

Revelation by Elder Mark E. Petersen

It is grand to be with you, brothers and sisters. We appreciate the excellent work that you do. There is such a great need in the Church for service such as you can render. Our big responsibility, of course, is to save souls. Inasmuch as you are dealing with our young people, you surely have a great responsibility.

I am always impressed with the lines in section 18 of the Doctrine and Covenants, where the Lord tells us about the great worth of souls:

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

"And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him on conditions of repentance.

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul to me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me." (D&C 18:10-16.)

May I begin this discussion on revelation by suggesting this: Suppose you have a son who is leaving home for the first time to make his own way in the world. Think of what he faces. Our boys who go into the service are taken from lovely homes and suddenly put into an environment which in some cases is shocking. They must make a great adjustment. If you had a child going out into the world like that, wouldn't you like to keep as close as you possibly could to that child? Wouldn't you like to telephone him as often as you could and write him letters? If possible, wouldn't you like to get in your car and visit the child? In any case, wouldn't you do all in your power to use your influence, whether by telephone or mail or by whatever other means you could, to strengthen that child while he was in the midst of this worldly situation, so that he would stay clean and pure? Wouldn't you like him to come back home as sweet and wholesome as when he left?

We are the children of God, aren't we? The situation, in a sense, is comparable. As the children of God we were reared in his heavenly home. He told us we would have the opportunity of coming down into mortality where we would be on our own, so to speak.

There would be temptations. There would be opposition in all things. We would be tried. But the Lord would try to influence us so that if we did our part we would come back to him, pure and clean and wholesome, when our period of service in mortality was concluded.

I think that is the fundamental basis of revelation. The Lord, our Father, desires to keep in touch with us and influence us without destroying our free agency, so that we will come back—wholesome, clean, and pure—into his presence. It isn't so different from you and your situation with your son, is it?

It was the Lord's intention that there should be continuous communication between him and his children. When he placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he talked freely with them. Even after their fall, when they were cast out of the garden, he continued to speak with them. And remember Cain. God came down and talked with him. They discussed the sacrifice, Abel's death, and the great curse that was put upon Cain. The Lord talked to Cain and the others in the very early time because he wanted to impress upon them, in no uncertain terms, the fact that He lives and the fact that mortals can earn the right to return to his presence.

No matter how sinful Cain was, even being a murderer, he learned that God lived, because he personally talked with him both before and after the murder was committed. This left no doubt in the mind of Cain, who could have no excuse.

God talked with Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and others. Communication was free and open, and it was the Lord's intention that it would continue so, for he desired to exercise his influence upon his children and give them every opportunity to rise above the conditions of mortality. He instituted prayer, whereby there would be further communication between God and man—sweet, simple, humble, faithful prayer. When the Savior was on the earth he issued an invitation to all saying: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you"—an invitation to revelation for everyone.

But you will notice that effort must be put forth on your part. *You* seek and you shall find, *you* knock and it shall be opened to you, *you* ask and you shall receive. *You* must ask, *you* must seek, *you* must knock.

Every one of the revelations Joseph Smith received was apparently the result of some need. He went to the Lord and sought, and the answer came.

I believe that one of the greatest gifts the Lord gave to us was our agency. Free agency is a vital thing in connection with revelation, very vital. He also esta-

blished an opposition of all things. We are enticed by these opposites and have our right of choice. God hopes that we will live in such a way that we can come back into his presence. Satan is here also, and is going to do all he can to keep us out of the presence of God. Satan is real; Satan is personal. He is as much a person as you and I. Satan was one of the angels of heaven at one time, according to revelation; and then he fell, and the heavens wept over him. We are enticed by the good and we are enticed by the evil, and with our agency we have the right to choose. This enticement is just as real as can be, and just as surely as the Lord, by his power, puts good ideas into our minds and entices us by them, so does Satan put evil ideas into our heads and entices us by them.

I suppose we can call one "good" revelation, and the other "bad" revelation, can't we, because Satan does give revelation to us, evil revelation, to put us off the track, to lead us astray, and to ease us into sin. So we must recognize the fact, I think, that Satan is definitely a revelator, devilish and evil as he is.

I have had members of apostate cults come to me and bear their testimonies. They say that they have read and studied the revelations of self-styled prophets and have prayed about them and have received testimonies from the Holy Spirit that these so-called revelations were true. They have told me that they have even felt a burning in their bosoms as a sign of the truth of these things.

Yet the men who reportedly got these revelations were out of harmony with the Church, out of harmony with the Spirit of God, and their "revelations" were not of God.

But how could people get these alleged testimonies of the truth of these obviously erroneous revelations? They got them from Lucifer, who can appear as an angel of light, who can give false and lying revelations, and who can so mislead people that they are duped into believing that these alleged revelations and testimonies are true; so they turn their backs upon the actual truth to accept these falsehoods.

Now I mentioned that here in mortality we are on our own, on probation, so to speak. We are away from our heavenly home and are "trying our wings." What we do here in this life is going to determine where we land in the next life. And so, as I say, God does all that he can to influence us and entice us to do right without robbing us of our free agency. One of the great means he has for bringing this about is that he provides what we speak of as the light of Christ—an influence or power emanating from God, which enlighteneth every man, unless that man, of course, by some way has rejected it. But this light enlighteneth every man—Mormon, Jew, Gentile—everybody. "I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," he says in section 93 (v. 2) of the Doctrine and Covenants. And in section 84, "And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into

the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit" (v. 46).

And in Section 88 we read this:

"This is the light of Christ. As also He is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. . . .

"Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—

"The light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things." (vv. 7, 12-13.)

This light of Christ which proceeds from God and fills the immensity of space and enlighteneth every man is the real basis of progress. It is through this light that men make discoveries, that they invent, that they achieve all types of beneficial things in their lives.

We have this from Brigham Young: "The construction of the electric telegraph and the method of using it enabling people to send messages from one end of the earth to the other, is just as much a revelation from God as any that was ever given. The same is true with regard to making machinery, whether it be a steamboat, a carding machine, threshing machine, or anything else, it makes no difference—these things have existed from all eternity and will continue to all eternity, and the Lord has revealed them to his children." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. John A. Widtsoe, 1969 ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954], p. 40.)

That is one form of revelation by which the Lord influences his children and entices them to do right, to get along well and enjoy the good things of this life. But that is for all who live in the world.

Now let us draw sort of an inner circle where the kingdom of God is, in which there is something extra for the Saints, something that the world does not and cannot have.

We must remember that without Christ and without obedience to his gospel, there is no salvation in the celestial kingdom. He gives the light of Christ to all, even outside of his kingdom, but he gives the Holy Ghost—the Comforter—and its ministration only to those who are in his kingdom, for it is something extra special. The light of Christ is the power which emanates from God and blesses all men. The Holy Ghost is a personage of the Godhead, and he ministers to those who join the kingdom. The Lord does give revelation to people to help them become converted to the Church. He does give them revelation to gain a testimony. He does give them revelation so that they can understand the gospel, as he did to Cornelius the Gentile. But every one of us has had that if we gained a testimony.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938, p. 328.] And

remember that we have been taught all our lives that no man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost.

Here is another little bit of information from Brigham Young:

"No person can receive a knowledge of this work except by the power of revelation.

"The spirit of revelation, even the spirit of eternal life, is within that person who lives so as to bear properly the yoke of Jesus. The heavens are open to such persons, and they see and understand things that pertain to eternity, and also the things that pertain to this earth.

"The spirit of revelation attends the Gospel, and without that spirit no man can understand it." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 35.)

And then the Prophet Joseph Smith said this: "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." He quotes that, as you remember, from Revelation 19:10. Then he adds this: "If any person should ask me if I were a prophet, I should not deny it, as that would give me the lie; for, according to John, the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; therefore, if I profess to be a witness or teacher, and had not the spirit of prophecy, which is the testimony of Jesus, I must be a false witness; but if I be a true teacher and witness, I must possess the spirit of prophecy, and that constitutes a prophet; and any man who says he is a teacher or preacher of righteousness, and denies the spirit of prophecy, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; and by this key false teachers and imposters may be detected." (*History of the Church*, 5:215-16.)

So every one of us, if we have the testimony of Jesus, have the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation. If we have received membership in the Church and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, the Holy Ghost by its power and influence will help us to live successfully if we will listen to it. The Lord said: "Deny not the spirit of revelation, nor the spirit of prophecy for wo unto him that denieth these things" (D&C 11:25). And so I say again, that when a person is converted, he is led to his conversion by the spirit of prophecy. I would like to read this from the last chapter of Moroni:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent [and those things are basic to receiving guidance from the Lord], having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 10:4).

I believe that with all my soul, and I believe that persons who investigate the Church and seek the truth with real intent and sincerity, and pray to God for guidance, get the testimony by the power of the Spirit, which is a form of revelation. So every real convert receives revelation to help him understand

the gospel and accept it. He doesn't necessarily receive it by voice or by vision, but by that which Paul spoke of as the Spirit of God testifying to their spirits that these things are true.

Brigham Young said: "What proved this work true to you in England, Ireland, Scotland and Germany, France, the United States, etc.? Was it not the spirit of revelation that rested upon you? Then why should you lose the spirit? You should add to it day by day; you should add as the Lord gives—a little here and a little there, and treasure up truth in your faith and understanding, until you become perfect before the Lord and are prepared to receive the fuller things of the kingdom of God." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 36.)

May I now recall to your minds what the Savior said: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

How many of you, when you were on your missions, inexperienced, stood up and gave wonderful talks and remembered things that you hadn't thought of since you were in Primary as children? Nearly every missionary has had that experience. You did this because the Holy Ghost helped you. He will bring all things to our remembrance; he will guide us into all truth; he will be a companion; he will enlighten us; he will give us right ideas; he will keep us on the track; and he will help us to have the discernment to distinguish between good and evil, whether in doctrine, in some form of enticement, or whatever it might be. Every sincere person who joins the Church receives that gift. Everyone in the Church who listens to the whisperings of the Spirit may be guided by this type of revelation.

On the other hand, if we reject the guidance of the Spirit, darkness will come to us. Said Brigham Young: "If the Spirit of God whispers to His people through their leader, and they will not listen or obey, what will be the consequence of their disobedience? Darkness and blindness of mind with regard to the things of God will be their lot; they will cease to have the spirit of prayer, and the spirit of the world will increase in them in proportion to their disobedience until they apostatize entirely." (In *Journal of Discourses*, 12:117.) So that is the other side of the situation.

I have a rather lengthy quotation here from President Joseph F. Smith, the late President of the Church; it is very enlightening on this subject of revelation and the light of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and I'd like to read it to you. You may find this in a book called *Gospel Doctrine*, beginning on page 66:

"It is by the power of God that all things are made that have been made. It is by the power of Christ that all things are governed and kept in place that are governed and kept in place in the universe. It is the power which proceeds from the presence of the So

of God throughout all the works of his hands, that giveth light, energy, understanding, knowledge, and a degree of intelligence to all the children of men, strictly in accordance with the words in the Book of Job: 'There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.' . . . it is nothing more nor less than the spirit of Christ that enlighteneth the mind, that quickeneth the understanding, and that prompteth the children of men to do that which is good and to eschew that which is evil; which quickens the conscience of man and gives him intelligence to judge between good and evil, light and darkness, right and wrong.

"But the Holy Ghost, who bears record of the Father and the Son, who takes of the things of the Father and shows them unto men, who testifies of Jesus Christ, and of the everliving God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and who bears witness of the truth—this Spirit, this intelligence, is not given unto all men until they repent of their sins and come into a state of worthiness before the Lord. Then they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands of those who are authorized of God to bestow his blessings upon the heads of the children of men. . . .

"The question is often asked, Is there any difference between the Spirit of the Lord and the Holy Ghost? The terms are frequently used synonymously. We often say the Spirit of God when we mean the Holy Ghost; we likewise say the Holy Ghost when we mean the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is a personage in the Godhead, and is not that which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is the Spirit of God which proceeds through Christ to the world, that enlightens every man that comes into the world, and that strives with the children of men, and will continue to strive with them, until it brings them to a knowledge of the truth and the possession of the greater light and testimony of the Holy Ghost. If, however, he receive that greater light and then sin against it, the Spirit of God will cease to strive with him, and the Holy Ghost will wholly depart from him. Then will he persecute the truth; then will he seek the blood of the innocent." (*Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939], pp. 66-68.)

President Joseph F. Smith also said this about inspiration and revelation: "And the spirit of inspiration, the gift of revelation, does not belong to one man solely; it is not a gift that pertains to the Presidency of the Church and the Twelve Apostles alone. It is not confined to the presiding authorities of the Church, it belongs to every individual member of the Church; and it is the right and privilege of every man, every woman, and every child who has reached the years of accountability, to enjoy the spirit of revelation, and to be possessed with the spirit of inspiration in the discharge of the duties as members of the Church. It is the privilege of every individual member of the Church to have revelation for his own guidance, for the direction of his life and conduct. . . . You are all

entitled to revelation. It is your privilege to have it revealed to you whether I am a servant of God or a servant of men; whether I am in the discharge of my duty or not; whether I, as a presiding officer in the Church, am acting in my duty acceptably to you and the Lord. It is your privilege to have revelation in regard to this, and to know the truth yourselves. And it is my privilege to have revelation from God, as an individual, for my own temporal guidance, and I repeat again that there never was a time on the earth, since the Church was organized, when the spirituality of the people was greater than it is today." (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 34.)

Now I would like to come to the matter of guidance through the General Authorities. That is a much disputed subject among some of the Latter-day Saints, and I am going to talk to you very frankly about it.

The Prophet Joseph Smith wrote, "This morning I . . . visited with a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that 'a prophet is always a prophet;' but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such" (*Teachings*, p. 278).

And then I have selected this from section 68: "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto Salvation" (v. 5).

I would like you to know that the General Authorities are entitled to the exercise of free agency, just as much as anybody else. I would like you to know that they are entitled to the guidance of the light of Christ just like anybody else, and that they are entitled to the whisperings of the Spirit as a result of their having received the gift of the Holy Ghost, just like other members of the Church. And I would like you to know that because the General Authorities have their agency, if anyone of them so desired they could exercise that agency to violate all the rules of the Church. Some of them have in the past, especially in early days.

Now, before I go on I want you to know that I sustain the Brethren with all my heart and soul. I know they are prophets, seers, and revelators; I know it as I know I live. I'd like you to know that when I went into the Council of the Twelve, I went in as a very obscure person. But having been a newspaperman for many years, I had learned to be somewhat observant and I watched the Brethren very carefully. It was marvelous to me to see how they did their work and how these men, fifteen of them sitting in a council—all of them endowed with bright minds, all of them endowed with free agency, all of them laboring under the Spirit of God, all of them from different walks of life with different backgrounds, different types of experience, different points of view on so many things—it was marvelous to me to see how a subject presented to them came under dis-

cussion and how the Spirit worked and how complete unanimity came out of the discussion.

It was an education such as I never dreamed I would get. It was marvelous. I have sat with them for ten years, and I have seen them work. I've knelt with them as they have prayed; I have felt their humble spirit. I have traveled with them miles and miles. I have labored with them in conferences. They are men of God—marvelous men, inspired men—men who receive now the revelation of Almighty God. The Church today is guided by revelation just as it was in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. That is my testimony to you.

I love those men. Not one of them has an "axe to grind"—not one. Each is as humble as can be. Each is just as teachable as can be, from the President on down through the group. My, they are humble, lovely, teachable men, righteous, merciful, great men—great men of God. They are prophets. I love them. I wanted to say that before I go on with this discussion.

But as I say, we all have our free agency. God doesn't rob anyone of that. And sometimes even a General Authority has used his agency in a wrong direction. Some of them turned traitor and some allied themselves with those who helped to kill the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Now, a General Authority might speculate, I suppose. We have had speculation, for instance, on the part of some with respect to Book of Mormon geography, and it is plain, unadulterated speculation and not doctrine. And if a General Authority has speculated on Book of Mormon geography he did not represent the view of the Church while doing so.

We have had speculation among some of the Brethren with respect to the Great Pyramid in Egypt. I would like you to know that any speculation on the Great Pyramid indulged in by General Authorities or others, in no way represents the views of the Church. We do not have anything to do with the Great Pyramid, nothing whatsoever.

Some speculate on food fads. A great injustice was done Brother John A. Widtsoe on that subject by certain extremists. I would be just a little bit disturbed when once in a while somebody would come to me after a stake conference and say, "Don't you believe it's breaking the law of God to eat white bread?" I said, "No, I don't believe it's the law of God to eat white bread nor white sugar. I don't believe that the law of God has anything to do with it." I said, "For one thing, if the Lord was opposed to white sugar, why did he give a revelation instructing the people to build a sugar factory in pioneer days? I don't think he would give one revelation to have a sugar factory built to make white sugar and another revelation saying we shouldn't eat it. The Lord just isn't inconsistent."

I gave a little talk once on this subject in general conference, and I had three bakers waiting for me when I got back to the office; and the next day I had still another one, protesting because of what I said

about white bread and white sugar. We don't uphold fads. If any do, they are not representing the view of the Church.

Here is a little bit from President Joseph F. Smith on this subject: "And I know this, that God has organized his Church on the earth, and I know that when he designs or purposes to make any change in the matter of governing or controlling or presiding over the affairs of his Church, that he will make the change, and he will make it in such a way that the whole people of the Church, who are doing right, will understand and accept it. I know that the Lord will not raise up a 'Tom, Dick and Harry' here, there and everywhere, claiming to be Christ, or 'one mighty and strong' claiming to be inspired and called to do some wonderful things. The Lord will not deal with men in that way; that while the organization of the Church exists, while quorums and councils of the Priesthood are intact in the Church, the Lord will reveal his purposes through them, and not through 'Tom, Dick or Harry.' Put that in your little note books now, and remember it; it is true." (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 36.)

I think one of the great sections in the Doctrine and Covenants is section 21. Here the Lord, on the very day the Church was organized, designated the President of the Church as the prophet, seer, revelator, and translator of the Church. And then he speaks to the membership of the Church about the President and says: "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 you shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith." (D&C 21:4-5.)

And then he gives a great promise: "For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory" (D&C 21:6).

This is a great statement, and sets the President of the Church up before us in a light which we cannot misunderstand. The President of the Church is a prophet, seer, and revelator. His word we shall receive as "if from mine own mouth in all patience and faith," says the Lord. Now, that doesn't mean that the President of the Church is speaking prophecy every minute. He might like to go to a ball game, and he isn't acting as a prophet there. But when he acts in the power of his office, he is the prophet and mouthpiece of the Almighty.

I would like to go into this a little bit more, and again I hope that there will be no misunderstanding.

In the Church, if the Lord is going to give revelation for the body of the Church, he gives the revelation to the President of the Church. The President of the Church doesn't just get up and announce it spontaneously and automatically. The way he proceeds is this: he brings any matter of policy or business or

doctrine first to his counselors. Then they bring it to the meeting of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve which convenes each Thursday morning at 10:00. Those fifteen men sit as a council, and they call it the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. The President presents the business there, and after due deliberation, after everyone has had opportunity to ask questions, after prayer has been said earnestly on the subject, then a vote of acceptance or rejection is asked for. After an affirmative vote has been taken, and there has been unanimous decision, then such policy is announced to the Church. That's the way it works, as a practical matter.

Now I'd like to give you just a few instances when that happened. I'm going to refer first to the Manifesto, having to do with the doctrine of plural marriage. I have an excerpt from remarks made by President Wilford Woodruff at the Cache Stake conference, held at Logan, Sunday afternoon, November 1, 1891, reported by Arthur Winter, whom many of you probably know. It reads:

"I made some remarks last Sunday at Brigham City upon the same principle—revelation. Read the life of Brigham Young and you can hardly find a revelation that he had wherein he said, 'Thus saith the Lord;' but the Holy Ghost was with him; he taught by inspiration and by revelation; but with one exception he did not give those revelations in the form that Joseph did; for they were not written and given as revelations and commandments to the Church in the words and name of the Savior. Joseph said: 'Thus saith the Lord' almost every day of his life in laying the foundation of this work. But those who followed him have not deemed it always necessary to say 'Thus saith the Lord:' yet they have led the people by the power of the Holy Ghost; and if you want to know what that is read the first six verses of the 88th section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, where the Lord told Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and William E. McLellin to go out and preach the Gospel to people as they were moved upon by the Holy Ghost:

"'And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation.'

"It is by that power that we have led Israel. By that power President Young presided over and led the Church. By the same power President John Taylor presided over and led the Church. And that is the way I have acted, according to the best of my ability, in that capacity. I do not want the Latter-day Saints to understand that the Lord is not with us, and that He is not giving revelations to us; for He is giving us revelation, and will give us revelation until this scene is wound up.

"I have had some revelations of late, and very important ones to me, and I will tell you what the Lord

has said to me. Let me bring your minds to what is termed the manifesto. The Lord has told me by revelation that there are many members of the Church throughout Zion who are sorely tried in their hearts because of that manifesto. And also because of the testimony of the Presidency of the Church and the Apostles before the Master in Chancery. Since I received that revelation I have heard of many who are tried in these things, though I had not heard of any before that, particularly. Now, the Lord has commanded me to do one thing, and I fulfilled that commandment at the conference at Brigham City last Sunday, and I will do the same here today. The Lord has told me to ask the Latter-day Saints a question, and He also told me that if they would listen to what I said to them and answer the question put to them, by the spirit and power of God, they would all answer alike, and they would all believe alike with regard to this matter. The question is this: Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the land against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, and at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the Temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein, both for the living and the dead and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and Twelve and heads of families in the Church, and the confiscation of all personal property of the people (all of which of themselves would stop the practice), or after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law, and through doing so, to leave the Prophets, Apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the Church, and also leave the Temples in the hands of the Saints, so that they can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, both for the living and for the dead?

"The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for Brother Merrill, for Brother Edlefsen, for Brother Roskelley, for Brother Leishman, or for any of the men in this temple at Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we would have been compelled to stop the practice. Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our Prophets and Apostles and fathers free men, and the Temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed. A large number has already been delivered from the prison house in the spirit world by this people, and shall the work go on or stop? This is the question I lay before the Latter-day Saints. You have to judge for yourselves. I want you to answer it for yourselves. I shall not answer it; but I say to you that is exactly the condition we as a people

would have been in had we not taken the course we have.

"I know there are a good many men, and probably some leading men, in this Church who have been tried and felt as though President Woodruff had lost the Spirit of God and was about to apostatize. . . . The Lord is with him, and with this people. He has told me exactly what to do, and what the result would be if we did not do it. I have been called upon by friends outside of the Church and urged to take some steps with regard to this matter. They knew the course which the Government [was] determined to take. This feeling has also been manifested more or less by the members of the Church. I saw exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and wrote what the Lord told me to write. I laid it before my brethren—such strong men as Brother George Q. Cannon, Brother Joseph F. Smith, and the Twelve Apostles. I might as well undertake to turn an army with banners out of its course as to turn them out of a course that they considered to be right. These men agreed with me. . . . Why? Because they were moved upon by the Spirit of God and by the revelations of Jesus Christ to do it." (*Deseret Weekly News*, 14 Nov. 1891, pp. 59-60.)

The President did present this matter to his counselors and then to the Twelve, and they voted on it. Then, because of the revelation which I have described, the Brethren wrote the Manifesto. The Manifesto was not dictated by revelation from the Lord. The Manifesto was written by the Brethren, based upon the revelation which was given to President Woodruff. Before it was published it was submitted to the vote of the people, who accepted it, making it binding.

In the conference assembled where it was read, President Lorenzo Snow offered the following, as a motion, on 6 October 1890.

"I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized by virtue of his position to issue the Manifesto which had been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a Church in General Conference assembled, we accept his declaration concerning plural marriage as authoritative and binding.

"The vote to sustain the foregoing motion was unanimous."

That, you see, is how new revelation and new doctrine and new policy become binding upon the

Church.

As a second illustration, let me talk about the Church welfare program. I have here an excerpt from an address by President J. Reuben Clark given at a regional welfare meeting of the central Utah welfare region, in Provo, 3 August 1951. President Clark said:

"The Welfare Plan has behind it the care of the poor. It has behind it labor, so far as we can secure it, and the poor can furnish it, for what we give to those in need. It has behind it the giving up by those who have and putting over into the common storehouse, to which all worthy have access, something of the riches with which the Lord has blessed them. It has to do with the Church caring for those who need help. It has to do with the father caring for his children, and with the children caring for the father and the mother who have sustained them in their infancy and youth.

"These revelations, the fundamentals of them, have been with us since Adam. There is nothing new in them. They are revelations and they are the word of God unto us today, as they have been throughout all the ages since Adam was placed upon the earth.

"So I hope that nobody will go from this meeting feeling in his heart, or having in his heart any doubt but that the Welfare Plan came through revelations that began in Adam's time and that have continued on until the present. . . . [And now note this next.]

" . . . The revelation which came to President Grant, in setting up the Welfare Plan, was merely to set up an organization which should be able to bring together, the resources to the people to care for those who are in need."

The principles of the welfare plan had been given by revelation previously, and as Brother Clark says, go back to Adam. But the revelation to inaugurate a definite organization and bring all these good things together in this specific organization came now to President Heber J. Grant. How did he proceed? He talked it over with his counselors, just like Brother Woodruff did on the Manifesto; he took it to the Twelve, just like Brother Woodruff did with the Manifesto; and they voted on it, and then it went to the people. That is the way new revelation, new policies, come to the Church.

Now here is the point I hope you won't misunderstand. When I go to a stake conference, I go there as a representative of the President of the Church. I am an official representative of the Church and therefore I must represent the official views of the doctrines of the Church rather than any peculiar notions I myself might have. If, in the exercise of my free agency, I get up and preach something that is off side, I am out of the line of my duty and I do not preach under the light and guidance of the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost is not going to inspire me to preach some doctrine that is contrary to the policy established as I have just outlined for you under the direction of the President of the Church. So as a member of the Council of the Twelve I never knowingly preach

anything that is contrary to what the Brethren have decided, because my responsibility is to go out and promulgate the policies officially established by the presiding councils of the Church.

I cannot go out as an Apostle of the Church and announce some new doctrine or policy; if I did I would be out of line. The only things I announce are those which the Brethren previously have announced officially.

The Brethren tell me to go into a stake and put all things in order there, but I know the pattern I have to follow in doing so, and that pertains to ordinations, organizational work, the preaching of doctrine, and announcements of policy.

People who are out of harmony with these principles get into difficulty because they do not humble themselves and follow the line of their duty, limiting their teachings and doctrines and practices to the official views of the Church. That is something which every Church member must understand. Every bishop has to understand it. Every teacher has to understand it. A teacher who will take the bit in his mouth and teach something that is not orthodox and official is out of line.

I remember going to a ward where I attended the gospel doctrine class, and the whole lesson was a discussion on some article in the *Reader's Digest*. It was a good article, all right, but there was no religion in it. After the meeting was over I talked with the Sunday School superintendent and told him that although it was an interesting discussion, I thought the Sunday School teacher should stay with his official outline, and he said, "Oh, he doesn't use the outline."

"What does he use?"

"He uses the *Reader's Digest*."

For a solid year he had given every lesson out of the *Reader's Digest*. That teacher ought to have been made to repent or resign. He had no right to set aside the established order of the Church, and for him the established order of the Church was the regular outline of lessons provided by the general board of the Sunday School.

I went to another stake where a bishop in a ward said he wouldn't have a Boy Scout program. He had no right to set aside a part of the official program of the Church. He had no right to bring in something else as a substitute.

When a man accepts a position in this Church, he accepts the responsibility that goes with it, which is that he will follow the officially outlined procedure and will not go off on a tangent. It is no different with a bishop or a Sunday School superintendent or a teacher. It is no different with an Apostle or a member of the Council of the Seventy or the Presiding Bishopric. We are official representatives of the Church.

As teachers in our school system, you are official representatives of the Church; and if you teach something that is out of line, you are not being loyal to

your calling. You are officially there by appointment, aren't you? If you are there officially by appointment, then you will do the official job.

In the primitive Church there were Apostles and prophets for the "perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"; and also you remember, they were to help the people so that they would not be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:12, 14).

If somebody comes to you with a revelation or some new doctrine and it really looks good to you, you owe it to yourself to find out the source of it. Do you know how to tell whether or not it is from God?

It must be in harmony with the scriptures, and it must be in harmony with the living prophet, seer, and revelator of the Lord. If a man brought a new doctrine or revelation to me, the first thing I would do with it would be to take it to the President of the Church and say, "Did you receive that?" And if he said, "No. I know nothing about it," I would give it back to the man and say, "You keep it; I want nothing to do with it."

Remember the fourth chapter of Ephesians, and remember that the prophets, seers, and revelators, and Apostles are in the Church to help keep the people from being led astray by every wind of doctrine.

So compare any views that come to you with the views of the President of the Church, and if you have some doubt about a doctrine, don't teach it until you have the permission of the President of the Church to preach it, and then you will be safe.

You sustain us as prophets, seers, and revelators, don't you? Yet there is not one of us who would try to give a new revelation for the Church, because we know the line through which such revelation comes. My responsibility is to sustain that policy that has already been established by the proper council.

What authority do I have, then? By ordination, the Twelve have all the authority that was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith by all of the angels who conferred authority upon him. Every key and every authority given to Joseph Smith by the holy angel is conferred upon each new Apostle as he is ordained, but he does not use all of those powers given to Joseph Smith by the angel. By ordination they make him President of the Church, and empower this one man—their senior Apostle—to exercise all of these keys and powers at once as President of the Church, and they are the only group in the whole world who can do this.

As Apostles they are prophets, seers, and revelators, but they know the limitations of their office. They do not attempt to usurp the powers of the President of the Church. Rather, they accept him as their file leader and all work harmoniously under the direction of the Spirit. There is order in the Church. (Address to religious educators, 24 Aug. 1954.)