

Elder George P. Lee

True gospel unpopular with the world

The true gospel of the Son of God has always been opposed by those who are caught within the throes of sin. For many, there is simply too much light, too much truth, and too much intelligence. Others who resist the gospel have found its principles too pure, too noble, and much too elevating to accord with their chosen life-style. In all ages of the world since Adam's time, the gospel of Jesus Christ has always met opposition whenever and wherever it has been proclaimed. This negative spirit challenges the truths of God and concerns His servants, even today.

The heavens have been opened to holy men of various ages. In each case, the receiver of the vision has been rejected by his fellowmen. Sometimes his life has been sought and he has had no peace upon the earth. Prophets and Apostles, even the Lord Jesus Christ, have met such adversity and challenges. The true gospel of Christ is very unpopular with the world.

Renew humility, dedication, and commitment

If there is anyone listening who is deeply troubled by the apparent criticism thrown against us periodically, let me say that we have a glorious array of predecessors who have been persecuted and who have met opposition time and time again.

It is a source of consolation and encouragement that we do not stand alone in this respect. In former times, Saints of God have been challenged and scorned for no other cause than for preaching the truth in its fulness and purity, and for standing up in defense of holy and pure principles revealed from God. In fact, the trials they have been called upon to pass through, instead of being an evidence against, are evidence

in favor of the truth of the work they were engaged in.

The Lord Jesus said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!" (Luke 6:26). He warned His disciples of the danger when their names were honored and when all men spoke well of them. In a real sense, we as Latter-day Saints are also being warned. When our names are being honored in connection with all men speaking well of us, we need to renew our humility, dedication, and commitment.

Any good out of Nazareth? out of Palmyra?

My beloved Saints of God, let us remember the warning from our prophets: "Others will he pacify and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion" (2 Nephi 28:21). If anyone finds himself in that position, it is time for renewed humility, commitment, and dedication.

When the Lord came to Jerusalem, He was rejected and despised by many from the day of His birth until His Golgothic death. He spoke and taught as none had ever done before. He worked as none had ever done. He performed miracles and wonderful works among men. But what kind of treatment did He receive? He was rejected by those who were supposed to have loved Him. He was buffeted, scourged, mobbed, and led like a lamb to the slaughter. Jesus, a being in whom there was no guile, bore a rough-hewn cross—that cruel instrument of death which tore at His back as He hung in agony. The scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees did not welcome Him with open arms. Nor did the learned, the wise, and the noble hail Him. Then need we expect the world to embrace and welcome us with open arms?

Joseph Smith knew and understood by the teachings given unto him of God and angels what he had to do.

He was called of the Lord and raised up for this very purpose. He, too, was not popular among men, nor did the world clamor for his wisdom. Until the day of his death, he was persecuted and reviled for living and teaching the gospel. His blood sealed his testimony.

In the Lord's own day, the proclamation was, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (See John 1:46). Likewise, the life and teachings of Joseph Smith did not appeal to those with worldly thoughts. Joseph's teachings came into conflict with man-made traditions and prejudices. The cry in Joseph Smith's day was much the same as in the day of the Savior: "Can anything good come out of Palmyra? Can anything good come from Joseph Smith?"

Opposition our companion, adversity our fate

Today we hear a similar cry: "Can anything good come from the Mormon people? Can good be wrought by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints?" Falsehoods are spoken about the true Saints of God. These will continue to abound until the coming of the Son of God.

Saints of God in all ages have passed through these tests of opposition. Those of today find themselves in no different position. Until evil is bound, this shall ever be the case. This is one of the legacies left to the elect Saints while here in mortality. Opposition may be our companion, and adversity our fate until the Lord comes in a cloud of glory. Latter-day Saints, this is our legacy. We may depend on it.

Said Jesus, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19).

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own.

"... If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:18-20).

Pray for our enemies and critics

What if some of us have to sacrifice all that we have for the gospel and testimony of Christ? The Saints have done this in the past, and I am sure the Saints of today have the faith and courage to do whatever the Lord asks them to do. Should we complain or murmur if we are asked to sacrifice in defending the true gospel of the Son of God?

The Lord, Jesus, was poor from the manger to the cross. He descended below all things that He might rise above all. Should we complain if we face challenges ourselves? As an individual, as one who has walked the path of poverty and trials, I am beginning to learn the value of such experiences. The Lord has always been my faith, strength, and courage. I want nothing but the best for my family and others. I desire salvation and eternal life for my family and for my fellowmen. I will pray for our critics and enemies. I will be patient and long-suffering toward them and will return kindness, prayer, and righteousness.

Salvation and eternal life

There is no stopping the true work of God. Some men may resent it. The world may reject it. They may use every means and all their power against this work, but the work of God will roll forth and will gather every honest soul throughout the earth sooner or later. We have the promise of God that this is His work and it shall never be overthrown in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.

Are we ready, as the Saints of God, to endure all things for the sake of the souls of our fellowmen? We have gone from continent to continent, from land to land, from island to island, wherever there was a door open to preach the gospel. We have left our homes, families, wives, and children. Some have sacrificed their lives for the salvation of their fellowmen. Some have gone without purse or scrip. Some have faced shame and ridicule, even

persecution. We shall continue to do this until we have taken this beloved gospel to the ends of the earth.

This message of salvation and eternal life has been entrusted to us. All mankind shall hear the glad tidings of salvation. They shall receive the blessings of God, or His condemnation, according to their willingness to receive or their determination to reject the gospel.

Priesthood—head and heart of the true church

This work is a never-ending work which we have taken upon ourselves. It will never terminate until this earth shall be redeemed, until the power of Satan shall be subdued, until wickedness shall be banished from the earth, until Christ shall reign, whose right it is to reign, and until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

In due course of time, all will be redeemed who may be redeemed. God, our Heavenly Father, desires that we should be long-suffering and patient toward those who seek to afflict and oppress us, just as He is long-suffering toward all of His children, in spite of their wickedness and waywardness.

Men of God who hold the holy priesthood are the head and heart of the Lord's true church. We do not have the priesthood for self-aggrandizement or to be used to oppress anyone. There is no priesthood of the Son of God that authorizes any one man to oppress another or to intrude upon his rights in any way.

We ought to be a brother and a friend to all men everywhere. We ought not to entertain a "Big I" and a "Little You" feeling toward our neighbors and fellowmen. Men of God who are approachable and compassionate are putting honor upon the holy priesthood of God.

If there are any in our own flock who err, let us try to reclaim them by kindness and long-suffering. If there are any among us who have a bad spirit,

let us show them a better spirit. If there are any among us who do not do right, let us do right ourselves and say to them, "Come, follow me."

Amen to the priesthood or the authority of any man of God who exercises control, dominion, or compulsion upon a fellow being outside of the Church or upon a fellow member in the Church in any degree of unrighteousness. (See D&C 121:37.)

Prayers, and testimony that work will roll forth

I pray that our conduct day by day will be such that it will bear examination and scrutiny by our fellowmen, and also by our Heavenly Father. I pray that we will be willing to stand by this gospel, this testimony, and this work in life and death, in time and eternity.

I pray that every Latter-day Saint will let his prayers ascend into the ears of our Father in Heaven day and night, whether praying in family circles or in private places, for the Lord to sustain His leaders and people as we work to build up a Zion and to fulfill His promises. I pray that every Latter-day Saint will pray for the First Presidency of this Church and pray for His Apostles and leaders. Let us uphold them by our faith, works, and hopes. History will record one day that President Gordon B. Hinckley was one of the strongest counselors the Church ever had. Let us uphold him by our faith and by our prayers. President Hinckley carries a tremendous burden today.

I bear testimony in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that this work is true. I know that no earthly power can destroy it. Even the combined forces and powers of all the nations in the world cannot stop or retard this work because the Great Elohim and Jehovah have spoken it. I bear testimony that the principles of the gospel will live on, even if the earth wastes away. There is no power beneath the heavens that can hinder, stop, or destroy the progress of truth and the decrees of God, our Eternal Father in Heaven.

I bear testimony that the destiny of every individual, every prince, every emperor, of every king, president, statesman, or ruler under heaven is in the hands of God. He made the world and all that is in it. They may not go further than the Master permits. Adversity will purify Zion. Opposition will make us stronger in our courage and firmer in our faith.

I bear testimony that this work will continue to roll forth in strength and power throughout all the earth until all things which have been predicted by the prophets are fulfilled.

May the Lord bless all the Saints of God throughout the world. May He bless all the house of Israel, all of the dispersed of every tribe, all the righteous, the pure, the holy and good in every nation, is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Benson

We have just listened to Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will now address us.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert

Over nineteen hundred years ago, the Apostle Paul, in writing to the Saints at Ephesus, declared: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). How far we have drifted over the intervening years, for there are now more than a thousand different churches claiming to be Christian.

For the first twenty-four years of my life I was an active member of one of this multitude of churches of Christendom. However, I had many unanswered questions which prompted me to listen to the young Mormon missionaries when they knocked on our door in England. Similar questions remain unanswered for millions of people who claim membership in some church but who do not have a clear understanding of the Savior's teachings.

I would therefore like to suggest ten questions which members of any church might ask our missionaries, or, indeed, any Latter-day Saint. My life was changed, along with my dear wife's, as we met with the missionaries, asked questions, and prayed to know the truth.

Question no. 1: Why doesn't God speak to us today?

My wife and I grew up as teenagers during the Second World War, and this question often came to our minds. We felt strongly the need for God's guidance then, as we do today in these challenging and perilous times. Anciently, through the prophet Amos, the Lord had declared, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). I never felt that revelations had ceased just because those already given had been bound into a book, the Holy Bible.

It was not until five years after the hostilities of war had ceased that I received the answer. God does speak again, through prophets, and revelation once more flows down from the heavens. These and many other wonderful truths enlightened our minds and lifted our souls as the missionaries taught us. How exciting to realize we are living in the latter days, "the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21). How wonderful to learn of another book of scripture, the Book of Mormon, re-