

Friday, October 5

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not sufficient—men's hearts must be changed!

In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving people's greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationship to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness.*

We find ourselves now immersed in a great political campaign in America for the purpose of selecting candidates for office in local, state, and national positions. We urge you as citizens to participate in this great democratic process, in accordance with your honest political convictions.

However, above all else, strive to support good and conscientious candidates of *either party* who are aware of the great dangers inherent in communism, and who are truly dedicated to the Con-

stitution in the tradition of our founding fathers. They should also pledge their sincere fealty to our way of liberty—a liberty which aims at the preservation of both personal and property rights. Study the issues, analyze the candidates on these grounds, and then exercise your franchise as free men and women. Never be found guilty of exchanging your birthright for a mess of pottage!

God enlighten our minds to comprehend our responsibility, to proclaim the truth and maintain freedom throughout the world, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy, who is now serving as president of the Southern Australian Mission, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Alvin R. Dyer.

ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

Of the First Council of the Seventy

When the time drew near for the ushering in of this great latter-day dispensation—the dispensation in which the Lord designed to restore again the truths of everlasting salvation to men—he placed Joseph Smith in circumstances where the future prophet was confronted with a wave of religious revivalism. “In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions,” Joseph heard various ministers proclaim conflicting systems of salvation. Some cried, “Lo, here is Christ,” others, “Lo, there.” Confronted with this confusion, this young man, who had been prepared for his coming mission from all eternity; who had sat with Abraham and Adam in the councils in pre-existence; who had the spiritual stature and was the one foreordained to usher in this great work—this young man read in the book of James: “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 said that never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this

did to his heart at this time. The Spirit of the Lord was working with him and preparing him to receive the great vision that was ahead. Having listened to the ministers, he concluded that there was no real prospect of resolving the question as to which of all the churches was right by reference to the scriptures, “for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.” In due course, being led by the Spirit, he retired to a secluded and appropriate place to ask God which of all the churches was right and which he should join. In his language, this is what occurred:

“. . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me.

“. . . When the light rested upon me I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—

This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!

"My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get possession of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right—and which I should join.

"I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: '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.'

"He again forbade me to join with any of them; and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. . . ." (See Joseph Smith 2:13-20.)

But on another occasion the Prophet was permitted to write one of these other things. He was told, in effect, that if he remained faithful and true, he would be the instrument in the hands of the Lord to restore the everlasting gospel. In process of time he became that instrument; he received revelation upon revelation; heavenly ministers visited him; keys and powers, rights and prerogatives were restored, until the gospel in its fulness had been given again, which means that everything had been restored that was needed to enable men to gain a fulness of exaltation hereafter. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was set up, and the power of God was again manifest to men on the earth.

Now, I suggest that the greatest question in the spiritual realm today is this: Was Joseph Smith called of God? Did he in fact receive the revelations which we certify were given to him? If he was called of God, if the Father and the Son appeared to him, if the heavens have been opened and the Church and kingdom of God has been set up again on earth through his instrumentality, then all men everywhere can find salvation by coming to this kingdom, by learning for themselves of the divinity

of the work, and by hearkening to the precepts that are taught here.

But if Joseph Smith was not called of God, then this cause that we have espoused, and these proclamations that we make, are the greatest imposition and fraud that have been promulgated in the name of religion in the course of the history of the world. We are worse than the declining churches of the world if this cause is not true, because our proclamation is that the kingdom of God has been set up on the earth, and that this very kingdom is destined to grow and increase and break in pieces all other kingdoms until it fills the whole earth.

So I would suppose that every honest truth seeker in the world, every spiritually inclined person ought to desire to know whether Joseph Smith was called of God and whether the Lord's hand is in this work. I suggest that we have a pattern before us which shows the way whereby men can know of the divinity of this work. In the dispensation which preceded this one, in the day when our Lord himself ministered among men, he called apostles and prophets; he sent missionaries forth; they laid the foundation of a great Christian religion for their day; and the great message, the question then was: Has the Lord Jesus risen from the dead? Is this man, this lowly Nazarene, in fact and in literal reality, the Almighty Jehovah?

Now, this message that Christ had risen from the dead, that he had abolished death and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10), was carried by the missionaries of old. They did it by declaring in simplicity and in plainness the gospel doctrines that he had given them. They did it by citing the ancient scriptures. They did it by pointing to the works which the Lord had done there in the flesh, he having said that the very works that he did bore record of him; and then they climaxed their message by bearing testimony of what God had revealed to them as to the divinity of the work. Some of them were able to stand up and say that they had seen with their eyes and felt with their hands, and that they knew of the Risen Lord's reality; and all of them

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were able to testify that they knew by revelation from the Holy Ghost that the gospel was there and that Jesus was the Lord.

This is the same system that exists in this day. We have in the world now some 12,000 missionaries in the various nations, preaching what we call the message of the restoration; announcing the opening of the heavens, that God has spoken; preaching the divine Sonship of Christ; proclaiming that there are living apostles and prophets on earth. And they go forth carrying the message of salvation in precisely the same way that the apostles and prophets and missionaries of old did it. They go forth and announce the doctrines of salvation; they preach them in simplicity and in plainness; they cite the ancient revelations; they reason with the people and show that these things have been predicted; they point to the fruits of the prophet, the work that he did, for a man's fruits bear record of him. Then when all this has been done, they clinch the testimony, they climax the evidence they give, by bearing testimony of what God has revealed to them of the divinity of the work.

So though they may be, as the scripture read by President McKay states, though they may be the weak and the simple and the humble of the earth, yet with the Spirit of God as their companion, they fear not the face of man, but go forth boldly, proclaiming Christ as the Divine Son of God and Joseph Smith as his prophet for this age. As a result, the honest in heart, the upright, the spiritually inclined, the righteous, the good, the best people among all the nations of the earth, hear the testimony which they bear and are gathered into the kingdom of God.

You can argue or debate about the scriptures; you can explain away the works that are performed by prophets and say they were done by this power or that. But you cannot argue with a testimony; there is no issue to debate; there is no defense against the testimony that rests in the hearts of living witnesses who go out and certify of the divinity of this work.

I can stand in the congregations of the earth and can reason with the people out of the revelations. I can cite

the scriptures of old. I can recite the proofs and the evidences, the fruits, such as the Book of Mormon, which have flown from the ministry of Joseph Smith. When I do this, if people are not spiritually inclined, they can argue and contend and attempt to explain these things away. But, having done all this, having set the stage, having laid a foundation, if I then say to the people: "In addition to all these evidences, I have received revelation that has come to me by the power of the Holy Ghost, telling me that this latter-day work is true, and I bear record to you that God has spoken in this day; now, if you will heed my warning voice and come and investigate and learn for yourselves, you also can know of the divinity of the work"—if I bear such a witness, that witness stands against them at the judgment bar of the Almighty.

Every investigator, in due course, stands exactly where Joseph Smith stood. He hears the cry, "Lo, here is Christ," and "Lo, there." He must decide for himself which of all the churches is right and which he should join. At his peril, he must find where the truth lies. And so, learning of the doctrine, and hearing the testimony, the obligation rests with him to do what the ancients did, to ask God for wisdom. As surely as he asks in faith, the Almighty will reveal to him that this great latter-day work is true. When he comes to know in his heart that the work is true, then if he has the spiritual integrity, fortitude, and courage to live in harmony with the standards of gospel righteousness, he forsakes the world, as thousands are doing; he comes into the Church; he finds peace and joy and satisfaction and happiness in this life; and he charts a course which will lead eventually to eternal exaltation in the mansions on high, which I pray may be the lot of all of us and honest truth seekers the world over. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy has just addressed us. Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.