

UNDERSTANDING INCREASED THROUGH STUDY

Through membership we have a right to understand more about the work of the Lord. Because of the additional things that have come to us by way of revelation, instead of having only the Bible we have in addition, the Pearl of Great Price, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. These enable us to understand what God expects us to do here upon the earth, that we may walk more uprightly and more sincerely than we could without the additional evidence and the additional testimony that come from these great revelations of the Lord. In addition, because of our faith and membership, we have the privilege of understanding doctrines that are not generally understood by the world, such as pre-existence, salvation for the dead, and the resurrection with its three glories. Our understanding is increased, and we gain strength from many things that the Lord has revealed to us for our consolation, for our blessing, and for our encouragement.

May the Lord bless us and help us to value our membership in the Church and our citizenship in the great kingdom of the Lord, that we shall not only use the things that are easy for us to understand and to use, but that we shall search deeply into the ways of the Lord and make use of all the principles and the doctrines and live by all of the standards of the Church, I pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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As a preface to what I would like to say this afternoon, I read the following from President Grant's message:

I believe that the elders of Israel in all the different wards and stakes of Zion earnestly desire to know the mind and will of our Heavenly Father, and that they are ready and willing to do anything that is within their power to fulfill that mind and that will and to carry it out in their lives.

It is a great responsibility to address a general conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and I feel that responsibility keenly. I pray that I may be responsive to the Holy Spirit and that what I say will bring comfort to the hearts of those who listen, and at the same time stimulate us all to examine ourselves and determine more fully to do our Father's will, which, if we do, will bring us peace in this world and finally immortality and eternal life in his presence.

DOING THE WILL OF GOD BRINGS PEACE

To seek to know the Father's will and to comply therewith does not mean abject submission to an arbitrary superior force, but rather bringing ourselves into harmony with the laws and principles prevailing in an orderly universe. It is the only way by which we may

ion to which they are entitled, because our leaders put so much stress upon what, to them, are unimportant rules of conduct, such as the nonuse of tea, coffee, tobacco, and intoxicating beverages." He wondered if the rules as to these things and such other, to them, minor things as the payment of tithing and the keeping of the Sabbath day holy, could not be relaxed so that such persons would not feel out of harmony or be embarrassed in the Church.

THE YOKE OF CHRIST

Now, my brethren and sisters, it is not the desire of the Church nor of any man or woman in the Church who has the spirit of the gospel, to discomfort or embarrass or drive away from the purifying and sanctifying influences of the gospel, any person, be he in or out of the Church. Rather, it is their desire to take every person where he now is and build him up, lead him step by step along the straight and narrow path of conforming with gospel standards, until he finds peace and happiness in doing the will of the Father.

This, however, cannot be done by condoning noncompliance with the rules of conduct which the Lord has prescribed, nor by presuming to change them. The words of Jesus were, "Take my yoke upon you." He did not say come on your own terms, but—

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (Matt. 11:29.)

The Lord has never revealed a way whereby we can enjoy that rest unto our souls without taking his yoke upon us. The acceptance of the commandments in the Doctrine and Covenants as an expression to us individually of the will of our Father in heaven as to how we should live, and an earnest effort to abide thereby, will do much to bring us peace and happiness while we live in the earth, and to assure us of great joy in the world to come.

LIVING PROPHETS AS GUIDES

Another fundamental to bear in mind in our search is that the manifestations of the Father's will to this generation did not cease with what is written in the Doctrine and Covenants. He has not left us unguided to jangle over the interpretations of those revelations, nor does he leave us ignorant of his will on current issues. He has given us living prophets to interpret those revelations and to declare to us his will on present problems.

When the Lord opened up this dispensation, he chose and appointed the Prophet Joseph Smith through whom to reveal his will. And the peoples of the earth were put under obligation to hear him. More than a year before the Church was organized, the Lord said to the Prophet:

. . . this generation shall have my word through you. (Doc. and Cov. 5:10.)

And he further declared that woe should come upon the inhabitants of the earth if they did not hearken unto his words.

As long as the Prophet lived, the Lord revealed his will to that generation through him. And it is significant how much of what he revealed dealt with the issues of that day. Since the Prophet's martyrdom, the will of the Lord has been given through succeeding prophets, Presidents Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, and Heber J. Grant, who each in his turn has presided over the Church, and, like unto Moses, has guided the people of his generation on the issues of their day by the spirit of revelation. (See Doc. and Cov. 107:91; 8:2-3.)

During the administrations of all these leaders, those who have accepted them as prophets, who have truly believed that by the spirit of revelation they spoke the Father's will on the issues of the day, who have adjusted their thinking, their living, and their feelings to harmonize with the spirit and the letter of the words of these living prophets—they are the ones who have been comforted and who have had peace in their souls.

Today the Lord is revealing his will to all the inhabitants of the earth, and to members of the Church in particular, on the issues of this our day through the living prophets, with the First Presidency at the head. What they say as a presidency is what the Lord would say if he were here in person. This is the rock foundation of Mormonism. If it ever ceases to be the fact, this will be an apostate Church. But it will never cease to be the fact. When the Prophet Joseph Smith was asked what the difference was between the Latter-day Saint Church and the sectarian churches of the world, he said, "We have the Holy Ghost," by which he meant that by the power of the Holy Ghost the will of our Father is revealed to the minds of the leaders of this Church. So I repeat again, what the presidency say as a presidency is what the Lord would say if he were here, and it is scripture. It should be studied, understood, and followed, even as the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and other scriptures. Those who follow this course will not interpret what they say as being inspired by political bias or selfishness; neither will they say that the brethren are uninformed as to the circumstances of those affected by their counsel; or that their counsels cannot be accepted because they are not prefaced by the quotation, "Thus saith the Lord."

Those, and I testify to this out of my own experience, who will through mighty prayer and earnest study inform themselves as to what these living prophets say, and act upon it, will be visited by the spirit of the Lord and know by the spirit of revelation that they speak the mind and will of the Father.

This is a day of great conflict between truth and error. Satan is having a field day with the souls of men. Anti-christs stalk the earth in all lands, including our own. False philosophies and doctrines emanating from the prince of darkness are being presented

in such appealing manner as almost to deceive the very elect. There is only one sure way to divine the truth from the error. That is to learn what the mind and will of the Father is on these matters, and then do it. You will find it declared on many issues in the messages of the First Presidency given in the general conferences in 1942. I take the liberty of reading from the one given in April the following:

We again warn our people in America of the constantly increasing threat against our inspired Constitution and our free institutions set up under it. The same political tenets and philosophies that have brought war and terror in other parts of the world are at work amongst us in America. The proponents thereof are seeking to undermine our own form of government and to set up instead one of the forms of dictatorships now flourishing in other lands. These revolutionists are using a technique that is as old as the human race—a fervid but false solicitude for the unfortunate over whom they thus gain mastery, and then enslave them.

They suit their approaches to the particular group they seek to deceive. Among the Latter-day Saints they speak of their philosophy and their plans under it, as an ushering in of the United Order. Communism and all other similar isms bear no relationship whatever to the United Order. They are merely the clumsy counterfeits which Satan always devises of the gospel plan. Communism debases the individual and makes him the enslaved tool of the state to whom he must look for sustenance and religion; the United Order exalts the individual, leaves him his property, "according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs" (Doc. and Cov. 51:3), and provides a system by which he helps care for his less fortunate brethren; the United Order leaves every man free to choose his own religion as his conscience directs. Communism destroys man's God-given free agency; the United Order glorifies it. Latter-day Saints cannot be true to their faith and lend aid, encouragement, or sympathy to any of these false philosophies. They will prove snares to their feet.

If there be those among us who feel aggrieved, out of harmony, or to criticize what the Presidency say on these burning issues of our times, it would be well to remember that these prophets are but declaring to us the will of the Father, and that the only open road to peace and happiness is to bring ourselves into harmony therewith.

May the Lord help each of us to have a consuming desire to know and do his will, and to recognize that his will is made known to us and all peoples of this generation through the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and the interpretations and counsels of the living prophets, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and you also who may be listening in: I am very glad today that I am a member of the restored Church of Christ. I have had this gladness in my heart all the days of my life, since my early boyhood, and I bear testimony to you this afternoon and witness also, that this Church is of God, established by him, which, as has