

We came here to these valleys to be sustained on the foundations of this Church. We must extend now into all the world the same sustenance which we have received here. Pay your fast offerings, obey the principles of the welfare plan, and let us take the mountain of the Lord's house and all its gifts and blessings to the four corners of the earth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER BRUCE McCONKIE
Of the First Council of the Seventy

I know that Jesus is the Son of the Living God and that he was crucified for the sins of the world. I know that he came into the world with the definitely appointed mission to be the Redeemer and the Savior of men. I know of him, as he himself said to the Nephites:

. . . I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me. And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross. . . . (III Nephi 27:13, 14.)

A TESTIMONY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL

This I believe to be the great burden of the message of the restored gospel.

I believe and know also, by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to my soul, that Joseph Smith was the instrument in his hands of restoring in this day the fulness of those principles and authorities and graces whereby you and I can go back into our Father's kingdom. I testify and know of Joseph Smith, as the inspired document which announced his martyrdom states:

Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it.

I think that this is the second great message of the restored gospel in this day. And in addition to that, because a testimony must be brought up to date if it is to have any saving force and value in the lives of men, I testify that I know that the keys of the kingdom have continued with the Saints from the days of Joseph Smith, and that George Albert Smith who stands at the head today is the Lord's anointed and the Living Oracle.

It is all well and good to sing praises to the ancient prophets and build sepulchres to their names, but there is no salvation in that fact standing alone. If men in this world in our day want to go back to our Father's kingdom, it is incumbent upon them to come to the Living Oracle and have exercised in their behalf the authority of the priesthood. They must accept and live in harmony with the counsels of those men whom God has chosen today.

. . . he that receiveth my servants receiveth me. (D. & C. 84:36.)

And on the other hand if we do not receive the servants of the Lord, we do not receive the Lord.

HOW A KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH IS OBTAINED

In my judgment one of the first cornerstones of all righteousness in this world is for a person to get for himself a knowledge, by the revelations of the Holy Ghost to his soul, that this work in which we are engaged is true. How does one get such a knowledge? God is no respecter of persons and he, through the Holy Ghost, will reveal to every person who abides the law upon which the receipt of that revelation is predicated, a knowledge that this work is true. The first step in complying with that law is for a person to desire to know. Men are given according to their desires, and unless they desire in their hearts to know that this work is true, that Jesus is the Christ and that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God, they will never exert the effort, and they will never comply with the law which will entitle them to know. And I think that the second step is that they must study the principles of the kingdom. The Lord does not pour a testimony into a vacuum. Men have to know what the doctrines of the kingdom are. Men are saved no faster than they gain knowledge of Jesus Christ and the principles of salvation. No man can be saved in ignorance of Jesus Christ and the laws of salvation. Christ said to the Jews:

Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (John 5:39.)

He said in our day as the preface to his Book of Commandments:

Search these commandments, for they are true and faithful, and the prophecies and promises which are in them shall all be fulfilled.

We have to learn of the doctrines of the kingdom if we ever in this world expect to gain a revelation that those doctrines are true.

And the third step is that we must practice the principles which we learn. The Lord said:

... My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. (John 7:16-17.)

We must practice the principles which we learn and make them a living part of our lives.

And as a fourth step, because a testimony comes by the revelations of the Holy Ghost and not from any other source, we must pray to the Lord in humility and in faith and beseech him to reveal to us whether this work is true or whether it is not. In writing of the things that were on the gold plates, Moroni said this:

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.

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

Now there is not a person, a God-fearing and righteous person in this world, who cannot come to this kingdom and by obedience to that law, embracing those four steps, gain for himself a knowledge that this work is true, a knowledge that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was the head of this dispensation and that the keys of the kingdom are with the Saints today. The Church has not strayed away. This is the Lord's work. This Church is literally the kingdom of God on earth, and the Lord's hand is in it, and there is inspiration at the head. There is no peace, and there is no safety; there is no salvation or solace or comfort or anything like these for the Latter-day Saints outside the kingdom. On the outside there is darkness and anguish of spirit and turmoil of heart and everything that upsets a man and that leads him on the broad course that goes down. But there are peace and joy for us here in this life, and there is a hope of eternal life for us hereafter, if we stand by the Church, and if we hearken to the counsels that come from the Living Oracles today. They are the voice of God to the Latter-day Saints and to the world in the day in which we live.

The first thing that a person ought to do is to know for himself that this work is true, and after he gets that kind of knowledge in his heart, he will have a desire to work the works of righteousness. He will want to do as Alma said at the waters of Mormon. To mourn with those that mourn; and to comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as a witness of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places, and then having that desire in his heart, he will want to covenant in the waters of baptism to do righteously in return for having the Spirit of the Lord poured out upon him in abundance.

And I think that that covenant is the second step in the plan of salvation, and that the third step is to press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope and a love of God and of all men, and then as Nephi wrote:

If ye shall press forward, feasting upon the words of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. (II Nephi 31:20.)

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS A BLESSED PEOPLE

On one occasion Christ preached a sermon where the doctrine was very strong, the sermon on the bread of life. After he had done it, the multitudes, including the disciples, began to fall away, and

he turned, and I suppose it was with a note of sadness, said to the Twelve:

“Will ye also go away?”

And then Simon Peter who was to be his mouthpiece, the Living Oracle for that day, spoke up and said:

Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. (John 6:68, 69.)

That is the condition that the Latter-day Saints are in today. We have the revelations of heaven. God has spoken in this day. Light and knowledge have been poured out upon us, and there is no place in all this world that we can find peace or solace or comfort—unless we keep the commandments of God and desire to do the things that he wants us to do.

I do not know anything in this world that is greater than to have the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, and that is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and every Saint has been promised that in connection with his baptism; and I do not think there is anything greater in eternity than to have the companionship of those of the celestial world, to have exaltation and eternal lives, and that is the thing that has been promised to the Saints on condition that they obey the law, that they keep the commandments of God.

Now there is nothing in this world that I would rather do than have the privilege of preaching the gospel and of devoting such time and abilities as the Lord may bless me with to the building up of his kingdom. I am grateful beyond any ability that I have to express for the privilege of being a member of the First Council of the Seventy and mingling with you Latter-day Saints and traveling in the stakes of Zion, and I pray that the Lord will bless me and will bless you and pour out his spirit upon the Saints, that we may keep the commandments of God and be entitled to the great blessings that flow therefrom, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Congregation and the Singing Mothers sang the hymn, “O Ye Mountains High,” by Penrose: Hymn Book No. 317, L.D.S. Hymns No. 338; Elder J. Spencer Cornwall, Director.

BISHOP LEGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

This is the year that we are paying special tribute and honor to our pioneers. Many of us are descended from them. They made great sacrifices to come to these valleys of the mountains. They left their homes, and President Grant used to say they left willingly because they had to. They could not bring very much with them in the way of this world's goods, but they brought something that