

As he himself said to Joseph Smith: "The Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.

"Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out." (D&C 76: 1-2.)

Knowledge of Redeemer

I feel to say with Job of old, whose knowledge came from the same source from which mine has come: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," and that "in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold. . . ." (Job 19:25-27.)

And as I join my testimony with that of Job, may I also unite with him in thanksgiving, for the cry, uttered out of the anguish and sorrow of his soul: ". . . the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21.)

I pray that we may all be guided by the power of the Holy Spirit, that

we may walk uprightly before the Lord, and that we may inherit eternal life in the mansions and kingdoms that are prepared for the obedient.

This is my prayer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

He to whom we have just listened is President Joseph Fielding Smith, president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I am sure that all members of the Church everywhere, realizing the circumstances under which he has delivered this powerful message, are greatly uplifted by the power and strength he has manifested before us here this morning. Thank you, President Smith, from the bottom of our hearts.

We shall now hear from Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. He will be followed by Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Of the Council of the Twelve

It has been my privilege during the last thirty days to meet with missionaries and members in Great Britain, South America, South Africa, and here in North America. Always as we meet we find a common question that confronts us. Members of the Church, especially our missionaries, often hear this statement: "If there is anything I resent, it is those that say they are right and everybody else is wrong." They object, of course, to the declaration concerning the exclusive delegation of authority in this church.

Now I understand, of course, why one would feel that way. Nevertheless, I would say to him: "Hold on, think for a moment. Surely you can't believe that in the great confusing variety of religious beliefs, not one of them is true, is right."

Such a proposition generates atheism. When I think of an atheist, I believe with Sister Carol Lynn Pearson in what she wrote in her verse dedicated to the atheist:

"God must have a huge sense of humor

So righteously to resist

The temptation of turning the tables
On your pretending he does not
exist."⁴

One as good as another

The other view, the one most widely held, is that all of them are right, that they are all alike. If there is a typical response to our missionaries, it is, "I already have a church. One is just as good as another and it doesn't matter really which one we belong to, or if we belong to any. We will all end up in the same place anyway."

Surely no one who really thinks would hold to that position. Nevertheless, many people accept it when they would not for a moment apply it or relate it to any other phase of their life. They would not, for instance, take the same position with regard to education. Who would not smile at a statement that all schools are alike, that one is just as good as another, and that a person deserves the same diploma no matter which school he attends, or which course he takes, or for how long?

Would you agree to send students to just any school, taking any variety of courses, and then award them specialized degrees, anything they wanted—in architecture, law, medicine? Such an attitude would suggest that a man would be just as good a surgeon by not studying for it as he would by following the prerequisite courses. No person who has given it real substantial thought would take such a position, and neither you nor I would want to be under the knife of a surgeon who had been trained, or maybe I should say "untrained," in such a pattern.

Isn't it strange, then, that so many are able to apply such a view toward religion. They advocate: Go to any school, take any course, or go to no school at all, and we'll all end up in the same place with the same heavenly diploma.

That just isn't reasonable, nor is it true.

The only true Church

The position that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church upon the face of the earth is fundamental. Perhaps it would be more convenient and palatable and popular if we were to avoid it; nevertheless, we are under a sacred obligation and a sacred trust to hold to it. It is not merely an admission; it is a positive declaration. It is so fundamental that we cannot yield on this point.

Now to those who think us uncharitable, we say that it was not devised by us; it was declared by Him, for he gave commandments to the early brethren, and I quote:

"... to lay the foundation of this church, and to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness, the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth, with which I, the Lord, am well pleased, speaking unto the church collectively and not individually." (D&C 1:30.)

Now this is not to say that the churches, all of them, are without some truth. They have some truth—some of them very much of it. They have a form of godliness. Often the clergy and adherents are not without dedication, and many of them practice remarkably well the virtues of Christianity. They are, nonetheless, incomplete. By his declaration, "... they teach for doctrines the commandments of

⁴"To an Atheist," in *The Search* (Trilogy Arts, 1970), p. 34.

men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof." (Joseph Smith 2:19.)

A full keyboard

The gospel might be likened to the keyboard of a piano—a full keyboard with a selection of keys on which one who is trained can play a variety without limits; a ballad to express love, a march to rally, a melody to soothe, and a hymn to inspire; an endless variety to suit every mood and satisfy every need.

How shortsighted it is, then, to choose a single key and endlessly tap out the monotony of a single note, or even two or three notes, when the full keyboard of limitless harmony can be played.

How disappointing when the fullness of the gospel, the whole keyboard, is here upon the earth, that many churches tap on a single key. The note they stress may be essential to a complete harmony of religious experience, but it is, nonetheless, not all there is. It isn't the fullness.

Single keys used

For instance, one taps on the key of faith healing, to the neglect of many principles that would bring greater strength than faith healing itself. Another taps on an obscure key relating to the observance of the Sabbath—a key that would sound different indeed, played in harmony with the essential notes on the keyboard. A key used like that can get completely out of tune. Another repeats endlessly the key that relates to the mode of baptism and taps one or two other keys as though there were not a full keyboard. And again, the very key he uses, essential as it is, just doesn't sound complete

when played alone to the neglect of the others.

There are other examples, many of them where parts of the gospel are endlessly stressed and the churches build upon them, until alone they sound nothing like they would if blended with the full measure of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We don't say that the key of faith healing, for example, is not essential. We not only recognize it—we rely on it and experience it; but it is not the gospel itself, nor its fullness.

We would never hold that baptism is not essential, absolutely essential, for it constitutes the official enrollment in the church and kingdom of God. If that key, however, is played alone, without the counterpart key of authority, the fullness and the harmony are gone and it becomes dissonant. And without the key of faith and of repentance, it is meaningless, and perhaps worse, it is counterfeit. This happens when the authority we speak of is lacking.

Fullness restored

Now we do not say they are wrong so much as we say they are incomplete. The fullness of the gospel has been restored. The power and the authority to act for Him is present with us. The power and the authority of the priesthood rests upon this church. The Lord revealed:

"... this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

"Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

"And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the

priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh." (D&C 84:19-21.)

The great apostasy

Now in these last days when the consummate power of evil moves against us, the great apostasy spoken of in the scriptures moves to its inevitable conclusion. The Christian churches that should be the bulwark against it seem to provide little substance for their members or for their clergy. And we see the frightening specter of empty churches and a clergy promoting causes they, above all, should resist.

In these last travels I mentioned, it has been frightening to me to see the churches closed, boarded up, with weeds growing in the yard, or open but empty. We face the frightening thought of a generation raised without any contact with scripture.

Single key investigators

It is not unusual to find people who take an interest in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but give only casual attention to the ideal that the fullness of the gospel is here.

They become attracted by a single key, a doctrine, often one to which they take immediate exception and object to. They investigate it by itself alone. They want to know all there is about it without reference, in fact, with specific objection and rejection, to anything else.

They want to hear that key played over and over again. It will give them little knowledge unless they see that there is a fullness—other complementary ideals and doctrines that present a warmth and a harmony, and a fullness, that

draw at the right moment upon each key, which if played alone might seem discordant.

A hobby key

Now that danger is not limited to investigators alone. Some members of the Church who should know better pick out a hobby key or two and tap them incessantly, to the irritation of those around them. They can dull their own spiritual sensitivities. They lose track that there is a fullness of the gospel and become as individuals, like many churches have become. They may reject the fullness in preference to a favorite note. This becomes exaggerated and distorted, leading them away into apostasy.

Thinking and praying

I counseled, think about this matter. More than that, I would urge you to pray about this matter. Thinking alone can be the basis for man's wisdom. There is another more perfect manner of communication through the spirit: ". . . for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10.)

Paul, speaking to the Corinthians, said: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:13-14.)

The right to know

Any soul has the right, indeed the obligation, to make an appeal through prayer for the answer to

this question: Is there a true church? That is how it all began, you know, with a fourteen-year-old boy who went into a grove. Two questions: Which of all the churches is true? and Which should he join? There he experienced a marvelous vision of the Father and the Son, and the dispensation of the fulness of times was ushered in. Subsequently the authority to act for Him was restored and rests yet with this church. We heard in this meeting a prophet of God, Joseph Fielding Smith.

I bear witness that he is a prophet

of God. I have a witness that Jesus is the Christ. He lives. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church upon the face of this earth, of which I bear witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Henry D. Taylor

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

The prophet Abraham found favor in the sight of the Lord. He was given the assurance that he was a great and noble intelligence before coming to this earth. He learned that the earth was created as a place for the intelligences to dwell after their birth as mortal beings. Here they would be tested and tried to see if they would do all things that the Lord God would command them to do. Earth life would thus become a testing ground.

Man's free agency

It was not intended that the earthly road would be smooth, nor would the path be easy. Satan, the father of lies and deceit, and his evil followers would be permitted to use their wiles and influence to blind men to the truth and try to lead them astray. But man was to be allowed his free agency, the right to choose. It was contemplated that God, through his prophets, would provide guidelines

known as commandments, which, if followed, would bring joy and happiness. However, it would be man's privilege and responsibility to make a choice between good and evil. He himself must make the decisions. This was all part of the gospel plan. Joseph Smith, the Prophet, has given assurance that we were present as spiritual beings at a council when the plan was presented, and we gave it our approval.

This is a glorious time in which to live here upon the earth. The gospel and priesthood have been restored. The Church has been reestablished. While Jesus the Christ is head of the church that bears his name, men whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators are giving guidance to us.

Times of testing

As we travel through life upon this earth, there come times when we must stand up and be counted. These are times of testing. Are we on the Lord's