

It puts only one limitation on all the aspirations and desires of youth, and that is to do nothing that is not good. Experience, as well as divine principle, has taught us that there is no enduring happiness except in goodness, and the Church seeks only the lasting happiness of its young people, as well as the old.

So I say to my young friends everywhere—enjoy the happy days of youth. Live life joyously, beautifully, unmarred by the ugliness of sin. Show to the world what good, wholesome living will do for the oncoming generations. Demonstrate your gratitude for good homes, loving families, and great opportunities and prepare for happy days ahead when the army of liberators shall have won the victory and broken down the barriers so that you may go forth as an army of peace and good will to invade the countries of the earth and take to men everywhere the pure, restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God keep and preserve you for that great and holy mission, I humbly pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1.)

PURPORTED SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

It has only been a few weeks since I was approached at a stake conference by a good brother who said there was a gentleman there who had a very important message that he wished to present to me, and would I please give him an interview. So the interview was arranged. This man stated that he had been visited by one of the three Nephite disciples, and he told me a very fantastic story. After listening to it patiently until he had finished, I said to him, "If you have had a vision or manifestation, it is your duty to keep it to yourself; it is not for the Church, and I advise you not to repeat it." I hardly think that was the counsel he was seeking.

In the past few months I have received a number of communications from various parts of the Church, from good, honest-thinking people who have made inquiry regarding some purported visions and dreams which are being circulated in all parts of the Church. These inquirers wish to know what my judgment is concerning these purported visions. We have also had certain individuals traveling among our people, prevailing on some of the bishops to let them hold meetings where they could relate to the people their remarkable experiences which they claim to have had. They have on their own responsibility held cottage meetings and invited the people, and some have been foolish enough to go and listen to these stories as they have been told.

Now, I think it is wrong for any bishop or anyone else to invite these people who profess to have had a dream or a vision, or some kind of manifestation, into a meetinghouse, or even into the homes and gather the people in to listen to these presentations. In my judgment it is contrary to the teachings of the Church. When John said, "Believe not every spirit,

but try the spirits," he did not mean that we should spend our time accepting or encouraging every wind of doctrine, but that we should prove every doctrine by the revelations of the Lord; by those principles of eternal truth which have been revealed for our guidance. We have certain standards which have been accepted and by which we are to be governed.

REVELATIONS FROM THE LORD THE STANDARD

If I should say something which is contrary to that which is written in the standard works of the Church, and accepted by the Authorities of the Church and approved by the Church generally, no one is under obligation to accept it. Everything that I say and everything that any other person says must square itself with that which the Lord has revealed, or it should be rejected.

Paul said, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." (I Cor. 14:1.) Well, this counsel is very good; but do we understand what Paul meant by the gift of prophecy? When the angel appeared to John on the Isle of Patmos, and he appeared in glory, John fell before him upon his knees and was about to worship him, but the messenger said to John:

See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (Rev. 19:10.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith has said that every member of the Church should be a prophet, meaning, of course, that he should have that testimony of Jesus and keep himself in perfect accord with the Spirit of the Lord so that he could recognize truth and the Lord could reveal the truth to him, so that he might comprehend it. Every man in the Church has the right to receive revelation for his own guidance, but not for the guidance of the Church. Back in the very beginning, when the Church was only a few months old in this dispensation, certain individuals arose claiming to have had manifestations and visions for the Church, and they led some of the members astray. There was a woman by the name of Hubble who claimed to have revelations, and some of the members of the Church listened to her. One of the eight witnesses of the Book of Mormon, Hiram Page, began to have manifestations, and he was able to have influence over others. He persuaded some of the Whitmers and even Oliver Cowdery, to accept the things that he proclaimed. The result was that the Lord had to give a revelation correcting all of this sort of thing, but before it was corrected the Prophet had a difficult time to get some of his brethren to understand that what had been given by Hiram Page, and Mrs. Hubble, and others, was not of the Lord.

THE LORD SPEAKS THROUGH HIS PROPHETS

In that revelation, which was given in February, 1831, the Lord said this:

O hearken, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you.

For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.

And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.

And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments;

And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.

For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed. (D. & C. 43:1-7.)

This ought to be clear enough for us all. If the Lord has a revelation or a commandment to give to His people, it is going to come from the head, and when someone else comes among the people professing to have revelations and to give commandments we can test that matter very readily. We do not have to go into any details or make an extended examination of the claims, there is no need of any investigation whatever, because the Lord has given us the key as a law to the Church by which we are to be governed.

SEEK FOR THE BEST GIFTS

Now, again, in another revelation which was given a short time later, in March, 1831, the Lord said this:

But ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of men; for some are of men, and others of devils.

Wherefore, beware lest ye are deceived; and that ye may not be deceived seek ye earnestly the best gifts, always remembering for what they are given;

For verily I say unto you, they are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do; that all may be benefited that seek or that ask of me, that ask and not for a sign that they may consume it upon their lusts. (D. & C. 46:7-9.)

In conclusion, I will say that I agree with Paul, that prophecy is a wonderful gift, one that should be sought, for the gift of prophecy is the gift of revelation and may be received for the personal guidance of each member of the Church. I also think that the gift of discernment is a gift everyone should seek, so that we may not be deceived. If we have the spirit by which we can discern the hearts of men, and the doctrines of men, and interpret the inspiration of the Lord, then we shall not be deceived. Again the Lord has said, "And whoso treasureth up my word shall not be deceived." This does not mean merely the reading of the word, but that we put it into practice.

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