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The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones. (D. & C. 1:19)

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH

One hundred and thirteen years ago on this day, April 6, Joseph Smith, a young man twenty-five years of age, met five other young men in the humble home of Peter Whitmer in Fayette, New York, and according to divine instruction organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its membership now numbers 917,715.

It has missions, stakes, wards, and branches in practically every city of any size or consequence in the world. It has developed from a local organization to one of international proportions. Its missionaries have carried glad tidings of great joy to the races of men for over a century. Its officers and teachers number a quarter of a million, serving willingly, without thought of, or desire for, compensation. A great missionary system has been developed which affords the opportunity of missionary service to some two thousand two hundred young men and women each year. A religious educational project has been set in motion which involves one university, three colleges, thirteen institutes, and one hundred and eight seminaries, manned by three hundred sixty full-time teachers, and provides religious education for thirty-five thousand young men and women. Seven temples are now in use for the performing of ordinances for the dead and the living, and an eighth is soon to be dedicated and opened. A Welfare plan has been worked out designed to assist those in distress, anticipating, however, that those receiving assistance shall contribute of their energy and time on a production project. This program has in operation agricultural, manufacturing, and processing projects, to provide food, fuel, clothing, and shelter. A wheat storage program is sponsored by the General Authorities and the Relief Society of the Church wherein three elevators are now used to store approximately four hundred thousand bushels of wheat against a day of need. Hospitals, a boys' home, in addition to a great religious, cultural, and recreational program sponsored by the auxiliary organizations of the Church are all developments that have taken place in the last one hundred thirteen years. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an organization that is not in financial bondage to any man or set of creditors.

THE APPEARANCE OF HEAVENLY BEINGS TO JOSEPH SMITH

Joseph Smith declared to the world that the Father and the Son appeared to him in answer to the prayerful inquiry, which of all these

religious organizations was the one designated as the Church of Jesus Christ. He was forbidden to join any of them and three years later a divine personage calling himself Moroni appeared to him, telling Joseph that the Lord had assigned to him a great and marvelous work and that his name would be had for good and evil among the nations. A record of the ancient inhabitants who formerly lived upon the American continent, inscribed on plates of gold, was entrusted to Joseph Smith for translation and publication to the world, for within its covers the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its pure and complete form would be found.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Christ nineteen centuries ago, again appeared, bestowing upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery the Priesthood of Aaron, which gave to these men the authority to preach the gospel of repentance and to administer the ordinances of baptism by immersion for the remittance of sins. Peter, James, and John appeared later to Joseph, conferring upon him the Melchizedek Priesthood or the Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, authorizing the conferring of spiritual blessings and privileges upon the faithful. Other divine personages appeared, those who had lived in former dispensations. Moses returned, bestowing the keys of the gathering of Israel upon Joseph; Elias gave him the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham; Elijah the prophet appeared, bestowing upon Joseph the authority to inaugurate the work for the dead. Joseph Smith received direct revelations from on high, instructing and directing him in the restoration of the Gospel in its fulness and in organizing the Church exactly as it existed in the days of the apostles, with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone, with apostles, prophets, evangelists, high priests, seventies, elders, bishops, priests, teachers, and deacons. All of these offices in the Priesthood of God existed according to Biblical authorities in the days of the apostles and were restored through Joseph Smith which effected a complete restitution of the Church organization, which is recognized by the world's foremost authorities on organization as being the most perfect of its kind on earth today.

Who was Joseph Smith? Whence came this man? He was the son of a farmer, born in the backwoods of Vermont, with no opportunities for scholastic attainments or personal development from an academic viewpoint, persecuted and prosecuted by foes and even by officials of the law who should have protected him. He lacked the riches of the world, without friends or prestige of those in high places. Will his declarations and claims stand the X-ray of a minute analysis? This analysis can be made from four viewpoints: first, comparison of Joseph Smith's claims and achievements with other great religious leaders; second, the fulfilment of prophecy and revelation; third, the authenticity of the Book of Mormon; and fourth, his leaving all of his works, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, revised Bible, for future critical study, and in this he stands alone.

MARTIN LUTHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD

First permit me to compare him with Martin Luther, a great, courageous and sincere man who was born under very humble circumstances—the son of a miner—one of the steppingstones to the restoration of the Gospel. His father and mother were devout and religious people. Martin Luther's mental ability won for him recognition of an individual wealthy enough to finance his scholastic training. He soon received the degree of Master. Influential church authorities became interested in him and the office of priest was bestowed upon him. He held the chair of philosophy in the University of Wittenberg. Later he received the degree of Doctor of Theology. Shortly thereafter he became involved in a bitter controversy with the authorities of the church over the proposed sale, of indulgences and courageously affixed his ninety-five theses on the door of the Cathedral known as Schloss Kirche (Castle Church). He was excommunicated, his life was endangered, but there came to his rescue German princes and noblemen. Hence during a period of forced exile, he translated the Bible into the German language, declaring the Scriptures should be free and open to all men. He demanded general reformations of the dominant church, stating, "I am deeply interested in so purifying every church that all men may worship God as they see fit. As to organizing a new church, I have neither the desire nor the authority to do so." But nevertheless there came into being a church bearing his name and in whose declarations of faith are found many of the doctrines of the church he bitterly opposed. His greatest contribution to his people and to the world was the doctrine of religious freedom and the translation of the Scriptures into the tongue of his people. It is interesting to observe that although he read, studied, and translated the Bible word by word from cover to cover, he failed to see, understand, or advocate the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is therein recorded. In the process of his translations I have often wondered what his reaction was concerning such Scripture as the following: Malachi, Chapter 4, verses 5 and 6:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

LIGHT UPON THE SCRIPTURES GIVEN THROUGH JOSEPH SMITH

Joseph Smith, unlearned of men, chosen by God, had the interpretation, for Elijah appeared to him and gave him the keys that had turned the heart of the children to their fathers, inaugurating the Gospel of salvation for the dead.

I wonder what the thoughts of Martin Luther were as he paused over the statement of Ezekiel, Chapter 37, verses 16 and 17:

Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For

Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.

And again the meek of the earth received the interpretation of this Scripture when Moroni appeared to the boy Joseph Smith and four years later entrusted to his care a record inscribed upon the plates of gold, giving the record of Joseph and Ephraim and all the house of Israel, combining the stick of Judah, or the Bible, and the stick of Joseph, or the Book of Mormon, as one witness for the Lord and His Son Jesus Christ.

I wonder what the emotions of Martin Luther were as he read that scripture of Amos which indicated that a great apostasy was to take place as predicted in the book of Amos, Chapter 8, verse 11:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: . . .

And again there is a prediction in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to the Galatians, verse 6:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.

The answer was given to the fourteen-year-old boy in the woods of western New York when the Lord declared, "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." (See Isaiah 29:13, and Matthew 15:8.)

Martin Luther no doubt carefully perused the scriptures which had to do with the restitution of all things as recorded in chapter 3, verses 19 to 21, of the book of Acts:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

In Revelation, chapter 14, verse 6, we read:

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

And again the humble prophet of the Lord received the actual interpretation in the reality of the visits of Moroni and other divine personages whereby the everlasting Gospel was restored for the benefit of all nations, kindreds, tongues and peoples.

Martin Luther declared, "As to organizing a new church, I have neither the desire nor the authority to do so." Joseph Smith had no personal desire, but under mandate of God proceeded to organize

the Church of Christ. Martin Luther recognized the fact that he did not possess the authority to do so. Through the restoration of the Priesthood, Joseph Smith had the authority from on high to again inaugurate among the children of men the plan of salvation as given to the world by the Savior, and again to authorize men to act as His servants to bestow upon the Lord's children all of the blessings involved in the ordinances of the Gospel plan as was done in former dispensations. Luther's translation of the Bible sustains wholly the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel as restored to the earth by the Lord through Joseph Smith.

THE TEST OF PROPHECY

The second viewpoint is the test of prophecy and revelation. Time but permits pointing out to you a few of the many prophecies made by the Prophet Joseph. I draw your attention to section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verses 2 and 3, a revelation given to the Prophet December 25, 1832, wherein the Lord revealed to His servant:

The time will come that war will be poured out upon all nations, beginning at this place. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations, in order to defend themselves against other nations; and then war shall be poured out upon all nations.

Is it not singular that this man, with few opportunities in life from a scholastic and statesman's point of view, would declare twelve years before his death that such an event would take place, which event actually occurred twenty-nine years after the prophecy was given to the world, when the Confederacy fired upon Fort Sumter and Great Britain became involved? Thus prophecy was fulfilled, which statement is borne out by the facts of history. There is only one answer to the question, whence came this advance information to Joseph Smith? It came to him from the Lord, as a revelation.

Section 97, verses 22 and 23, affords provocative thinking:

For behold, and lo, vengeance cometh speedily upon the ungodly as the whirlwind; and who shall escape it? The Lord's scourge shall pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people; yea, it shall not be stayed until the Lord come.

The question arises, what is meant by the Lord's scourge, a "scourge to pass over by night and by day, and the report thereof shall vex all people"? As we observe the events that are occurring in the greatest war of all time, the scourge spoken of by the Lord might well be squadrons of flying fortresses raining death and destruction upon people, cities, armies, battleship fleets, the merchant marine—by day and by night. Think, if you will, of London, Coventry, Rotterdam, Stalingrad, and now Berlin. Surely the inhabitants of warring nations are sorely vexed by the passing of this scourge over them

by day and by night. Again I submit the question, from whence did Joseph Smith receive the information that such an event would take place? There is but one answer—his own—a revelation from the Lord.

Consider section 61, verses 14, 15 and 16:

Behold, I, the Lord, in the beginning blessed the waters; but in the last days, by the mouth of my servant John, I cursed the waters. Wherefore, the days will come that no flesh shall be safe upon the waters. And it shall be said in days to come that none is able to go up to the land of Zion upon the waters, but he that is upright in heart.

An examination of daily events upon the oceans of the earth might well indicate that the days are here when no flesh shall be safe upon the waters. Hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping have been sent to the bottom of the sea, involving the loss of thousands of lives. Again the question comes to our minds, how was it possible for Joseph Smith in 1831 to forecast a situation in the future wherein the waters would be unsafe for man? His answer is the only one—a revelation from God, given to His servant.

Joseph Smith was among the first American religionists to declare the Constitution of the United States came into being because God suffered its establishment. Read the words of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph found in section 101, verse 77:

According to the laws and constitution of the people, which I have suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles.

May I be permitted to digress long enough to say that any member of this Church or any citizen of this great republic that advocates the idea that the Constitution of the United States should be relegated to the past is on dangerous ground, for such a proposition destroys one of the fundamentals upon which true religion and democratic government are founded, namely the principle of free agency. Free agency, so far as the Church of Jesus Christ is concerned, is the foundation upon which the whole Gospel plan was formulated in the pre-existent world.

The Word of Wisdom also stands as an example of prophecy and revelation, God's law of health, sustained by modern-day science, which in the days of the Prophet had done but little work from a scientific point of view as to what was good and not good for man physically.

From the point of view of prophecy, compare Joseph Smith's declarations with the statement of Mosiah found in chapter 8, verses 17 and 18:

* But a seer can know of things which are past, and also things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known. Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings.

A PROPHET'S RIGHT TO SPEAK FOR THE LORD

Have men ever stopped to consider that of all the great ecclesiastics since the days of Christ and His apostles, there has been but one who used the term, "Thus saith the Lord"? Joseph Smith, speaking directly for the Lord, was the first one who had this right. He spoke for the Lord as did Moses, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

Third, the authenticity of the Book of Mormon should be given consideration. Historians, men of science, and doctors of religion over a period of one hundred thirteen years have made a most critical analysis of the Book of Mormon, failing to find inconsistencies or contradictions in the doctrines of Jesus Christ, in history or geography. In fact, research work in Central and South America accumulated since the martyrdom of the Prophet sustains the Book of Mormon as to its origin. More than that, men can know for themselves through study and humble supplication before the Lord, that the Book of Mormon is indeed of the Lord. Moroni, the last writer in the Book of Mormon, leaves with the reader this promise:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these 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. (Moroni 10:4)

THE WORKS OF JOSEPH SMITH OF ENDURING QUALITY

The fourth viewpoint—as someone has declared—Joseph Smith left all his works, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, revised Bible, for future critical study. He stands alone in this. Joseph Smith, unlearned in the ways of men, neither disillusioned nor spoiled by the theories or science of men, was selected and foreordained before the creation of the world to bring forth the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ for the second time, hence his works will stand forever and ever. This is the only answer to Joseph Smith and his work. Possessed neither of friends nor wealth, without the protection of kings and noblemen, with no opportunities of worldly training, yet regarding him and others one noted American, Fred W. Shibley, declared, "What the country and the world needs today is a resurgence of the philosophy taught by Confucius, Jesus, and Joseph Smith. Otherwise we will have an appalling period of human decadence." Josiah Quincy declared, "It is by no means improbable that some future textbook for the use of generations yet unborn will contain a question like this: 'What historical American of the 19th century has exerted the most powerful influence upon the destinies of his countrymen?' and the answer may be Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet."

It is intensely interesting that Fred Shibley and Josiah Quincy, men not of Joseph Smith's faith, would classify him with the greatest of teachers, Jesus Christ and Confucius, and give him a place among

the world's and America's greatest. As Moroni declared to Joseph Smith, his name would be had for good and evil among the nations. Today it is had for more good than evil.

A few years ago I stood in old Carthage Jail, and walking up the stairs to the room occupied by Joseph and his friends and standing there in meditation, the thought came to me, suppose Joseph, in the last moments of anguish, facing certain death, had confronted the blood-thirsty Carthage Grays with this statement: "I am an imposter. I did not see the Father and the Son. The Book of Mormon is of my own creation." The Carthage Grays would have responded with one voice, "Joseph, return to Nauvoo. We promise to permit you to live in peace."

AUTHORITY RESTS WITH SUCCESSORS TO JOSEPH SMITH

Joseph Smith could not make any such statement for, said he, "I saw the Father and the Son, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation," and rather than deny his testimony to the world, he sealed it with his blood, which is in accordance with the Scripture found in Hebrews, chapter 9, verse 16, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."

With the death of Joseph Smith, what happened to the mantle of authority and the keys that he held? They were in the possession of the Council of the Twelve, as the revelation of the Lord to the Prophet indicates, the Twelve are equal in authority to the First Presidency (D. & C. 107:23, 24). The Council of the Twelve, through revelation and inspiration selected Brigham Young. From the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph until the present day, all of his successors have been so selected and today the same mantle of authority rests upon the shoulders of President Heber J. Grant and the same keys are vested in him for the furtherance of the work of the Lord until the second coming of the Redeemer.

THE TRUE EXPLANATION

There is but one answer to Joseph Smith, and the answer is found in his story, his life, and his achievements. It is also found in the lives of those who have accepted the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and have been blessed with a testimony of its divine origin. Joseph Smith should not be a man of mystery to the world, but a true servant of God, for as the Savior declared, ". . . By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:3).

I am grateful for the witness with which the Lord has blessed me, convincing me beyond all doubt that Joseph Smith was an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, a prophet, seer, and revelator, and through him God's greatest gift to man has been made available to all who accept His teachings. This gift is known as the gift of salvation, and there is no greater gift.

Joseph Smith, a humble, unknown farm boy, as Peter was the lowly fisherman—and yet in the hands of God he became the mightiest and the greatest in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, for he definitely reaffirmed the actual existence of the Father and His beloved Son Jesus Christ. Yes, “the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones.” May our obedience to and compliance with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as restored through His instrument, Joseph Smith, increase our testimonies of Joseph Smith’s divine calling, I humbly ask, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

“I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown,’ and he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand in the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than the known way.’”

COMMENTS ON WORDS OF KING OF ENGLAND

Those words were quoted by the King of England in an Empire Broadcast shortly after Great Britain entered the present world conflict. I presume the thought that he intended to convey to his subjects was that they should humble themselves and in supplication and in faith approach their Heavenly Father for divine guidance and His protection. And it was well that they be so counseled, for our Heavenly Father is concerned about all His children and desires that they “. . . believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

THE VOICE OF THE SHEPHERD

To the Latter-day Saints in this troublous day, when the perils of the earth are round about us, it is well that we take stock as to how we may approach Him and what may be our blessings. The Savior Himself spoke of the Comforter, which He said would guide into all truth, would bring all things to our remembrance, would show us things to come, and would teach us all things whatsoever the Lord our God had commanded. But there was another thing that has been spoken of by the scriptures, another guiding light that I should like to call to the attention of the Latter-day Saints at this time. The Savior enunciated this principle in the beautiful parable in which He spoke of Himself as the shepherd, the sheepfold as His kingdom, and the sheep as His people. These were His words:

... and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and he leadeth them out.

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (John 10:3, 4)

The Apostle Paul said: