

know many who have focused their thoughts on the wholesome and the pure things of life. They ponder on the scriptures, and they strive to magnify callings given to them. The gospel becomes a way of life, and over time they evidence peace and tranquillity in themselves and bless greatly those around them.

We may not appreciate the capacity of our minds to absorb and remember if we think it doesn't matter what books or movies or other activities are fed into it. The Lord wisely told us to seek first for the kingdom of God, and then other desirable things will also come to us.

Elder Sterling W. Sill noted that "the mind, like the dyer's hand, is colored by what it holds." That is, if I hold in my hand . . . purple dye, my hand becomes purple."⁷ Those who help establish the Church know what is bad, but they consistently choose the better part and fill their minds with pure thoughts. Establishing the kingdom of God on the earth depends on individual members of the Church using their God-given agency to think and say and act in keeping with the gospel of Jesus Christ at all times.

Those who feel they are too busy or have too many problems to be part of this work are likely the ones who would receive the greatest benefit from wholehearted participation. And the valuable service they could give would greatly bless others as well.

Now is the time to establish the Lord's Church by securing a confirmation of the truthfulness of the gospel in

our own hearts and doing what priesthood leaders ask of us. As we do so, we can come to know the personal blessings found in a great plan of happiness. We will come to know our Savior and what He has done for us and feel His great love. A sweet assurance of what is truth comes into our lives. We will sense that we are an important part of an eternal cause. We will truly enjoy the leadership of a wonderful prophet and other great leaders. Our lives can be filled with the peace of the Lord and the benefit of having His Church solidly established on this earth. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. 3 Nephi 21:1.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 138:44.
3. Doctrine and Covenants 10:53.
4. In Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 122; or *Ensign*, May 1978, 81.
5. Anonymous.
6. Proverbs 23:7.
7. In Conference Report, Oct. 1954, 28.

The choir and congregation sang "I Am a Child of God."

President Monson

We will now be pleased to hear from Elder Merrill C. Oaks of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Gordon T. Watts of the Seventy. Elder Oaks and Elder Watts were sustained as members of the Seventy at the April conference.

Elder Merrill C. Oaks

Continuing revelation is essential

Just over two years before his death, the Prophet Joseph Smith published the Articles of Faith. The ninth article of faith states, "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." I will speak concerning the final sentence, "He will

yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God." This principle of continuing revelation is an essential part of the kingdom of God.

In the fourth and fifth verses of the Doctrine and Covenants section 21, the Lord declared to the Church their obligation to heed the guidance of His prophet:

"Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith."

The Prophet Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon and received the revelations laying the foundation for the restored Church. He had premonitions of his own death and hastened to confer on the Quorum of the Twelve all the priesthood keys. In the words of Wilford Woodruff: "And thus addressing the Twelve, [Joseph] exclaimed, 'upon your shoulders the kingdom rests, and you must round up your shoulders, and bear it; for I have had to do it until now. But now the responsibility rests upon you'" (*Times and Seasons*, 1 Nov. 1844, 698).

Revelation continues today

Revelation and guidance from heaven did not end with the death of Joseph Smith. "Many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" have been revealed through those who succeeded him as President of the Church. In the words of President Spencer W. Kimball:

"Since that momentous day in 1820, additional scripture has continued to come, including the numerous and vital revelations flowing in a never-ending stream from God to his prophets on the earth. . . .

"There are those who would assume that with the printing and binding of these sacred records [and he was speaking here of the four standard works], that would be the 'end of the prophets.' But again we testify to the world that revelation continues and that the vaults and files of the Church contain these revelations which come month to month and day to day. We testify also that there is, since 1830 when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized, and will continue to be, so long as time shall last, a prophet, recognized of God and his people, who will continue to interpret the mind and will of the Lord" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1977, 115; or *Ensign*, May 1977, 78).

We have large amounts of written historical material available to us, including sermons of early Church leaders. These give us background that help us understand the early events of the Restoration and the situations that existed in those days. This year we have the privilege of studying teachings of the prophet Brigham Young in priesthood and Relief Society meetings. There are wonderful continuity and agreement of these teachings and those of our more current prophets.

To those who are disturbed by changes

As the policies and procedures of the Church are refined by continuing revelation and inspiration, there are those who become disturbed by any changes. Some literally hunt for situations where earlier Church leaders or members made statements which are not in complete harmony with our understanding and practices today. The mind-set of some is that anything coming from an earlier time must be more correct.

I would offer the following thoughts on such matters: (1) Some of the procedures of the Church were not completely developed early in this dispensation and

have been amplified and clarified by subsequent prophets. (2) Our protection from erroneous doctrine lies in an overriding belief in continuing revelation to the current prophet.

President Harold B. Lee spoke of this by relating an experience:

"Years ago as a young missionary I visited Nauvoo and Carthage with my mission president, and we were holding a missionary meeting in the jail room where Joseph and Hyrum had met their deaths. The mission president related the historical events that led up to the martyrdom and then he closed with this very significant statement: 'When the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred, there were many saints who died spiritually with Joseph.' So it was when Brigham Young died: so it was when John Taylor died. Do revelations given to President John Taylor, for example, have any more authority than something that comes from our president and prophet today? Some Church members died spiritually with Wilford Woodruff, with Lorenzo Snow, with Joseph F. Smith, with Heber J. Grant, with George Albert Smith. We have some today willing to believe someone who is dead and gone and to accept his words as having more authority than the words of a living authority today" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 153).

President Lee amplified this by telling of his response to a man who was disturbed at a new policy of the Church which was different from one established in the time of Joseph Smith. He said to this questioning brother:

"Have you ever thought that what was contrary to the order of heaven in 1840 might not be contrary to the order of heaven in 1960?' He had not thought of that. He again was following a dead prophet, and he was forgetting that there is a living prophet today. Hence the importance of our stressing that word *living*" (*Stand Ye in Holy Places*, 153).

An ongoing stream of revelation

In summary, the Church is founded on continuing revelation to a current, living prophet. "Many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" have been revealed, and more are yet to be revealed through the living prophet. Beginning with Joseph Smith and continuing on to his successors as President of the Church, the ongoing stream of revelation has perfected our understanding of the gospel. The understanding of doctrines is more complete as taught by the Church today than at any prior time in this dispensation. Of this I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder Gordon T. Watts

Gratitude

As a young boy, life on our small family farm was heaven. Often in our humble home there were not as many shingles as we had roof. The rest-room facility was connected by a long path that required some advance planning, and sometimes my worn shirt had more buttonholes than buttons. The Saturday night bath in front of a warm stove,

where your body experienced both extremes in temperature, was a luxury.

Then something changed. I started school and began to notice possessions I had not known. Some had nice clothing, beautiful homes with all the modern conveniences, and drove newer automobiles. Many my age were not required to arise early and do chores before going to school, only to go home at night and do them all over again. While they were