

the lowly brackets of life; not with all the riches that the world desires and clamors after, but that there may be in our lives a richness of love and hope and charity wherever we go.

I pray that our homes may be the abiding place of prayer, and that our sons and daughters may be worthy exemplars of the cause and represent us favorably wherever they may go.

Brethren, let us not think that this Church will go on just as well if we fail. The Church as a whole will, but I want to say to you that the department we are expected to direct will not go forward as long as we stand in the way, so let us adjust ourselves if necessary. Let us live so that every night when we kneel to pray and every morning when we bow before the Lord in thanksgiving, there will be in us the power to open the heavens so that God will hear and answer our prayers that we will know that we are approved of Him. We can do that, brethren, better than we have ever done before. If there ever was a time when it was needed, it is this particular period in which we are living.

I humbly pray that God may give us power and strength to resist evil and temptation and to put aside from us the selfish motives that characterize so many of His sons and daughters, that we may let our light so shine every day

that others observing our good works will see in us righteous leaders that they will be glad to follow. I pray that these men who preside over us, this Presidency, may have the joy of always being united in their leadership and that we may be united in our membership when they shall speak in the name of the Lord to the Church.

Again I say I know that this is God's work. I may not be with you very long, my brethren. I have passed the years of some of my forebears a long way, and I am amazed that I have been permitted to stand among you as long as I have with my many illnesses, but I desire that as long as I live that I may enjoy the Spirit of God, the spirit of fellowship, and brotherly love. When I think of your homes, I would like to know that there is love in every heart for one another; then I will know that there will be love in God's heart for us, and there will be an assurance that He will bless us as we need blessing.

That this conference may be notable for the spirit that will be distilled upon us, even as the dew from heaven, and when it is over that we may go to our various departments renewed and invigorated, and determined more than ever to be worthy of the high calling that has been made of us and conferred upon us, I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

## ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I DESIRE to call your attention to the principle of loyalty, loyalty to the truth and loyalty to the men whom God has chosen to lead the cause of truth. I speak of "the truth" and these "men" jointly, because it is impossible fully to accept the one and partly reject the other.

I raise my voice on this matter to warn and counsel you to be on your guard against criticism. I have heard some myself and have been told about more. It comes, in part, from those who hold, or have held, promi-

nent positions. Ostensibly, they are in good standing in the Church. In expressing their feelings, they frequently say, "We are members of the Church, too, you know, and our feelings should be considered."

They assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and directions they give. Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the

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guidance of this Church comes, not alone from the written word, but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through His chosen leaders and none else. It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the leaders, are assuming an indefensible position.

Such a spirit leads to apostasy. It is not new. It was prevalent in the days of Jesus. Some who boasted of being Abraham's children, said of the Son of God: "Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." (Matt. 11:19) But those who stood by Him enjoying the spirit of truth knew Him, as did Peter, who said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In the days of the Prophet Joseph, there was criticism against him and the counsel he gave. Some of the leading brethren of the Church charged him with being a fallen prophet. They did not deny the gospel, but they contended that the Prophet had fallen.

Those were critical times for the Church. They have now long since passed into history, but the records remain. The issues are now clear. Joseph Smith was the Lord's prophet, and so continued, notwithstanding all the abuse directed at him. He now sits enthroned in yonder heavens, and those who criticized him apostatized and left the Church. Thomas B. Marsh, who left the Church in 1839 because he became jealous of the Prophet, found his way in 1857 to Salt Lake City, and in addressing the Saints, said:

If there are any among this people who should ever apostatize and do as I have done, prepare your backs for a good whipping if you are such as the Lord loves. *But if you will take my advice, you will stand by the authorities.*

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As we look back upon these important events, it seems that the issues were always so clearly drawn that anyone could have seen the truth. And yet, there seem always to have been great intellects on the side of error. This is one of life's tragedies. Surely there can be nothing of more importance than to be always and everlastingly on the side with truth as we meet the complex problems of our lives. It is comforting to know that that is where we may be if we will but hearken to the spirit of truth. For the Lord has said that "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.*" (D. & C. 84:46) That this is no idle promise is shown by the fact that on nearly all occasions there have stood with God's spokesmen those who were loyal to the truth and to the men whom God had chosen to lead the cause of truth. At the time of the attack on the Prophet in Kirtland, Brigham Young was present, and when the criticism was expressed he arose and in plain and forceful language said that Joseph was a Prophet and he knew it, "and that they might rail and slander him as much as they pleased, they could but destroy their own authority and cut the thread that bound them to the Prophet of God and sink themselves to hell." Later he said:

Some of the leading men at Kirtland were much opposed to the Prophet meddling with temporal affairs, thinking that his duty embraced spiritual things alone and that the people should be left to attend to their temporal affairs without any interference whatever from prophets and apostles. In a public meeting, I said: "Ye elders of Israel: Now; will some of you draw the line of demarcation between the spiritual and temporal within the Kingdom of God, so that I may understand it!" Not one of them could do it. When I saw a man standing in the path before the Prophet,

I felt like hurling him out of the way and branding him as a fool.

Here was loyalty, loyalty both to the truth and to the man whom God had called to represent it.

Why was it that the vision of Brigham Young was clear and that of Thomas B. Marsh was cloudy; that Brigham Young remained true to the Prophet, and that Thomas B. Marsh criticized him? It was because Brigham Young always hearkened to the spirit of truth, and Thomas B. Marsh did not.

LAST October, I attended an outlying stake's conference. A number of the speakers had just attended for the first time a general conference. Their reports were soul stirring. One bishop wished that every member of his ward might attend just one conference in the tabernacle. Another, when he stood with the vast congregation for the first time, was so moved that tears ran down his cheeks, and his voice so choked that he could not join in the singing. A third was impressed with President Grant's closing remarks. He said as he finished his talk: "Three times the President said 'I bless you, I bless you, I bless you.'"

In another outlying stake, an ex-bishop said to me that the conference was nothing but a political convention. In another a man said that whether he would follow the counsel of the leaders depended upon what subject they discussed.

How are these different responses accounted for? I will tell you. The members of the one group were observing and keeping the commandments of God, and the others were not; one group was walking in the light of truth, and the other was in the dark; one group enjoyed the *Spirit of the Lord*, and the others did not.

If we are to be on the side of truth, we must have the Spirit of the Lord. To the obtaining of that spirit, prayer is an indispensable prerequisite. Praying will keep one's vision clear on this question of loyalty as on all other questions. By praying I do not mean, however, just saying prayers. Prayers may be said in a perfunctory manner. Access to the Spirit of God, which is a directing power, cannot be so obtained. The divine injunction to pray is not to be satisfied in a casual manner nor by an effort to obtain divine approval of a predetermined course. A firm resolve to comply with the will of God must accompany the petition for knowledge as to what His will is. When one brings himself to the position that he will pursue the truth wherever it may lead, even though it may require a reversal of his former position, he can, without hypocrisy, go before the Lord in prayer. Then, when he prays with all the energy of his soul, he is entitled to and he will receive guidance. The mind and will of the Lord as to the course he should take will be made known unto him.

I assure you, however, that the spirit of the Lord will never direct a person to take a position in opposition to the counsel of the Presidency of His Church. Such could not be, and I'll tell you why. The Spirit of the Lord is "truth." The Prophet Joseph Smith says that "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, *light and truth*."

The Presidency, in directing the Church and its affairs and in counseling the people, do so under the directing power of this "*light and truth*." When a man and the Presidency are both directed on the same subject by "*light and truth*," there can be no conflict. And so, my brethren, all who are out of harmony in any degree with the Presidency

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have need to repent and to seek the Lord for forgiveness and to put themselves in full harmony.

In response to a contention that to follow such a course is tantamount to surrendering one's "moral agency," suppose a person were in a forest with his vision limited by the denseness of the growth about him. Would he be surrendering his agency in following the directions of one who stands on a lookout tower, commanding an unobstructed view? To me, our leaders are true watchmen on the towers of Zion, and those who follow their counsel are exercising their agency just as freely as would be the man in the forest. For I accept as a fact, without any reservation, that this Church is headed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He, through the men whom he chooses and appoints to lead His people, gives it active direction. I

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believe that He communicates to them His will, and that they, enjoying His spirit, counsel us.

The Savior Himself gave us the great example on this point. As He labored and suffered under the weight of the sins of this world in the accomplishment of the great atonement, He cried out in the agony of His soul, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39) And so saying, He subjected Himself to the will of His Father in the consummation of His supreme mission. Who will say that in so doing He surrendered His free agency?

That we may all have the vision and the courage to be loyal to the truth and loyal to the men whom God has chosen to lead in the cause of truth, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER THOMAS E. MCKAY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

It is a very great privilege for me to be associated with such fine, outstanding men as are here present, and I express my thanks humbly and before you brethren, to my Father in heaven for this privilege. I am very thankful also to be able to report the conditions in the missions included in the European group as very favorable. All those missions are functioning, and most of them are making progress. Some of them are handicapped in the holding of their meetings; especially has that been the case during this past winter because of the lack of fuel and light. They are continuing, however, to hold all meetings, including their district conferences, but they must all be held during the daytime. Generally the sacrament meetings convene immediately following the Sunday school, and the Priesthood, Relief Society, and M. I. A. gatherings are held at the same time.

We continue to get letters; but, of course, as you know, they are all censored. A report just received yesterday from the Danish Mission was sent by regular mail on the eleventh of October. It had been censored by both the German and the English authorities, but it came through in its original form. On one end of the envelope was stamped *Geoffnet*, the German word for opened, and on the other end *Opened by Examiner*, the words used by the English censor.

In that report it stated that thirteen members had been baptized for the ten months ending October 27, 1941.

The letters and reports from the British, South African, Swedish, and Swiss Missions and the French, Swiss, and Syrian Districts come through quite regularly, while those from the other missions since the United States entered the war are very irregular; some of my letters are being returned, with the