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Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

"Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good, if ye walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith ye have covenanted one with another." (D&C 90:24.)

This quotation was from one of the revelations given when the Church was less than three years old, given in March 1833, which means that at that time there were no members who had been members of the Church more than three years. Their enemies from without were bringing persecution upon all who professed to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ. Under withering and merciless persecution, they were seeing in our day an interpretation of the Master's interpretation of the parable of the sowers. Some of the new members "brought forth only thirtyfold; some brought forth sixtyfold; and a small percentage only, an hundredfold."

With little or no experience in Church administration among the Church leaders at that time, there was occasionally confusion and disunity, and the immaturity of the Church members was evidenced in quarrelings and bickerings and factional disputes, and there was a spirit of apostasy in various places, which threatened at times to destroy the very structure of the Church.

It was important, then, that the Lord should send this important warning and instruction that they should search diligently, pray always, and be believing, so that all things would work to their good. Diligence means to be industrious, the opposite of being lazy or careless or indifferent. In other words, they must search to know the doctrines of the Church, and they must search to know the instructions that had been given concerning Church procedures. They were to pray always. Our missionaries after over a hundred years of experience have learned that no one is truly converted until he prays on his knees to know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and that the Church is indeed the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. And the four essentials that the

missionaries teach to one who has never prayed before are: he first must thank; he next must ask; he must do it in the name of Jesus Christ, and then Amen. And with that simple instruction the beginning inquirer after truth is taught to pray. In praying, he is enjoined as the father said to his son, after listening to his son's prayers, "Son, don't give the Lord instructions. You just report for duty."

It is a wonderful thing for us in our younger years to remember what old age brings. Chauncey Depew, who as a United States Congressman on his ninetieth birthday was asked about his philosophy of life. He replied that when he was a young man his greatest ambition had been to display his intelligence, but the older he grew the greater was his anxiety to conceal his ignorance. It was indeed the beginning of learning when as Moses said, after the great and soul-stirring revelation of the personality of God, "Now for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I had never supposed." (Moses 1:10.) That was in the beginning of his wisdom.

To be believing means, first to obtain a testimony and then strive to retain it. The testing must precede the testimony, for they will "receive no witness until after the trial of their faith." As the Master had said, ". . . that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:6, 8.)

The power of the Spirit was more definitely defined in an early revelation to these new Saints when the Lord said: ". . . I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, who is your God and your Redeemer, even so surely shall you receive. . . .

"Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon

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you and which shall dwell in your heart." (D&C 8:1-2.)

Now then, he said further, that if they would walk uprightly and remember their covenant, then they would have all things which would work to their good. To walk uprightly means to be morally correct, to be honest, to be just, to be honorable. As the Lord told Enos, the grandson of Lehi, "I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments," (Enos 1:10) which was repeated in substance when the Lord revealed this great truth: "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say ye have no promise." (D&C 82:10.)

We heard an excellent discourse this morning on the meaning of a covenant as it pertained to the priesthood. The nature of the covenant that we enter into when we became members of the Church was fully explained when the Lord said: "And again, by way of commandment to the Church concerning the manner of baptism—All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church." (*Ibid.*, 20:37.)

The people in the Book of Mormon days were instructed with a similar explanation. "And now I speak," Moroni said, "concerning baptism. Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.

"Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins." (Moroni 6:1-2.)

King Benjamin explained it this way: "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his

daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters." (Mosiah 5:7.)

Others of the prophets asked this soul-searching question of those who were candidates for baptism, "Are you willing to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that you might be in, even until death?" (See *Ibid.*, 18:9.) To the first one of those who was baptized, the prophet who officiated said as he was directed under inspiration, "... Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world." (*Ibid.*, 18:13.)

Never was there a time when Church members generally, and newly baptized converts, particularly, throughout the stakes and missions needed more to be reminded of the Lord's admonition that they should "Search diligently, and pray always, and be believing that all things should work to their good if they would walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith they had covenanted one with another," as the scriptures I have referred to have so well explained. (See D&C 90:24.)

Thousands of new members have built upon the foundation of their faith at the time of their baptism, but there are wolves in sheep's clothing among them. Older members by bad example could "wound their weak conscience and make their weaker brethren to offend." (See I Cor. 8:11-13.) Dissension and confusion could result from lack of experience, and the tide of persecution from the outside could roll in upon them and engulf them in a flood of apostasy unless they heed the Lord's warnings.

I was down in Australia nearly a year ago, and after I had spent a long evening instructing the stake leaders in their duties, one of the brethren raised

his hand and said, "Now, Brother Lee, you have spent the evening telling us what to do. Now answer us one more question. Just how do we obtain the spiritual power necessary for us to lead this people and to instruct them?" And I have been trying to answer that question ever since he asked it. Perhaps a few illustrations will serve to suggest the answer:

I received a letter recently from a patriarch who had been instructed that what he should speak in blessings upon the people should be that which the Lord inspired and not of himself. In the struggle which followed his ordination he sought to know how he could distinguish between what the Lord inspired and that which was just his own thinking. He remembered, he said, what the Lord admonished in an early revelation to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery: ". . . you cannot write" (which to him meant you cannot say) "that which is sacred save it be given you from me." (D&C 9:9.)

"So my personal problem finally was resolved," he wrote me, "by making this conclusion: You have been called and ordained to this work by an authorized servant of the Lord. You have the authority to proceed. You must live as closely to the Lord as you know how. You must constantly seek and pray for guidance and inspiration, then perform your duties in humility and rest content in the knowledge that you have done all you could, and in the firm belief that what you have said in giving blessings was indeed inspired."

The Lord's formula for new and untried leaders was this:

"Again I say unto you, that it shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church.

"And again, the elders, priests and teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel, which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in the which is the fulness of the gospel.

"And they shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and

these shall be their teachings, as they shall be directed by the Spirit.

"And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach." (D&C 42:11-14.)

Summarized this meant that there were four essentials for service in the kingdom of God. (1) They must be ordained, (2) they must teach from the standard Church works, (3) they must live as they preached, (4) they must teach by the Spirit. ". . . when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men." (2 Nephi 33:1.)

Well, so the Lord has told us in plain language how his servants could be inspired. It was as Alma observed in the sons of Mosiah who were great and successful missionaries. "They were strong in a knowledge of the truth." They were sound in understanding. They fasted and prayed often, and they cultivated "the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of revelation," so that "when they taught they taught with power and authority of God." (Alma 17:1-3.)

I met a man in his late seventies down in Brisbane, Australia, who said that all his lifetime he had been searching for a church that could answer satisfactorily his question, "Are God and his Son, the Savior of the world, living with your church today?" And always the answer to his question was negative. "The scriptures are closed," they said. "There is no prophet through whom the Lord speaks today. God does not reveal himself to man."

He was convalescing from a painful accident when two young men—missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—called. In their opening testimony, they bore witness that the Lord had appeared with his Heavenly Father to Joseph Smith, and in answer to his question as to which church they should join, he was told to join none of them, for they were all wrong, ". . . they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." (See Joseph Smith 2:19.)

Here was the answer he had been seeking, and the Spirit bore witness that this was in truth the true Church of Jesus Christ, with which the Father and the Son were living today.

Brigham Young, in speaking about the same thing, said, "If all the talent, tact, wisdom, and refinement of the world had been sent to me with the Book of Mormon and had declared in the most exalted eloquence the truth of it, undertaking to prove it by learning and worldly wisdom, they would have been to me like the smoke which rises only to vanish away. But when I saw a man without eloquence or talent for public speaking who could say, 'I know by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith is a prophet of the Lord,' and the Holy Ghost preceding from that individual, illuminated my understanding, and light, glory, and immortality were before me. I was encircled by them, filled with them, and I knew for myself that their testimony was true." (*J of D*, Vol. 1, p. 90.)

We must teach with that in mind. If the Holy Ghost does not bear witness to the things we say, we cannot and we will not be successful in our missionary work.

I heard a missionary telling about President McKay's visit to Glasgow when a young reporter looked him in the face and asked of President McKay, "Are you a prophet of God?" And the young man said President McKay looked at the reporter and replied: "Young

man, you look me in the eye and answer your own question." This young man in telling me the story said, "I looked President McKay in the eye, and I received my answer and my witness that he is in truth a prophet of the Living God," to which I also bear humble testimony in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psalm 127:1.)

Today the servants, many unschooled and inexperienced like the disciples of old, must "go forth"—"the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with the signs following." (See Mark 16:20.)

Except we do walk uprightly and remember our covenants and have an unshakable testimony of the divinity of this Church; in the language of an eminent businessman and financier, the various activities of the Church would be but a shambles.

May the Lord help us to search diligently and walk uprightly and remember the covenant wherewith we have covenanted one with another, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken. Elder ElRay L. Christiansen will be our next speaker.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

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My brothers and sisters, as I sought to determine what I might appropriately speak about at this time, my mind seemed to be driven and impelled to speak on a commandment which God gave to the children of Israel a long, long time ago. I humbly pray that I may say something on this topic that will be encouraging to all of us.

When the Lord created the earth as his abode for his children, he placed upon it all the necessary essentials for their physical needs—the light and the warmth of the sun, the seasons, the

fertile soil from which to obtain food and raiment and shelter, and at the same time and with equal concern, he made provision for the spiritual needs of his children and for the development of man. Among the provisions made for man's spiritual goal was the gift of the Sabbath day, for he said to Moses, ". . . for . . . the Lord hath given you the sabbath." (Exodus 16:29.) Three thousand years ago this commandment was given to the children of Israel: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.