

things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (Moroni 10:4, 5.)

Alma's experience also points the way. Listen to him again:

And it came to pass that as I was racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. (Alma 36:17, 18.)

The course Alma took, that is, *to cry unto the Lord in sincere repentance*—is the way for all men. And until this course is followed by men and nations, no rebirth will come to men, nor relief to nations.

STEADFASTNESS BRINGS GROWTH AND POWER

Not only must we all have the experience which first makes us brethren and sisters in the Lord, but having obtained this we must continue day by day through the years to maintain, and build upon it, as did Alma and the sons of Mosiah. They did it by studying the scriptures and by prayer and fasting. Of them it is written:

Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

But this is not all; They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God. (Alma 17:2, 3)

God help all honest men to be born again and come to be of sound understanding and to know the word of God and maintain the spirit thereof by study, fasting, prayer, and work, that we may be blessed with His power and authority, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters, I seek your faith and prayers as I stand here to speak to you, for I desire to say nothing but that which the Spirit of the Lord would lead me to say. I have no set theme.

The theme of this Conference seems to be obedience. I know of

nothing that is of greater importance to members of the Church, and if I may be so led I would like to add a few words in regard to this important topic.

THOSE WHO MAY BE BAPTIZED

A few months ago, when I was in one of the mission fields, meeting with a group of missionaries, one of them asked me this question:

Shall we baptize men into this Church when they say they believe that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and they believe that the Lord appeared to him, and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is indeed the Church of Christ upon the earth, and yet they have not forsaken all of their sins?

He stated that this question had been discussed among the Elders. Some took one view, some another. Some held that if we accepted a man who so expressed himself, that eventually he would repent of all his sins. I said in answer to him: "I shall read to you what the Lord Himself has said, and we will see if that will not answer your question." I am going to read those words here this afternoon:

And again, by way of commandment to the Church concerning the manner of baptism.—All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the Church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve Him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into His Church.

Then I asked if that did not answer the question. The missionaries concluded that it did. But yet this question arose: We keep the man out who has not forsaken all his sins and yet confesses that this is the Church of Christ; but think of the great many who are in the Church, the great number who violate the commandments of the Lord, and yet we do nothing about it.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WILL NOT ESCAPE JUDGMENT

I answered: "True, unless it is a grievous sin we do not excommunicate people from the Church. We try to teach them their duty. We try to bring them to repentance. We try to make them understand the truth. But after they are in the Church, if they will not do these things and will not hearken to our counsels, you may be assured that they are going to be judged according to their works."

The fact that they are members of the Church will not save them. Every man and every woman will have to answer for the deeds done in the body.

Then again an ancient prophet said:

Wo unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state.

Now, when people come into this Church they should, by all means, subscribe to the regulations which the Lord Himself has laid down by commandment. But does that mean that after we are in the Church, after we have confessed our sins and have forsaken them, that we can return to them after membership has been secured? That would not be consistent. Woe unto all those who are disobedient after they have made the preparation which is expressed in this commandment which I have read to you—woe unto them. Mark you, the Lord says before a man comes into the Church he must have a desire; he must come with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

What is a broken heart? One that is humble, one that is touched by the Spirit of the Lord, and which is willing to abide in all the covenants and the obligations which the Gospel entails.

BAPTISM A COVENANT TO CONTINUE FAITHFUL

Further we read that he must forsake all of his sins. Does that mean merely until he gets into the Church, and then he may return to them again? I call your attention to the words of Paul, speaking himself in regard to baptism and membership, and rather rebuking some of the members of the church when he said:

How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Every baptized person who has fully repented, who comes into the Church with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, has made a covenant to continue with that broken heart, with that contrite spirit, which means a repentant spirit. He makes a covenant that he will do that.

Then again we read here, in this admonition and commandment, that he is to endure to the end. It is essential that we endure to the end. In the revelation that was given to the Church, this same revelation, at the time the Church was organized, the Lord said this:

And we know that all men must repent and believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and worship the Father in His name, and endure in faith on His name to the end, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God.

Now, I believe the Lord meant what He said. I think this is true. Baptism is not merely a door into the kingdom, which entitles us to enter, bringing with us a trail of sins unrepented of. It is not that at all. We must not enter that door until our hearts are humble, our spirits contrite, and we give the assurance that we will serve the Lord in faithfulness and righteousness to the end.

Again:

And we know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true;

That is, if we come into this Church with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, with a determination to forsake all our sins and live faith-

fully to the end, then we are justified, and the sanctification of the blood of Jesus Christ is efficacious, and we receive the blessings.

We know also that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength.

Again here we are involved: it is our duty, as members of the Church, to serve the Lord our God with all our mights, with all our minds, with all our strength, and as it is stated in another revelation, with all our hearts. That is our duty,—not to serve Him half-heartedly, not to accept a portion of the commandments only, not to receive only those things which appeal to us, and refuse to accept those principles which do not appeal to us. We should be converted in full to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“TAKE HEED AND PRAY ALWAYS”

But there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God;

Therefore let the Church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation—

Not only the Church collectively, but you and me; let us take heed.

Never in the history of the world, that is, in the history of the Church, have there been so many temptations, so many pitfalls, so many dangers, to lure away the members of the Church from the path of duty and from righteousness, as we find today. Every day of our lives we come in contact with these temptations, these dangers. We should continue in the spirit of prayer and faith, remembering that there is this possibility that we may turn from the grace of the living God, and fall, unless we continue in that humility, in the exercise of faith and obedience to every principle of truth.

THE WORD OF THE LORD SHOULD BE REVERED

In another of these revelations the Lord says—I think I will read it, instead of attempting to quote it:

And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.

For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.

So we are commanded here to give heed concerning ourselves, each of us individually, as to the words of eternal life, how we hold them. We should hold them sacred. It is just as much my obligation, and yours, after baptism, to be humble, to have that contrite spirit, that broken heart, and the desire to forsake all sin, as it was before we came into this Church through the waters of baptism.

MORTALITY, THE FOUNDATION FOR PERFECTION

I often think, and I suppose you do, too, of that great and wonderful discourse—the greatest that was ever preached, so far as we know—which we call the Sermon on the Mount, in which instructions of various kinds were given by our Lord for the benefit of the members of the Church of all ages, by which, if we will only hearken to those teachings, we may come back again into the presence of God, the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ.

I often think of that which is really a summation:

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

I have heard many discourses upon that with which I could not agree, not fully, because I believe the Lord meant just what He said, that we should be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect. That will not come all at once, but line upon line and precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God.

But here we lay the foundation. Here is where we are taught these simple truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in this probationary state, to prepare us for that perfection. It is my duty, it is yours, to be better today than I was yesterday, and for you to be better today than you were yesterday, and better tomorrow than you were today. Why? Because we are on that road, if we are keeping the commandments of the Lord, we are on that road to perfection, and that can only come through obedience and the desire in our hearts to overcome the world. That is all.

WEAKNESSES CONQUERED THROUGH CONCENTRATED EFFORT

There should be no sin in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. No man should attempt to excuse himself because he has this failing or that. If we have a failing, if we have a weakness, there is where we should concentrate, with a desire to overcome, until we master and conquer. If a man feels that it is hard for him to pay his tithing, then that is the thing he should do, until he learns to pay his tithing. If it is the Word of Wisdom, that is what he should do, until he learns to love that commandment.

May the Lord bless and guide the members of the Church, and protect us from evil. We know that the world is full of evil. It is a wicked world. The Lord has said that. We have come out of it. We don't belong to it, although we are in it. If we are keeping the commandments of the Lord we have no right and we should have no desire to partake of those things which belong to the world, which are contrary to the kingdom of God.

May the Lord bless us, and guide us in righteousness, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.