

Sunday, October 12

Third Day

and children better than they had ever been before. That is the mission of the gospel of Jesus Christ—to make evil-minded men and women good, and to make good men and women better; in other words, to change men's lives, to change human nature.

Beverley Nichols (and I repeat what I have said before), author of *The Fool Hath Said*, writes impressively on changing of human nature: "You can change human nature. No man who has felt in him the Spirit of Christ, even for half a minute, can deny this truth, the one great truth in a world of little lies. You do change human nature, your own human nature, if you surrender it to him. To deny this is only to proclaim yourself as an uneducated fool.

"Human nature can be changed, here and now.

"Human nature has been changed, in the past.

"Human nature must be changed, on an enormous scale, in the future, unless the world is to be drowned in its own blood.

"And only Christ can change it. . .

"Twelve men did quite a lot to change the world nineteen hundred years ago. Twelve simple men, with only the wind to bear them over the seas, with only a few pence in their pockets, and a shining faith in their hearts! They fell far short of their ideal; their words were twisted and mocked; and false temples were built over their bones, in praise of a Christ they would have rejected. And yet, by the light of their inspiration, many of the world's loveliest things were created, and many of the world's finest minds inspired.

"If twelve men did that nineteen

hundred years ago, what might not twelve men do today? For God has now given us the power of whispering across space, of transmitting our thoughts from one end of the earth to another. What shall we whisper—what shall we think? That is the question!"

To be just a lay member of the Church means that every man is a Christian gentleman, that every husband is true to the ideals of chastity, that every young boy and every young girl refrains from indulgence in tobacco, in strong drink, and keeps himself or herself free from the sins of the world. That is what Mormonism means in daily life. If you are called upon to render service in any position, render it. If you are released, you will accept your release, always remembering that the Church is established for your benefit, and the benefit and happiness of your children and your children's children. If you will live in accordance with those humble principles under the covenants you made at the water's edge, and since that time in Sacrament meetings, and many of you in the House of God, you will fill a noble mission, and God will reward you.

May every member of the Church experience this transformation in this life, and so live that others, seeing his good deeds, may be led to glorify our Father in heaven, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.

ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brothers and sisters and friends: I have sought earnestly to prepare myself for this occasion and now that it has come my hope and prayer, in which I ask you to join, is that we may continue to enjoy the sweet influence we have felt while listening to the great message of President McKay.

As I stand before you this morning I

realize that many of you, unseen by me, are listening in on radio and television. You are most welcome. Indeed, we feel complimented by your participation with us. As I speak I shall have you in mind, particularly you who may not be members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

If you have been with us during the

last hour you have heard, and perhaps seen, President David O. McKay deliver a most timely and inspirational address. Moved by it, as I know you were, perhaps you will be even more impressed if I tell you something about his high and holy calling.

You have already observed that he is an unusual personality—tall, straight, dignified, and gracious. Through a devoted lifelong service to his God and to his fellow men he has partaken so deeply of the divine nature that he is filled with that charity defined by one of the Book of Mormon prophets as the “pure love of Christ.”

Fine as he is in his own right, the great office to which he has been called adds to his stature. For he is not just the presiding officer of an ordinary church, he is the rightful successor to the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr. He is God’s prophet and personal representative in the earth. Just as Peter was the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of former-day saints, so President McKay is today the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is the President of the priesthood of that Church. He is in fact and in truth a prophet, seer, and revelator. To this high station he was called through revelation from heaven. He was not appointed nor elected to it by men.

In 1906, under divine inspiration, President Joseph F. Smith, then God’s personal representative and mouthpiece in the earth, laid his hands upon President McKay and conferred upon him the holy apostleship with all its gifts and powers. Pursuant to the order of God’s Holy Priesthood which is the government operative in the Church of Christ, he was, in April 1951, sustained in and ordained to his present high office.

President Joseph F. Smith, who conferred the apostleship upon President McKay, had received his authority in like manner from President Brigham Young. President Young had received his authority from Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith, Jr.

And who was Joseph Smith, Jr.? He was none other than God’s great prophet of the restoration.

At the head of every gospel dispen-

sation the Lord has placed one of his mighty sons—Adam, Noah, Abraham, for example. Jesus Christ, himself, stood at the head of the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time. Joseph Smith, Jr., than whom none of these save Jesus only was greater, was appointed and ordained in the heavens to head this last and greatest dispensation, the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, into which, as rivers into a mighty ocean, flow all former dispensations. Joseph Smith was and is to modern Israel what Moses was to ancient Israel, leader, law-giver, prophet, seer, and revelator.

You will recall that John the Beloved saw in vision an “. . . angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” (Revelation 14:6.) Joseph Smith was the person to whom that angel came.

Born of humble parents, he lived less than thirty-nine years. In June 1844, he died a martyr, sealing with his own blood his witness to the truth, even the gospel of Jesus Christ, which through him God had restored to earth for the benefit of all men.

This gospel has often been spoken of as a way of life. This however is not quite accurate. Consisting as it does of the principles and ordinances necessary to man’s exaltation, it is not just a way of life, it is *the* one and only way of life by which men may accomplish the full purpose of their mortality.

The gospel begins with God and man’s relationship to him.

In the early 1800’s, the days of the Prophet’s youth, no living man had a correct understanding of God. Professed believers knew no more about him than did the Athenians who posted inscriptions to the “Unknown God.”

Stirred by a religious revival, moved with a sincere desire to know which, if any, of the contending sects was right and relying upon the promise of James that, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5), Joseph Smith in simple faith and earnest prayer sought wisdom from God.

The time was spring, 1820. Joseph was then in his fourteenth year.

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The place was Palmyra, Western New York state.

The result: God the Eternal Father and his Son Jesus Christ appeared to him. "I saw two Personages," he said, "whose brightness and glory defy all description." These two Personages spoke to him and called him by name. He heard their voices and asked them questions. They gave him answer. (Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:17.)

When he came out of that sacred interview he knew with certainty the nature of God. He had seen and conversed with him. From him he had received a personal introduction to his resurrected Son Jesus Christ.

In after years Joseph referred to God as an "exalted man," and said that both he and the Son were personages of flesh and bone, as tangible as man. (D & C 130:22.)

Through subsequent revelations he learned that the relationship between God and men is that of parent and children. "The inhabitants" of the "worlds" . . . "are begotten sons and daughters unto God," said the Lord to him in one of the revelations. (*Ibid.*, 76:24.)

The Prophet further learned through communication from heaven that as the begotten children of God we are endowed with the potential to become like him, even as mortal children may become like their mortal parents. He came to understand the high ideal projected by the Savior, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.)

Not only did Joseph Smith receive through divine revelation knowledge concerning God, man's relationship to him, the doctrine of eternal progression, and all the other glorious principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ upon obedience to which man's exaltation is conditioned, he was also divinely commissioned to organize, and again establish upon earth, the Church of Jesus Christ; the organization through which these principles and ordinances can be authoritatively taught and administered. To enable him to do so he was endowed with the Holy Priesthood which is delegated authority to act in the name of God.

John the Baptist, who held the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood in the days of Jesus, now a resurrected person, came to earth and laid his hands upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them "the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins." (D & C 13.)

Peter, James, and John, who as the presidency of Christ's Church in the apostolic dispensation held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, came and conferred this priesthood and the keys thereof upon Joseph and Oliver. Other holy beings delivered to them gospel keys which they had received and held in former dispensations. For example, in April of 1836, Moses "committed unto . . . [them] the keys of the gathering of Israel . . ." and the restoration of the ten tribes. Elias ". . . committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham," and "Elijah the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death, stood before [them] . . . and said: Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors." (*Ibid.*, 110:11-16.) Thus was the gospel for the salvation of the dead restored.

Having thus received from heavenly beings the foregoing and other endowments, Joseph Smith the prophet and his associate Oliver Cowdery conferred them upon the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as they were directed by the Lord to do. Brigham Young, one of the original Twelve succeeded the Prophet Joseph as president of the Church. President David O. McKay, as already pointed out, is today the rightful successor to the Prophet Joseph Smith. He now holds all the priesthood, keys, and powers received by the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Now, my beloved brothers and sisters and friends, it is our solemn obligation and great joy to testify to you that these things are so. They are not "cunningly devised fables." They are realities of the utmost significance. We know them to be true with the same certainty that Peter knew Jesus was the Christ when, in answer to the Master's question, "But whom say ye that I am?" he boldly declared, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This he knew, said Jesus, because his Father in heaven had revealed it unto him. The conviction with which we speak was obtained in the same way. (Matt. 16:15-16.)

In like manner every child of God if he will but do the work as Jesus said, may know of the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith and that President David O. McKay is now his legal successor; he may likewise know that the gospel as restored through the Prophet Joseph is the gospel of Jesus Christ, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the repository of that gospel, that the Church possesses the priesthood of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit of God and that to the Church God has given the commission and the power to preach the gospel and administer all the ordinances necessary to the salvation and exaltation of us, his children.

The Lord is no respecter of persons. He himself has said that, ". . . every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am." (D & C 93:1.)

If enough people can be brought to this knowledge they will exercise such power for righteousness that the strifes and contentions of this world will melt away as the hoarfrost before the burning rays of the rising sun. Upon the slim prospect that such will be the case hangs the issue of the preservation or termination of our present civilization.

To provide an escape from our threatened destruction was one of the reasons specified by the Lord for restoring the gospel. ". . . knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth," he said, "I the

Lord, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments." (*Ibid.*, 1:17.) Obedience to the commandments here referred to—the principles and ordinances of the gospel—constitute the sure and only means of escaping the impending calamity. That the peoples of the earth will avail themselves of this means of escape is by no means certain. But whether they do or whether they do not they who know the truth are not dismayed, for they know that the promised blessings do not depend upon the conduct of others and that that peace promised by the Savior flows into the heart of every soul who keeps his commandments regardless of what others do. Even as Jesus "endured the cross" "for the joy that was set before him," (Hebrews 12:2) so his true disciples are sustained in their trials by an inner peace and the glorious hope and assurance of eternal life. Such are the fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Of these glorious gospel truths I bear humble and solemn witness. To each of you I extend an urgent invitation to "Come listen to a prophet's voice,
And hear the word of God,
And in the way of truth rejoice,
And sing for joy aloud.
We've found the way the prophets went
Who lived in days of yore;
Another prophet now is sent
This knowledge to restore."

—Joseph J. Daynes

God bless you, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He who has given the address to which we have just listened is Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve. The Choir and Congregation will now sing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Elder Condie will lead us.

After the singing, we will hear from Elder Ezra Taft Benson.

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For A Prophet."