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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Constancy is a virtue of such high degree that James, in his epistle to the tribes of Israel, declared it to be one of the distinguishing characteristics of Deity. He wrote.

Every good gift and every perfect gift . . . cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17.)

In like vein, Paul writing to the Hebrews, says of the Lord:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Hebrews 13:8.)

GOD UNCHANGEABLE

In the very nature of things, the Almighty must possess this steadfastness. To be worshiped he must command the implicit confidence of the worshiper. Unless there is an abiding faith in the integrity of Deity, there could be no trust. But there could be neither faith nor trust if he were inconstant, changeable, capricious, or unstable. One must know that he is to be counted on. His promises must be infallibly sure of performance, and the same approbation or condemnation must flow unerringly from the same acts regardless of by whom, or where, or in what age of the world committed, with due allowance for the knowledge and enlightenment available to the actors. The ultimate law by which man's conduct is to be judged must be the same law tomorrow as today and so on down through all the tomorrows. Such is our concept of the immutability of the course of God. There is something immensely solid about that concept. It speaks of perpetuity and gives a sense of something enduring to stand on.

THE SOUNDNESS OF PRINCIPLES

But it is not a popular idea in this day when principles and practices and institutions and beliefs, grown venerable with age, are cast aside with contemptuous abandon, often for no other reason than that they are old. We have even invented some names for those who refuse to throw overboard the principles by which they have lived and flourished. In the language of the day, no doubt, James and Paul would be called reactionaries, anti-liberals, non-progressives. It would be easily demonstrable that most of the supposedly new and progressive offerings of the hour are in fact age-old and have been tried and found delusive and been thrown into the discard in the far-distant past. Their advocates so far from pointing the way to progress, are the real reactionaries, leading back to discredited failures of long ago. I have a notion that the reactionary or progressive quality of a doctrine should be deter-

mined by the soundness or lack of soundness of the principles it embodies and not by its age. Take for instance the Ten Commandments.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

They are fairly old. But which one of them would you eliminate? In what degree have the principles they lay down found their place in the laws enacted by the legislative bodies of modern nations? Would any one in all the world be the worse off for observing them? Can they be violated without injurious consequences to the violator? These are fair tests of their eternal nature. It is safe to say that the observance of them never brought to the individual remorse, nor caused injury or suffering to another. On the contrary, remorse, self-accusation, sorrow, and injury to others are the inescapable consequences of the violation of most of them.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Exodus 20:16) is particularly to be commended to our attention in these electioneering times. If all the falsity and calculated deception were squeezed out of many of the speeches we listen to, they could be reduced to about one minute's duration instead of thirty.

"Thou shalt not covet . . . any thing that is thy neighbour's." (Exodus 20:17.) The observance of this law would rid the world of most of its strife. Out of a fairly long experience in dealing with the disputations of men, and the causes, I am persuaded that most of them arise out of a covetous desire to obtain some material thing or to reap some advantage to which the contender is not entitled. If everybody wanted to do what he knew was right—deal justly, man to man, and would be content to have what he justly could claim—there wouldn't be much litigation or strife. If applied to the conduct of nations, there would be no war. War results when one nation covets what another nation has or seeks dominion over it. The victim does not want to give up either its possession or its independence. The designing one says, "I am bigger than you," or "I have a bigger or better equipped army so I shall take what I want by force." The other resists, and we have war.

The tenth commandment has to be obeyed before war and contention can cease. It states a universal principle, true for all time; hence, it is subject neither to change nor compromise. The same may be said of all the commandments of God. I can think of none, the keeping of which is harmful to the observer or any one else. On the contrary, it brings inward peace. Great stability results to individuals and nations from steadfast adherence.

THE QUALITY OF STABILITY

John Ruskin, in that unique book, the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, speaks of stability as an essential quality of the very buildings which we rear and which are the expression of our culture:

The greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, or in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness . . . it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and color, and preciousness of architecture; and it is not until a building has assumed this character, till it has been entrusted with the frame, and hallowed by the deeds of men, till its walls have been witnesses of suffering, and its pillars rise out of the shadows of death, that its existence, more lasting as it is than that of the natural objects of the world around it, can be gifted with even so much as these possess of language and of life.

Today, however, men are not building for durability either in their structures, their lives, their religious faiths, or their institutions. The result is a troubled world. Everywhere is anxiety and the dread arising from uncertainty which halts or stays all the normal processes of life. It all arises out of one cause—lack of fidelity to right principles—principles which are known and are not mysteriously hidden. Men have failed in allegiance to their religious principles and nations have not been true to their political principles. The two infidelities go together. When there is a breakdown of religious constancy, there inescapably follows deterioration in the political morality. Both have the same root cause, namely, the breaking away from or the compromising of sound principles. It amounts to a running away from reality and giving way to the urge for avoiding the hard and rigorous disciplines incident to meeting the issues of life, trying to reach goals without traveling the thorny road that leads to them. We want to avoid all the disagreeable things. We are trying to live under a pleasure economy in a pleasure world. So we *live*, really, in nothing: for no God, for no piety towards the past, for no pride of race or personality. Once we lived for freedom, pledging "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." The very expression implies sacrifice and suffering, discipline of the soul to meet reality. Now we want to be spared suffering of any kind—physical, emotional, or mental. We seek security, a six-hour day, a car, and a pension. But all the time life eludes us, peace of mind eludes us, and we have dissatisfaction, turmoil, uncertainty, and dread.

CONTINUITY NEEDED IN CHANGES

True, human institutions, bearing in themselves the imperfections incident to the limited wisdom and capacities of those who fashion and operate them, fall short of the permanence characteristic of things divine and may be subject to change with the progress of unfolding wisdom and experience. But change should be toward the ideal and should not run ahead of readiness to receive and assimilate it without violent disruptions lest mischief instead of betterment result. Change so brought about will be accomplished without destroying continuity, a factor vital to orderly progress.

Let me point this up with an illustration. When the American colonies revolted against the mother country, it was not out of a

purpose to discard the principles by which they had lived. As Englishmen they merely claimed the recognized rights of Englishmen, which rights, they contended, they, as residents of the colonies, were being denied. If Britain had acceded to their requests, they would have been content to remain as subjects of the kingdom and there would have been no revolution. Britain did not yield to their demands. So they declared a political separation and fought a war to make their declaration good. Having achieved that, they had to set up a new framework of government to carry on. But they did not throw their old principles into the scrap heap. They perpetuated them under their new government. The principle they had contended for was freedom—the rights of free men. That continued to be the purpose of their new government and was the core of continuity binding the old to the new. They were still, as their English forebears had been, a God-fearing Christian nation standing on their right to be free. The government they fashioned was concerned primarily with making that ancient right secure. They tried by every art and device they knew to provide against another infringement of it. It took a little floundering, a period of travail, before they got their government going; but when they did, it constituted no rupture with the past, and that continuity imparted a wonderful stability to the new nation; it began life free of blood purges, reprisals and excesses. For one hundred sixty years now it has run its unbroken course. So begun and so perpetuated, the United States of America has achieved unparalleled transcendence among the nations. It stands today the last hope of free men, the one steady support to this reeling world.

FURY OF FRENCH REVOLUTION

Contrast that with the story of the French Revolution which came along shortly after. This was inaugurated by a wild fury of murder, rapine, and blind vengeance, with monsters contending for supremacy and the victor sending the vanquished to the guillotine. Excesses spiraled, with frenzied zealots pushing ever to further extremes. At the bottom was the utter abandonment of principles. It was sought to wipe out the past. God was dethroned and mocked in derision; reason deified and a new cult proclaimed. With the thread of continuity completely severed, there could be no settling down to a stabilized order, and terror reigned until Napoleon trained on them his guns and established his personal rule. Since then, governments have risen and fallen in France, republic passing into totalitarian empire, and empire back into republic, and republic into republic with the very existence of the present one hanging in the balance. The attendant uncertainty and confusion and lack of steadfastness is its plague.

SOCIALISTIC EXPERIMENTATION

And yet with this and multitudinous other examples of history before us, we have today in this land those who would destroy our solid foundations by importing here from the Old World what our forebears ran away from to come and plant deep in the virgin soil of this new land the roots of the tree of liberty. The news is leaking out that there is now forming, to be publicly launched as soon as the elections are over, a new party, spearheaded by men who, having enjoyed a brief hour of power, but now out of favor in the party that elevated them, are loath to see authority slipping out of their hands. Their purpose is to bring to pass here the socialistic experimentation that is destroying the strength of England and shaking that nation to its foundation. That experiment has been aptly described as "the half-way house on the road to totalitarianism."

The land is also fecund of pseudo religious cults spawning like pestilence. We have already lost some of our own stability and shall not recover it if the people surrender to the seductive lure of specious phantasmas, religious or political, forswearing the solid principles on which we are foundationed and on which the Church and the nation have grown to greatness and power.

UNREST AND TURMOIL ABROAD

Look out over the world today and you see seething unrest, turmoil, confusion, dread, suspicion, envy, distrust, and preparation for devastating war. What has happened?

Britain and France went to war to guarantee the territorial integrity of Poland. We made that cause our cause. The principle was that no nation should be suffered to be trampled underfoot by a ruthless invader of its land. The enemy was subdued, but the principle of protection of a people against the incursions and oppression of a foreign tyrant, for which the war was ostensibly fought, was relinquished and a large part of the territory of Poland was suffered to be seized and its entire people brought under the dominion of a despot quite as ruthless and cruel as the first invader. The invasion of Finland was denounced as an act of wanton brutality and the perpetrator of the invasion as a despot as tyrannical as any in the world. Then by a turn of the wheel of fortune that despot got over on to our side, or more properly speaking, we got on to his and winked our eyes at his dismemberment of that unhappy land and his impositions upon its people of unconscionable indemnities.

Without so much as consulting our ancient friend, China, we gave consent to the seizure of a vast chunk of its territory and the control over its vital communications.

ONE TRUTH AND ONE MORALITY

The world is reaping the fruit of this abandonment of principles. There is only one truth and one morality. When discovered, it matters not whether they find application to religious observances or to political systems. They bear the hallmark of eternity and may not with impunity be abandoned or compromised.

Stability will come when men once more live by the promises they make and in their public morality as in their private conduct, in their religious as in their political life, they develop integrity of purpose and steadfastness to principle and adherence to known laws foundationed in the wisdom of the eternal.

As we struggle forward toward that goal, let us hold steadfastly before our eyes the shining beacon of Christ's perfect order as stated for us by Alma:

... he cannot walk in crooked paths; neither doth he vary from that which he hath said; neither hath he a shadow of turning from the right to the left, or from that which is right to that which is wrong; therefore, his course is one eternal round. (Alma 7:20.)

May God grant us the wisdom and the strength to achieve this stability, I pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

While I stand before you, my brothers and sisters, I sense my weakness, and ask, with humility, for your faith and prayers in my behalf. I am indeed grateful to the Lord for his many blessings to me, the greatest, of course, being the gospel and the knowledge of its divinity. The most cherished blessing of the gospel is the opportunity it gives us to continue throughout all eternity the family ties made on earth. Can there be anything greater or more far-reaching? Is there any greater joy that can come than that which comes from unselfish love for others, the love of a good wife and husband, united together in holy matrimony, the love for our children? Is there anything which makes a man feel more like bursting his shirt buttons off in pride and happiness than the first time he picks up his own child; or brings the mother more sheer joy than when her first child is placed in her arms?

IMPORTANCE OF TEMPLE MARRIAGE

Yet too many of us are willing to give up all these joys of family ties when death comes, and come it will, to separate us. If we do not obey God's laws of celestial marriage, we cannot hope to continue as a family unit with father, mother, children, grandchildren, and so on down the line. Death is a sad enough separation at best, even