

for their guide [and are directed by the Holy Ghost], and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they . . . shall abide the day.

“And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

“For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their law-giver.” (*Ibid.*, 45:9-10, 39-40, 44, 56-59.)

God grant that we may heed the message and be prepared for that great day I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker. Elder Richards.

ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will guide and direct me as I speak to you on this the 135th anniversary of the organization of the Church.

Differences

One of the most frequent questions asked members of the Church is, “What is the difference between The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and other churches?”

All that God Has Revealed

There are many important differences, but one of the most basic and significant is stated in our ninth article of faith: “We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.”

Many call us a peculiar people because we believe in modern revelation.

By way of explanation, in the year 1820 Joseph Smith, a boy of 14, living in the state of New York, was interested in joining a church but was unable to determine which church was right.

“If any of you lack wisdom”

In his own words he said, “While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chap-

ter and fifth verse, which reads, ‘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.’

“Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. . . .

“At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to ‘ask of god.’” (Joseph Smith 2:11-13.)

So in accordance with his determination to ask of God, one beautiful spring morning in 1820 he retired to a grove of trees on his father’s farm and knelt in prayer.

“My Beloved Son”

As he was praying he saw a pillar of light exactly over his head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon him. When the light rested upon him, he saw, standing above him in the air, two personages in the form of men, whose brightness and glory defied all description. One of them called Joseph Smith by name and said, “*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him.*” (*Ibid.*, 2:17.)

He could see them as clearly as we see one another. And he could see that his own body was created in the image and likeness of God. At that time the

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churches taught that God was only a spirit, that he had no body.

He Is the Christ, Our Savior and Redeemer

Yes, God does have a body, and he made us to be like him. I know this to be true: that God lives and that Jesus is our Savior and Redeemer.

In the grove of trees that day, Joseph Smith asked the Savior which of all the sects was right and which he should join.

He was told that he should join none of them, for they were all wrong, that they taught for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof.

This was a most startling message as it was an indictment of all churches in existence at that time.

Vision Outstanding

Joseph Smith's vision is probably the most outstanding in the history of God's relationship with man. With the exception of Stephen's vision as described in the seventh chapter of Acts, God the Father has remained in the background—the Jehovah of the Old Testament being the preexistent Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father.

With the opening of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, it was entirely appropriate that a fulness of the knowledge of God should be revealed to the Prophet. The importance of the dispensation was indicated by the Father introducing the Son to the Prophet Joseph. I bear you my witness that Joseph Smith is indeed one of the great prophets of all time.

It is difficult to appreciate the far-reaching effects of the Prophet's first vision—the first direct revelation in modern times. Consider for a moment what it did.

Concept of the Godhead

First. It clarified the conception of the Godhead. It made it clear that God does have a body, parts, and passions. He appeared to Joseph Smith as a glorified man. This being so, man is in form the same as God. The scrip-

tures taught that man was created in the likeness and image of God, but it took this vision to restore the correct conception of God.

Oneness of the Godhead

Second. It clarified the doctrine of the oneness of the Godhead. God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, appeared as two separate and distinct Personages—as separate and distinct as any earthly father and son. This makes it clear that the oneness of the Godhead is a type of unity of mind and purpose.

Revelation Continues

Third. It proved that revelation from God to man had not ceased even though Christendom taught otherwise.

Thus this great vision restored to man the true concept of God, made known that there had been an apostasy from the doctrines of the Church of Christ, opened a new dispensation, and provided a new witness for God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

He Will Reveal Many Great and Important Things

In contemplating the knowledge that came to man through Joseph Smith's first vision, one can more fully understand the meaning of the ninth article of faith: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." Especially note the words, "we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

Authority Restored

In keeping with this belief and subsequent to the first vision, the Lord through his Prophet restored the priesthood—the authority to act in the name of God—and authorized and directed the reestablishment of his Church on the earth. Membership in the Church affords every person a chance to serve—and service brings forth true happiness and peace together with personal growth and development.

The Gospel Restored

Through the prophets that have stood at the head of Christ's Church in this dispensation, the gospel in its fulness has been restored.

The Book of Mormon and other modern revelations have brought increased knowledge and understanding, answering many vital questions such as: "What is the purpose of life?" "Where did we come from?" "Why are we here?" "Where do we go after death?" "What is our relationship to God?" "How do we obtain happiness, peace, and progress eternally?"

The first vision of Joseph Smith clearly indicated the need of continuing revelation through a prophet. This need is likewise pressing today.

The confused and frustrated condition of mankind is indicated in an article which recently appeared in a leading newspaper entitled: *Nation at Crossroads of Advancement or Fall*.

"Our progress, our genius, our productivity will go down in history. But where do we go from here? We've taken to the worship of money and pleasure, twisted moral values to suit ourselves, and scoffed at integrity. We have behaved like great civilizations of the past when they've become pleasure-ridden—just before they crumbled.

"Where do we go? What are our new goals? To some our goal is a simple one; we're rich, let's get richer. We hear of three cars to a family, instead of two; four-day work weeks and three days a week for amusement and indolence. It is questionable whether three cars will save a family from divorce, or from spiritual emptiness, or from boredom.

"Getting richer was yesterday's frontier. The new frontier is what logically follows the job of making a living. It is making a life. Finding new paths to family harmony, relatedness to God and fellow humans, inner ease instead of tensions. In other words—Peace."

Good Will Toward Men

Jesus was called the Prince of Peace, and at his coming the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on

earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14.) It was God's wish that everyone would share this great gift of peace and good will.

Peace and joy characterize his kingdom according to the Apostle Paul, who declared: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17.)

Family harmony, the relief of inner tensions and genuine peace can be obtained by adhering to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and by following the counsel and direction of God's prophet.

Family and Home

Recently President McKay reemphasized the importance of the home and the role of parents in a program which is called, "Teaching and living the gospel in the home." This program provides for a weekly family night.

He said, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home," (The Improvement Era, June 1964, p. 445) but promised that in those homes that followed the program, ". . . love at home and obedience to parents will increase, and faith will develop in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat evil influences and temptations, and to choose righteousness and peace, and be assured an eternal place in the family circle of our Father." (*Family Home Evening Manual*, preface.)

I call your attention again to the ninth article of faith wherein it states, ". . . we believe that [God] will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

The Family Night program is an excellent example of this and an evidence of the need of continued revelation and a prophet to guide and direct us.

Testimony

I testify in all solemnity that God has raised up a prophet today and that he is the head of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President David O. McKay.

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I urge all members of the Church to follow the counsel of this prophet, and to you who are not members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but desire peace and relief from inner tensions, investigate the message that God has again spoken to men through a prophet. The Lord has restored the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fulness and reestablished his Church with the power to act in the name of God.

I bear witness that these things are true; you, too, may know that they are true by earnestly studying, praying, and attending the church services. We invite you to do so.

I leave this testimony with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve. The congregation and chorus will now join in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

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

President N. Eldon Tanner

Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church.

ELDER THEODORE M. BURTON

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

The Coming of Elijah

A prophecy given in Malachi, chapter 4, verses 5 and 6, has long bothered Bible students. Since the Old Testament closes with these words, it would be well to understand what they mean. I quote:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Because of a misunderstanding of Luke 1:17, which states that the child later to be named John the Baptist would come in the spirit and power of Elias to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, many persons have thought that John the Baptist who held the office of an Elias, or messenger, was the Elijah who was to return. This verse explains that John's work was a preparatory work to "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" and not the work of sealing or completion, which keys Elijah held. When John was bluntly asked the question, he said:

". . . I am not the Christ.

"And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias [Elijah]? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No." (John 1:20-21.)

This, of course, had to be true, for the prophecy stated that Elijah the Prophet should return before the second coming of the Lord, when Jesus was to come in great power, majesty, and glory as judge of all the earth. The mission of Elias held by John the Baptist comes first, and so just as John came before Elijah in the days of Jesus Christ, so John came before Elijah in these latter days to restore the preparatory Aaronic Priesthood before the greater power in the priesthood was given.

Elijah Expected

Among Jewish people Elijah is still the expected guest at every passover, for whom a vacant seat is reserved at the table. Thus the tradition of Elijah's return before the coming of the Redeemer in power and glory has been kept alive in the land. There must, therefore, be some important work that this great prophet had to perform, some power that he possessed