

ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

Of the First Council of the Seventy

THIS MORNING we have heard fervent and true witness borne by these great men who have stood in this pulpit about the fundamental truths on which we stand. We have heard witness borne of the divine mission of Christ our Lord, of the glorious things incident to the restoration of the gospel, and of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth in our day.

Along with these brethren, as a witness of these things, knowing for a surety of the truth of what I say, I bear witness and testimony and record that God has spoken in this our day; that the heavens have been opened; that the fulness of the gospel has been given again to men on earth; that angels have ministered from the presence of the Lord; and that the kingdom of God, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is here in the most literal and real sense.

Now, this is a startling, a dramatic, a marvelous announcement and claim to make. Perhaps it staggers the imagination of people who have not been schooled in the revelations.

Permit me to remind you that the ancient revelations speak in great measure, at extended length, about the glorious things that are to occur in the latter-days, in the era of restoration. I think there is no single subject covered in the ancient revelations as extensively, not even excepting the many revelations about the divine mission of our Lord, as is the general subject of the great era of restoration, the period when God will gather all things in one and consummate his glorious work in the latter days.

For instance: You will recall that after our Lord had organized and set up his Church in the Meridian of Time, after he had ministered among his apostles, his brethren, for a period of forty days following his resurrection, after all things were established for that era, and on the occasion when he was to ascend in glory to his Father, he was asked the question: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

And you will recall that he replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power." (Acts 1:6-7.) But then he sent his witnesses to declare the glad tidings of salvation for that era to all the world.

In other words, those brethren knew that in a day subsequent to that which then was, in a period after New Testament times, the promises, glorious promises made to Israel, were to be fulfilled.

You will recall that all of the prophets in ancient Israel spoke and wrote at great length about the latter days and the restoration of the kingdom to Israel.

You will recall that early in his ministry, when Peter was speaking to those on whose hands the blood of Christ was found, he said these very expressive words:

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: [now please note]

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. (Acts 3:19-21.)

That is to say, between the first and second comings of our Lord, there was to be an era in the earth's history which was named "the times of restitution of all things," or as we would express it, in more up-to-date language, the *era* or *period* or *age* of restoration.

You will recall that it was Paul who said that in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times all things would be gathered together in one in Christ, both things which are in heaven and on earth. (See Eph. 1:10.)

You will recall the words that Elder Hugh B. Brown quoted to us that an angelic ministrant should fly through the midst of heaven in the latter days to bring the everlasting gospel to men on earth. (See Rev. 14:6-7.)

We need not multiply illustrations; we easily could do so. There are multitudes and multitudes of scriptures which tell the events that are to transpire in our day, and so far as we can learn, no one else ever claimed revealed knowledge of their fulfillment; no one else ever came professing to know of the fulfillment of the prophecies of old, relative to the setting up of the kingdom of God in the last days.

We have this witness in our hearts, a witness borne of the Spirit, that these things have in our day occurred; and we believe most firmly that the Lord is no respecter of persons, which means that he will give the Holy Ghost to any living soul who will abide the law entitling him to receive revelations therefrom, and that member of the Godhead will bear record to him of the divinity of Christ his Son and of this great latter-day work that has been established.

You know, from the beginning, from the days of the Prophet Joseph to this moment, the men who have been living oracles, witnesses of the truth of these things, have been sound, stable, great, intelligent, competent men. We have not been led by people who are unstable or fanatical or unbalanced in any sense of the word. We have had men who have been educators and bankers, presidents of insurance companies, people who have sat in the halls of Congress and in Cabinets with Presidents, the most stable, mature, and sensible men, industrialists and otherwise, that anyone could expect to find.

Now it would seem to me that when men of the highest, soundest caliber—I mean the living oracles, the Presidency and the Twelve, from the beginning to now—stand up as we have heard it done here this morning, and bear fervent witness to the divinity of these things, and certify that they know as they know that they live, that God has spoken in this day, it seems to me that any person in the world who has spiritual inclination ought to stay himself and wonder, and be willing to search and make inquiry, and find whether these glorious

and marvelous things are true, or whether they are not.

I had a man tell me how it came about that he was converted to the Church in his later years, past sixty. He said that he chanced to be on Temple Square. He walked into this building when President J. Reuben Clark was addressing a civic organization on a civic or political subject. At the end of his talk, this man told me, President Clark said in substance, "Now, I am going to bear you my testimony about Joseph Smith and the restoration of the gospel," which he did with the power that few can equal. The convert then said, "I had never before heard of Joseph Smith, but I did know who J. Reuben Clark was, and I figured that if a man of that caliber would tell me in the sincerity with which he spoke that this great truth was available, that I ought to make inquiry and find out," and he investigated and joined the Church. That is a very sensible attitude.

To what these great men who have spoken this morning have said, I add my own personal testimony, an assurance born of the Spirit, an assurance coming when the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Lord, which has spoken to the spirit which is within me, conveying truth with unshakable certainty. I add my witness that God Almighty has opened the heavens in our day; that all of the laws and principles which comprise the gospel of salvation are here again; that legal administrators stand at the head of the kingdom of God on earth; and that for all who will hearken and believe and conform to these principles there is peace and joy in this life and a hope of eternal reward hereafter. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.