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My beloved brethren and sisters, I believe the question most frequently put to the General Authorities is, "Don't you remember me?" Some years ago as Sister Romney and I sat near President and Sister McKay at an MIA Dance Festival, a beautiful little Primary girl worked her way through to get the President's autograph. "President McKay," she said, "do you remember when you last saw me?" "No, my dear, I don't," he said gently, "but it must have been a long time ago." "No, it wasn't," she replied, "it was just last year in Scotland."

Perhaps the next most frequently asked question is, "Do quick baptisms stay as active in the Church as when more time was taken?" Because the meaning of "active" is so indefinite, this question is something like Paul's trumpet of uncertain sound. No firm answer can be given. However, my observation is that the percentage of activity among so-called "quick baptisms" is about the same as it is among those born to church members in the stakes.

From the time of Father Adam until today some people have been baptized almost immediately upon hearing the gospel. Others have investigated long and studiously. So far as I know, the Lord has never fixed a time limit. The only prerequisite he has prescribed is "conversion."

It is about conversion and the healing which attends it that I wish to speak.

I sincerely pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with me and that he will put his seal upon the things that I do say.

Webster says the verb, "convert," means "to turn from one belief or course to another." That "conversion" is "a spiritual and moral *change* attending a *change* of belief with conviction." As used in the scriptures, "converted" generally implies not merely mental acceptance of Jesus and his teachings but also a motivating faith in him and in his gospel—a faith which works a

transformation, an actual *change* in one's understanding of life's meaning and in his allegiance to God—in interest, in thought, and in conduct. While conversion may be accomplished in stages, one is not really converted in the full sense of the term unless and until he is at heart a new person. "Born again" is the scriptural term.

In one who is wholly converted, desire for things inimical to the gospel of Jesus Christ has actually died, and substituted therefor is a love of God with a fixed and controlling determination to keep his commandments. Paul told the Romans that such a one would walk in newness of life. "Know ye not," he said, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:3-4.)

Peter taught that by walking in this "newness of life" one escapes "the corruption that is in the world through lust," and by developing within himself faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, he becomes a partaker "of the divine nature."

One who walks in newness of life is converted. On the other hand, says Peter, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (See 2 Pet. 1:1-9.) Such a one is not converted, even though he may have been baptized.

There is a striking example of the change wrought by conversion in Mormon's account of King Benjamin's farewell address. This sermon was so powerful that as Benjamin delivered it the multitude fell to the earth; for ". . . they . . . viewed themselves in their own carnal state, . . . And they all cried aloud . . . O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we

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believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, . . ." (Mosiah 4:2.)

Observing their humility, King Benjamin continued: "Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, . . . believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; . . .

“ . . . believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.” (*Ibid.*, 4:9-10.)

When he had concluded, he inquired as to whether they believed his words.

“And they all cried . . . Yea, we believe all (thy) words . . . and also, we know of their surety and truth, . . .” And why were they so confident? Because as they said: “. . . the Spirit of the Lord . . . has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.

“And (they continued) we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things . . . all the remainder of our days, . . .” (*Ibid.*, 5:2, 5.)

Although these people seem to have been converted rather quickly from a “disposition to do evil” to a determination “to do good continually” all the remainder of their days, they evidently fully met the conditions prescribed by the Lord for baptism, when he said: “. . . 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.” (D&C 20:37.)

That the Prophet applied these instructions strictly is apparent from this entry in his diary of July 5, 1835: “Michael H. Barton tried to get into the Church, but he was not willing to

confess and forsake all his sins—and he was rejected.” (*DHC* 2, 235.)

Had Mr. Barton obtained membership in the Church in his then unrepentant state, it would have availed him nothing no matter how much he knew about the gospel, because he was not converted.

From some of the Savior’s sayings it would seem that there might even be people in high places whose conversion is not complete; for example, conversing with his apostles at his last supper, he said to Peter, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

“But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32.) From this it would appear that membership in the Church and conversion are not necessarily synonymous. Being converted, as we are here using the term, and having a testimony are not necessarily the same thing either. A testimony comes when the Holy Ghost gives the earnest seeker a witness of the truth. A moving testimony vitalizes faith; that is, it induces repentance and obedience to the commandments. Conversion, on the other hand, is the fruit of, or the reward for, repentance and obedience. (Of course one’s testimony continues to increase as he is converted.)

Conversion is effected by divine forgiveness, which remits sins. The sequence is something like this. An honest seeker hears the message. He asks the Lord in prayer if it is true. The Holy Spirit gives him a witness. This is a testimony. If one’s testimony is strong enough, he repents and obeys the commandments. By such obedience he receives divine forgiveness which remits sin. Thus he is converted to a newness of life. His spirit is healed.

From what Jesus said at the time he healed the man “sick with the palsy,” it would seem that remittance of sins is the therapy which heals and that the two terms are synonymous. Concerning that incident, Luke says, “. . . the power of the Lord was present to heal. . . .” (*Ibid.*, 5:17.) Jesus, recognizing the faith of the palsied man and his associates, “. . . said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.” (*Ibid.*, 5:20.)

For this the Pharisees charged him with blasphemy, saying within themselves, ". . . Who can forgive sins but God? . . ." (*Ibid.*, 5:21.) Perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" Then he added, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." (*Ibid.*, 5:23-24.) This, of course, the man immediately did.

In this instance there was a physical healing. Sometimes there is also a healing of the nervous system or of the mind. But always the remittance of sins which attends divine forgiveness heals the spirit. This accounts for the fact that in the scriptures conversion and healing are repeatedly associated.

For example, in 1837 the Lord said to Thomas B. Marsh, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, ". . . pray for thy brethren of the Twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name's sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins, . . ."

"And after their temptations, and much tribulation, behold, I, the Lord, will feel after them, and if they harden not their hearts, and stiffen not their necks against me, they shall be converted, and I will heal them." (D&C 112:12-13. Italics added.)

Jesus frequently spoke of his healing the converted. Citing Isaiah, he said, ". . . this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13:15.)

At the opening of his mortal ministry he told his fellow townsmen in Nazareth that he had been sent ". . . to heal the brokenhearted, . . ." (Luke 4:18.)

To the distraught Nephites he thus spoke out of the awful darkness which attended his crucifixion: "O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and

be converted, that I may heal you?" (3 Nephi 9:13.)

Somebody recently asked how one could know when he is converted. The answer is simple. He may be assured of it when by the power of the Holy Spirit his soul is healed. When this occurs, he will recognize it by the way he feels, for he will feel as the people of Benjamin felt when they received remission of sins. The record says, ". . . the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, . . ." (Mosiah 4:3.)

When Alma the younger was converted he said: ". . . I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

"And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

"Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy." (Alma 36:19-21.)

As a third and final guide, I quote from President Joseph F. Smith: "No person can be properly baptized unless he has faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and has repented of his sins, with a repentance that need not be repented of. But faith comes by hearing the word of God. This implies that the candidate must be taught. Efficient teaching and preparation must precede the ordinance, so that the candidate may have a proper appreciation and conception of its purposes. The call to baptism, in the mission of our Savior, was always preceded by instructions in the doctrines which he taught." (The Improvement Era, 14, 266; *Gospel Doctrine*, Joseph F. Smith, 7th ed, p. 99.)

Speaking of his own experience, he said: "The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, of love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned—and surely I was not without sin—that it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched, and I felt that I

would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet. I felt as if I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to do that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul. I was but a little boy, it is true, when I was baptized; but this was the influence that came upon me, and I know that it was from God, and was and ever has been a living witness to me of my acceptance of the Lord." (*April Conference Report, 1898; Gospel Doctrine, Joseph F. Smith, 7th ed., p. 96.*)

As Jesus ministered among the Nephites, he told them not to administer the Sacrament to the unworthy, but to continue laboring with them; ". . . for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them." (3 Nephi 18:32.)

Getting people's spirits healed through conversion is the only way they can be healed. I know this is an unpopular doctrine and a slow way to solve the problems of men and nations. As a matter of fact, I am convinced that relatively few among the billions of earth's inhabitants will be converted.

ELDER WILLIAM J. CRITCHLOW, JR.

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Over a score or so of years, I promoted and sold something I have never seen; I didn't even know what it was—I still don't. I have not only never seen it; I have tried assiduously to avoid touching it. Once, stringing lights on a Christmas tree, I accidentally got my finger in an empty socket; oh, I felt it!

Who really knows what electricity is? We know what it can do. It lights this building; it lights our homes; it lights our streets; it runs our factories and our mills; it affords us lovely music, radio, television, and a score of wonderful appliances in our homes, but who really knows what this great power, called electricity, actually is?

Over the same score or so of years, I promoted another something which I

Nevertheless, I know and solemnly witness that there is no other means by which the sin-sick souls of men can be healed or for a troubled world to find peace. I know that the unbelieving will reject this divine way. But this is nothing new. They have been rejecting it ever since the time of Cain. They have from the beginning refused to accept Christ and his gospel. They killed the ancient prophets. They burned Abinadi. They stoned Samuel the Lamanite. They crucified the Lord himself. In our own day they martyred Joseph Smith, Jun., the great prophet of the restoration. But all that has happened in the past has not, and all that occurs in the future will not, change the truth that conversion to Jesus Christ and his gospel is the one and only way; for still it must be said that "there is none other way given under heaven by which men must be saved." (See Acts 4:12.) To this I witness in solemn testimony.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. We shall now hear Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Twelve.

have never seen; I don't really know what it is. I have not only never seen it; I have never heard it; I have never smelled it; I have never tasted it; I have never touched it, but on occasions it has touched me. More than once, as I officiated in priesthood ordinance work, I have felt it.

Who really knows what this great power of the priesthood is? We know what it can do. By that power this and other worlds were created and will be redeemed (*JD 15, 127; 24, 242*); by that power the city of Enoch was taken up to heaven (*Joseph Smith's Teachings, p. 170*), by that power the waters of the Red Sea were parted to liberate Israel; by that power Elijah sealed the heavens so that no rain or dew fell upon