

SERMONS AND ARTICLES

The Standard Divine: Sermon by Hubert Case at Independence, Missouri, October 31, 1921

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.—Paul.

This, my text is a brief one, one with which I am sure you are familiar. As an associate text I have selected these words of Jude:

Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

A Practical Faith

There isn't a person in this house to-day, nor in this church, who has felt the power of the Spirit of God in his conversion, or since his conversion, but what has looked forward to a day when our ideals would be practically demonstrated among men.

If I should call for testimonies this morning as an evidence of faith among this people, we would have witnesses by the thousands. Tens of thousands are ready to bear testimony to the fact that living faith has been exercised on many occasions among us, with practical results. You people, too, have seen proof of this.

The text I have selected admonishes us we should examine ourselves and see whether we be in the faith. I comprehend this refers not only to miraculous healings, etc., for it refers also to our system of belief as a whole.

We Have a Standard

In Isaiah 59, in the closing verses, we are told the enemy shall come in like a flood, but the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him. This refers undoubtedly to the time of the martyrdom of the Prophet of this church, its leader, when the enemy came in like a flood, and with one savage rush swept the Saints off their feet, scattering them hither and thither. The Prophet Isaiah says, however, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against the enemy of the faith.

As a people we have adopted a standard. That standard is contained in the three books of this church, the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

We examine ourselves by this standard to see whether we are in the faith. In it we have that by which we can test every individual, and every man's belief. Throw that standard away, and we have nothing by which to make a test.

This standard is a God-given standard. It is his eternal truth. It cannot be overthrown. It stands to-day just as immutable and firm as it ever did.

With our wonderful standard before us, and the accumulation of the ages, by way of testimony, we are steadied and inspired for our work.

It doesn't make any difference who falls away from the standard, or who denies the faith, the standard is true just the same. The principles are true. And furthermore, he who has come to that standard has no need of the testimony of men, for he knows he has come into a condition of acceptance with God.

There is a witness that is greater than that of men—the witness which comes from God. And that witness we unerringly receive when faithful and true.

The only correct standard is this standard that God Almighty has given to men, his eternal truth.

The Standard Raised Up

Reverting to the prophecy of Isaiah, we note again that the enemy was to come in like a flood; but that the Spirit of the Lord would raise up a standard against him.

This was just what was done in the preaching of the early men of the Reorganization. These stalwarts cleared from these pure doctrines of our standards the misrepresenta-

tions that had been thrown broadcast by evil-designing men.

The early preachers of the Reorganization set before the people of the world a clear vision—they taught them again what the standard was. They called men back into the old paths. They proclaimed again the prophecies and teachings of that wonderful man, that great revelator of the latter days, Joseph the Martyr. So have we raised up the standard against the enemy, even as foretold by Isaiah. And by this same means is unfolded the real meaning of the Scriptures.

The Need of Inspiration

One thing that has troubled the religious world for centuries, and which is troubling men to-day, is how to make a practical application of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament Scripture, referring to the organization of the church, etc. How far from the mark, wise men, noble men, good men, have gotten in their efforts to maintain the standard!

The rays of inspiration coming to men as God spoke in these latter days, take us back to the simple truth and church organization Jesus Christ taught and established two thousand years ago. So are his church and ways reestablished here upon the earth. This could not have been done without inspiration.

Neither has any man, whatever his human wisdom, been able to define the specific work of the officers placed in the church two thousand years ago. It takes inspiration to do that.

No man can reach the standard in other things without inspiration. The principles of the doctrine of Christ are plainly stated in the New Testament Scriptures, referred to and recorded again and again, yet men have for centuries failed to recognize their significance. It takes inspiration to do that.

Do we believe the standard that has been set before us in the latter-day dispensation, through the revelations of God to this church? Do we believe it to be true? It is the plainest thing, the most practical thing, that could be put into the hands of men. This product of inspiration is telling us of

the things of God, what they mean, and how to use them.

A Promised Consummation

The promises contained in the three books of the church, the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, concerning our work in the latter-day dispensation present a wonderful program.

I have in my work taken hold of one phase of this program: I have been appointed to labor among the American Indians, the history of whom we have in the Book of Mormon. And I expect this particular promise, this particular part of the program, as much as any other, to come to a practical fulfillment.

We have recorded in the Bible the dealings of God with the people on the Eastern Continent. This same Bible frequently refers to the fact that this second wonderful witness, the Book of Mormon, was to come forth, and that the two would become one in the hands of man, for the converting of scattered Israel, unto the bringing of them to a knowledge of the truth. Among these are the Indians, for, as set forth in the Book of Mormon, they also are of Israel.

This is Ezekiel's picture of the practical use that should be made of the Book of Mormon.

No person among us should doubt the promises of these standard books; we should not doubt the possibility of their being worked out. These promises are to be literally fulfilled. They are going to be worked out, just exactly as God has said they would be.

Why, I have no more hesitancy in saying to you people this morning that we are going to see the Lamanites blossom as the rose, than I have of saying anything else about our system of belief. This is the promise of God.

Let Us Rally to the Standard

This is not going to be done, however, until we take up the work in earnest. Even then it cannot be done in a day. It cannot be done in a week. It may finally be done though by an application to our lives of the

gospel of Jesus Christ. Throwing away every doubt, and adhering without mental reservation to what God Almighty has said, regardless of the sayings of man, and doing according thereto, we shall achieve and see performed this work God has said should come to pass, even among his covenant people, the Lamanites, the Indians.

Men make mistakes. God does not. Men may be wrong. God is never wrong. He is always right. He has emblazoned the pathway before us. The standard has been set for us. It is our business to rally to that standard.

Men of America never see Old Glory unfurled to the breeze but what a spirit of pride touches their hearts. Why? Because it is a noble standard. It represents liberty. It represents freedom.

How much means that flag, or standard, Jesus Christ has unfurled to humanity. And he has called to humanity again and again, and is calling to-day, from one end of this earth to the other. He is calling to the people, to the sons and daughters of men everywhere, to rally to that standard, and respond to his clarion call.

Two Witnesses Foretell Events

The fast crowding of latter-day events simply means the early ushering in of the millennial reign. We see, then, the need of keeping in the faith, that the winds of doctrine, the teachings of men, swerve us not for a moment from the path of duty and achievement.

The promises of the Book of Mormon are in harmony, in spirit, all the way through, with the promises made in the Bible. Every prophet, almost, as referred to in Bible history, under the spirit of inspiration caught the vision of the latter-day work; of the great culminating of events that is to take place here upon this earth, in preparation for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. These events, as we say, are referred to in the Book of Mormon. Hence it is we have two witnesses speaking of the same things, to the convincing of Jew and Gentile that these things in promise are true,

and that they shall verily come to pass, even as foretold.

It is nearly a hundred years since the first vision was given to the latter-day prophet, opening up this wonderful dispensation. One hundred years have passed away, and still we have not reached the ideal condition the prophecies abound in telling us is to be obtained in preparation for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But we shall attain to that condition, for even so has it been prophesied.

The Need of Humanity and Love

Friends, our individual safety is in staying with God and the gospel. Not every man in the church is perfect. We are not claiming that men are perfect. They are mortal men. They make mistakes. The gospel is to take hold of their lives, and they are to march on under the standard unto final achievement.

We cannot keep going in the gospel of Jesus Christ unless we keep the spirit of humility. We cannot remain under the standard if we get away from the spirit of humility. The spirit of true love is the dynamic that moves us under the standard. The pure love of God which enters the heart of an individual floods him with light, so that he willingly steps forward under the standard in the onward march of the great army of God.

It is a happy day in our lives when we give the heart's full allegiance to the standard of God Almighty. We may not at first fully understand that standard; but we are convinced that it is true. As we endeavor, and study, there comes to us an unfoldment of the divine mind and wisdom. Remaining in the spirit of love and humility, we remain under the standard, close to God. This is our only safeguard.

Let Us Move Forward

Every man's loyalty to this standard and work is made manifest in his doings. And if there ever was a time to stand firm, to stand as a united body, that time is to-day. We ought to rally to the standard; rally to the help of the missionaries who are carrying

this banner to the world. We ought to pray for them. I believe we are praying for them, and desiring to do all required of us that the truth may roll forth to the whole world. There is, however, room for improvement; room for growth. Let us work together and stand together as a united people. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel and push. So shall we demonstrate our faith. So shall be fulfilled the Scriptures. So shall we triumph, for our work is a practical work.

God is going to shine through our lives. He is going to shine through the lives of this people who call themselves Zion, who will prove their willingness by moving forward and holding aloft his standard. It doesn't make any difference what other people do, it is our business to stand firm, loyal, true to God, true to our fellow men, true to our standard.

That we may do this, and that the peace and light of heaven may come into our lives, enabling us to become victors, obtaining the crown given to those who have been faithful to the end, is my prayer.

The Angel Message

By A. H. Christensen

Part I

There in a silent bedchamber of an humble man seeking truth, did the angel point out some of the most important passages of the Holy Scriptures. We wonder now, after the full importance of these scriptures has become known, that the people of those times failed to observe their significance. From the narrative by Joseph Smith we quote as follows:

After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bible.

And we add also a part of that prophecy as it is recorded in the Bible, and suggest that the reader read also the whole third and fourth chapters.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall

prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

For long it has been understood by most Bible students that the first part of this chapter (quoted above) had reference to the messenger, John the Baptist, when he came just before the birth of Christ, crying in the wilderness saying, "Make straight the way of the Lord," and that with the coming of Christ, the prophecy had an end. But the fact that the angel quoted this prophecy in connection with others which pointed out things about to come to pass, opened our eyes to another meaning; and reading the entire chapter, we are induced to believe that all of it referred to our day. We note some reasons below.

The messenger should come in the day of preparation. Now, that preparation is something more than preparing men's hearts. It included the restoration of God's covenant people to their promised lands. And of this preparation all the major prophets spoke freely. Zechariah and Jeremiah and Isaiah make it very clear that the Jews will be gathered back to Palestine before the second coming of Christ, and Christ himself made this statement:

For as the light of morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, and covereth the whole earth; so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be. And now I show unto you a parable. Behold, wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together; so likewise will mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth.—Matthew 24: 27, 28, Inspired Version.

This preparatory work, preliminary to the coming of the Savior, is declared by Isaiah in the following language:

Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.—Isaiah 50: 10, Inspired Version.

Another reason that makes it appear that the prophecy of the third chapter of Malachi applies to the time just preceding the second coming of Christ, is the fact that the character of his coming predicted there, is one of *power and glory and judgment*, and a time