

## Elder Royden G. Derrick

### Truth and the Light of Christ

Our revered leader of years past, President David O. McKay, often said, "The mission of the Gospel of Jesus Christ [is] to make evil-minded men good and to make good men better" (*Millennial Star*, Oct. 1961, p. 469).

The Lord said to the people of ancient America, "And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good" (Ether 4:12).

To be good, one must seek after truth, for truth is the ingredient which, when inculcated into our lives, changes us for good. "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come" (D&C 93:24). "Truth abideth and hath no end" (D&C 88:66).

Intelligence is the ability to use knowledge properly. The Lord has said, "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth" (D&C 93:36). The light of which this scripture speaks is the Light of Christ, for Jesus further said, "I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (D&C 93:2).

### Remorse of conscience

One of my earliest recollections happened when I was about four years of age. Several blocks from our home was a little wooden grocery store. In the front of the store windows the proprietor had built a ledge about four inches wide, where at this time of the year he placed big juicy apples to attract those passing by. As I walked by the front of the store, I saw those beautiful red apples, and my mouth began to water. Without realizing what I was doing, I took one and continued walking up the street.

When I got a short distance away, I looked at what I had in my hand and suddenly realized I had stolen an apple.

I began to run but made the mistake of running the wrong way.

On the downhill side of our front porch, there was latticework between the porch level and the ground level. A small door enabled us to store gardening tools under the porch and also gave us access to a convenient place to hide.

I ran all the way home, crawled under the porch, and sat there all afternoon shivering with fear—and eating the apple. I knew that I had done wrong, and I knew that my Heavenly Father knew that I had done wrong.

I have often reflected upon how I suffered from a remorse of conscience at such an early age. The Light of Christ, which lights every man that comes into the world, was evident that day, which in later years caused me to ponder about how the Light of Christ can influence our lives.

### The Holy Ghost

Envision yourself standing on the banks of the River Jordan on a particular day nearly two thousand years ago and observing two men standing in the water. John the Baptist, clothed with camel's hair and with a girdle of skin about his loins, is baptizing Jesus; and Jesus, dressed in the garb of the day, is coming up out of the water. The heavens open and a marvelous thing occurs. The Holy Ghost descends in the form of a dove and alights upon him. And a voice from heaven is heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

### The light of life

Envision yourself some time later in the temple in Jerusalem. The weather is hot outside; but inside, the thick stone walls give relief to a group gathered in discussion. It is Jesus talking to the scribes and the Pharisees:

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

"The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. . . .

"It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true.

"I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me" (John 8:12-14, 17-18).

### God—fountain of wisdom

The testimony of the Father and the testimony of Jesus were not for the people of their day alone, but for men down through the ages. It was documented then—for us today—and is just as true today as it was two thousand years ago. The truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ have been restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith and are available to each of us for study.

In my limited experience in the fields of religion and education, it has been my observation that it takes as much intelligence for one to assimilate the principles of the gospel as it does for one to understand the complicated formulas of science. An understanding of the gospel is a quest and must be pursued through study, thought, and prayer.

Brigham Young taught: "All true wisdom that mankind have they have received from God, whether they know it or not. There is no ingenious mind that has ever invented anything beneficial to the human family but what he obtained it from that One Source. . . . There is only one source from whence men obtain wisdom, and that is God, the fountain of all wisdom; and though men may claim to make their discoveries by their own wisdom, by meditation and reflection, they are in-

debted to our Father in Heaven for all" (*Journal of Discourses*, 13:148).

### Impossible to be saved in ignorance

To those who pursue and apply gospel principles, the Lord says, "And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things" (D&C 88:67).

President Joseph F. Smith said: "[The] knowledge of truth, combined with proper regard for it, and its faithful observance, constitutes true education. The mere stuffing of the mind with a knowledge of facts is not education. The mind must not only possess a knowledge of truth, but the soul must revere it, cherish it, love it as a priceless gem; and this human life must be guided and shaped by it in order to fulfil its destiny" (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], p. 269).

Of what value is truth unless it is assimilated into the minds and hearts of men? "Truth is the rock foundation of every great character," wrote William George Jordan. "It is loyalty to the right as we see it; it is courageous living of our lives in harmony with our ideals" (*The Power of Truth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1943], p. 3).

The Lord says:

"Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.

"And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come" (D&C 130:18-19).

He further said, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6).

Brigham Young asked the question, "When shall we cease to learn?" And then he answered his own question with the words, "Never, never" (*Journal of Discourses*, 3:203).

## Integrity

We should not overlook the fact that some truths have little or nothing to do with our eternal salvation, while others are essential to it.

When one is loyal to the truth, we say he is a person of integrity. When one is loyal to the truth under intense opposition, we say he is a person of *great* integrity. Integrity is a quality or state of being of sound moral principle. Integrity is uprightness, honesty, and sincerity—yes, all that and even more.

## Men of great integrity

Following the First Vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith was persecuted unmercifully for the rest of his life and died as a martyr at thirty-eight years of age; yet he never wavered in declaring what he knew to be the truth. He knew that if he denied what he had said, the persecution would cease; yet he stood firm. He recorded:

"I . . . [saw] a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me; and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true; and while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart: Why persecute me for telling the truth? I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation" (Joseph Smith—History 1:25.)

To so react requires great integrity and also builds great integrity.

We revere Abraham Lincoln because of his commitment to a principle in which he strongly believed. And though the opposition was severe, the pathway filled with stumbling blocks, and the future dark and uncertain, he

tenaciously held to what he believed to be right, prevailed in the cause, and eventually won the undying gratitude of a nation that was destined to become great. We have other such patriots in other lands throughout the world who are heralded as men of great integrity.

## Crown of integrity

Samuel Johnson made an interesting observation when he wrote: "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless. . . . Knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful" (*Rasselas*, ch. 41). Leaders in schools of elementary, secondary, and higher education know that the true success of their system is measured by the man it forms. Such is also true of families, politics, governments, and religion.

Many live by the motto that the end justifies the means. There are those who gain their possessions by deceit, bribery, and dishonest practices, then seek legitimacy by contributing freely to a righteous cause. Integrity cannot be compromised.

Integrity is sustained by forethought and commitment. It was written of Helaman's stripling warriors, "Yea, and they did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness" (Alma 57:21). They were fully committed to what they would do when they got into the heat of battle. Their efforts won them the crown of integrity.

## Review our own lives

Let us review our own lives to determine how each of us measures up in our own quest for integrity.

As an employee, are you committed to give at least forty hours work for forty hours pay?

Do you work enthusiastically in your job and use your best efforts to strengthen the company for which you work?

Do you, as an administrator, study your challenges thoroughly and antici-

pate the results before you submit your recommendations?

Do you jump to conclusions without taking the time to know the facts before you make your decision?

Do you properly sustain those working under your jurisdiction?

Do you sincerely sustain those to whom you are responsible?

Do you young men and young women stand loyal, in the face of opposition, to those moral principles you have been taught in the home?

Do you, as a wife and mother, strive earnestly to create an atmosphere of love and harmony in the home?

Do you fathers and mothers seriously strive to inculcate values of integrity, morality, charity, and good manners in your children?

Are you completely honest with yourself and others?

Are you obedient to Him who gave you life?

### **Formula for bringing forth good fruit**

The Lord said to the people in his day, and to us too: "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:20.)

"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

" . . . Every tree is known by his own fruit" (Luke 6:43-44).

May I suggest a formula for bringing forth good fruit and helping one to gain eternal salvation? (1) Have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in yourself, (2) study eternal truths, (3) ponder and pray for understanding, (4) strive to incorporate principles of truth into daily living, (5) exercise integrity in all that you do, and (6) strive to do everything you do to a standard of excellence.

Let us diligently strive to understand the wonderful things of God. The jewels of the gospel of Jesus Christ are within our reach. But we must seek—ask and strive for—and live the principles of truth. When we do so, we will become better men and better women and contribute to a better community, a better nation, and a better world, for which I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

### **President Hinckley**

Thank you, Elder Derrick.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Ronald E. Poelman of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## **Elder Ronald E. Poelman**

Both the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ are true and divine, and there is an essential relationship between them that is significant and very important. Understanding the proper relationship between the gospel and the Church will prevent confusion, misplaced priorities, and failed expectations and will lead to the realization of gospel goals through happy, fulfilling participation in the Church. Such understanding will avoid possible disaffection and will result in great personal blessings.

### **The gospel and the Church**

As I attempt to describe and comment upon the essential relationship between the gospel and the Church, it is my prayer that a perspective may be developed which will enhance the influence of both the gospel and the Church in our individual lives.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a divine and perfect plan. It is composed of eternal, unchanging principles, laws, and ordinances which are universally applicable to every individual