover a satisfactory answer.

Then too, the part of the record which the so-called higher critics and some of our skeptical friends would discredit, while accepting other parts, is the most important and surely the most vital thing connected with the Redeemer's work and message.

TRUTH A REQUISITE

Was he what he said he was? I think all thoughtful persons must agree that the significance of his Lordship is infinitely greater than the ethics of his teachings. Of course, it is easier to believe in the Golden Rule than in the virgin birth or the transfiguration. We can understand the one far better than the other. It takes faith to accept the things we do not understand. Perhaps on that very account, they are of more importance and lasting benefit to us, because they require and develop faith which is the very genius and essence of the Savior's life, work and mission. No student of the scriptures, I believe, will deny that.

Perhaps it will not be too much of a digression from the theme to ask the question at this point: Why is it so difficult to accept things on faith? I think I can suggest an answer. It is because we are so conceited. Men of the world are in the world only because they adopt the philosophy of the world which is the philosophy of self sufficiency. It is not a humble philosophy—it is highly egotistical. It makes men themselves the arbiters of all things. They look to no higher source than themselves for the solution of all questions.

Such a philosophy is diametrically opposed to the philosophy of Christ which is that of faith. When men adopt his philosophy they are humble—they acknowledge an intelligence far superior to their own and they seek guidance and wisdom from that source. When they adopt the philosophy of faith, they come out of the world, for the world, as a term in theology is not a place but a condition or state of mind and feeling. It requires courage to come out of the world and adopt the philosophy of faith. Sometimes it subjects one to ridicule and the contempt of friends which are harder for most men to endure than physical pain; but because a thing is hard to do or hard to believe is no assurance that it is not right.

NOT HARD TO HAVE FAITH

I am one, however, who believes that it is not so hard for most people to have faith and accept spiritual realities if they will but let their minds and their native inclinations pursue their natural bent. I think that altogether too often we permit thinking complexes and sophisticated reasoning to warp our intuitive judgment and entammel the spontaneous feelings and emotions of our souls. So, when I prescribe the acceptance of Christ as a condition of orthodoxy, I mean an acceptance without reservation—a whole souled, intelligent, joyous ac-

ceptance of him that proclaims him, Lord, Savior, Redeemer and Mediator with the Father and lays claim on his mercy, his grace and his love for all the finer things we know in life. What hope—what peace and satisfaction such a full acceptance of the Christ brings to the heart of man, only those who have received a testimony of Jesus will ever know.

ACCEPTANCE OF JOSEPH SMITH

Now the next thing is to accept Joseph Smith—to believe in him as a prophet and ordained servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many of the things which have been said about the Savior, apply with equal force to the Prophet. The record which he left is more full, more recent and far more susceptible of verification than the early Gospels. Many have assailed the record but no one has ever succeeded in discrediting it. Many thousands to whom the record has come have not believed it but the thousands who have believed have furnished in their lives and work verification and support which thoughtful observers can not ignore.

The Prophet's own story requires faith for its acceptance as does the account of the Savior. It deals with unusual and supernatural experiences which relatively few have ever enjoyed but which no one has ever had the actual knowledge to deny.

LAME ATTEMPTS

I have known a few people and I have heard of others who attempt to explain the extraordinary manifestations to the Prophet in ways other than he accounted for them. I have always felt that such attempted explanations were lame, unwarranted and pure conjecture, and sometimes conspicuously anomalous because, while attempting to explain away the phenomena of the divine manifestations to the Prophet, an effort is made to uphold the validity of his teachings and doctrine.

There are a few who assert that it is immaterial whether or not the Prophet's account of himself is true, and sufficient to know that the organization which he initiated and the doctrines he taught are salutary and helpful. Some go so far as to indicate that they would prefer to pass over the miraculous story of the Prophet Joseph and repose their faith and confidence in Brigham Young, his leadership and accomplishments. These are some of the views held by those who are counted unorthodox.

The views certainly are not orthodox and I think they are not logical nor consistent. I lay it down as fundamental that the vitality and validity of the work of our Church stands or falls with the verity of Joseph Smith's own story.

RIGHT OF SUCCESSION

What would be the efficacy of our priesthood, had he not received the divine bestowal as he said? What of all the ordinances, the cere-

monies, the work of our temples if the source is impugned? Brigham Young freely acknowledged that not only his authority but the doctrines which he taught and the genius of the organization which he carried forward all came to him from and through the Prophet. The man who stands at our head today is where he is only because he comes in rightful succession from the Prophet and exercises the authority handed down to him from that source.

FUNDAMENTALS UNCHANGED

It is true that the Church has developed some new methods and organizations since the days of the Prophet but there is nothing fundamentally essential in doctrine or organization which we have today that was not given to us through the Prophet Joseph Smith.

I am sure it is not necessary to mention further reasons why it is absolutely necessary to accept the Prophet Joseph Smith, his testimony and his work as a condition to full fellowship in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; nor do I expect that I shall encounter any considerable disagreement with what I have heretofore said. I believe the conclusions which I have stated are not susceptible of successful contradiction. In fact they may seem so obvious as scarcely to warrant any discussion.

INDIFFERENT AND CRITICAL MEMBERS

There is another phase of this subject which is not so obvious and on which I wish to make a few suggestions. I believe that there are many people in the Church, who, deep down in their hearts, have a conviction of the divinity of the Church and its work, but, for one reason and another, seldom, if ever, acknowledge this conviction, even to themselves. In many cases, such people have come from Latter-day Saint homes and have had early training in the organizations of the Church. Then they have become inactive and finally indifferent or critical. Most of this class still claim membership or at least admit membership but they acknowledge that they are not orthodox and seem rather proud of it.

I wish I could help them analyze their own condition because I believe if they would take the trouble to do that, it would be the first step toward a new and happier life for them. I have a feeling that most of the class which I have just described are not entirely happy and contented with their luke warm, partial allegiance to the Church, especially at such times as they may seriously ponder the matter. They realize without my telling them that their position is inconsistent with any logical deduction they can make. They know that the challenge of the Gospel is such that it means everything to one who embraces it, if it means anything at all. If they are parents, they are often very pleased to have their children receive the benefits of Church training. They are concerned for the welfare of their children and they know that the influence of the Church is good. Why is it then, that they

do not or can not call back into full force their testimony of the truth, enjoy the companionship of the Holy Spirit and rejoice in the associations of the Church?

I am not sure that I can answer this question for many, but I am sure that each can answer for himself, if he will but frankly look into his own life, feelings and conduct. I think I can promise to each that if he will scrutinize himself as critically as he does the authorities and the procedure of the Church he will discover the reasons which underly his own disaffection. This is not so easy to do and not nearly so interesting as it is to criticize others. One seldom has company when he is analyzing himself and the conversation he carries on with himself is never very scintillating. The parties to the conversation,—he and himself, know all the facts and they have to be so brutally frank that sometimes it is really painful to listen in. But when the conversation centers about others with sympathetic company it isn't necessary to have more than a mere smattering of the facts to make a colorful, interesting story.

DISPOSITION TO CRITICIZE

Now I'm not complaining that the authorities and policies of the Church are subjected to criticism. If the criticism were constructive and if it could reach those who could remedy defects when they are shown, it might be very profitable. It is my desire, not so much to save the Church from criticism as to save the critics from themselves. I know without being told that the men who administer the affairs of the Church in both general and local capacity are men with human frailties and imperfect wisdom and judgment. I know too that they are humble men and that they diligently and prayerfully seek to give to the service of their fellows the best that is within them. There may be a few exceptions but they are very rare, indeed. With such a disposition manifest in our leaders and officers, surely it is not going too far to ask for forbearance of judgment and kindly, tolerant consideration and particularly a full investigation of the facts before adverse criticism is either entertained or uttered. I believe that if we could once and for all abandon the practice of long range, ill considered, intemperate criticism, thousands of people would save themselves, their faith and others;—and relatively few in this Church would regard themselves or be regarded as unorthodox.

TRUE WORSHIP OVERCOMES CRITICISM

Worship is an essential part of religion. Who can go to a place of worship and enjoy the sanctifying, refreshing influence which comes from prayer, songs of praise, communion with the Saints and the lovely spirit which pervades a reverential assembly, if his mind is filled with critical thoughts. In fact, when he is in such a condition he does not enjoy worship and he ceases to attend the meetings of the Church. It is surprising how rapidly disintegration of faith sets in. Skepticism

and doubt follow and sometimes apostasy, but more often indifference.

I wish I could say something to check those who are on the road to indifference, and I wish I could call those who have already gone far astray back to the faith and the fold of the Church. I recognize that my words, however deep my feelings may be, can do but little and that each must do the things that are necessary for himself. I do want to hold out encouragement, however. I can give positive assurance that everyone whose spiritual progress is being retarded by critical thoughts, doubt and skepticism can remove the obstacles if he but has the will to do it. I can likewise give assurance that anyone who will make this effort will be amply and richly rewarded all the days of his life.

A PLEA TO THE INDIFFERENT

We need the services of the able men and women in this Church who regard themselves as being unorthodox. Some of them are among the brightest and most capable people that we have in the Church and many are of excellent character. Not a few are in the professional and business world and have permitted their vocations to so completely occupy their time and attention that they have neglected their opportunities and duties in the Church,—in consequence of which, they find their affection to the great cause has waned and their faith has declined.

Come back, you lawyers, doctors and men of affairs,—we need you and you need us. Your faith is not dead, it is but sleeping. You know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and you know that Joseph Smith is a prophet. That knowledge was given to you to bring you joy and faith. It will condemn you and bring you misery if you do not heed it. I plead with you, my dear brethren and sisters, who are not in this conference today, who are seldom in any meeting of the Church, if in any way my words shall reach you, come back to those who love you. You will find open arms to receive you. You are not ostracized because you have departed from the straight path of duty—you belong to a Church which is the Church of Christ, with the Christian virtues of mercy, forgiveness and tolerance. Many of you have entered the new and everlasting covenant—that great compact with God, our Eternal Father, as first party, and all of us, his children as second parties, by virtue of which you are to receive blessings and joys that pass the understanding in return for keeping his commandments. Do not forfeit your rights—they are much too important to you and your loved ones. You can not afford to set an unworthy example—your children will see it—other men's children will be influenced by it,—it will fill you with remorse to know that you have led one soul astray.

I need not remind you of all that you should do, your hearts will guide you, if you will but consult them. If you are not ashamed of the Gospel, criticism and doubt will leave you,—faith and love will take their place. You will bless humanity and God will bless you.