

**ELDER DAVID O. M'KAY.**

Individual responsibility in Church affairs.—Be loyal and true because it is right.—The Holy Spirit a more sure guide than reason.—Who fails to perform duty is untrue to self.

Along with the enjoyment of the spirit of this conference my soul has had a struggle with a feeling of dread of this moment, and if I am not able to make you hear, my brethren and sisters, it is because a great deal of my energy has been expended in suspense. I pray for your sympathy, and for your faith and prayers, that the words which I utter may conform to the spirit of this conference. If you have been affected as I am by that spirit, then you are each strongly impressed with your individual responsibility. Probably you more strongly appreciate than ever before that this Church organization depends upon all the people, not upon just a few; and that those members who fail to carry their share of responsibility are not wholly true to their brethren.

President Joseph F. Smith, in his opening address, expressed this sentiment, and nearly in these words: "I come home now to the Latter-day Saints determined to keep my covenants, to be true to my duty and loyal to my God." I wondered how many, bearing the Priesthood, would say the same thing, and will go home to their fellow-workers with that same determination in their hearts. How many Patriarchs here assembled have said to themselves, I am determined to be true to my covenants, true to my brethren, true to God? How many of the High Priests throughout the Church have that same feeling within them? It burns into the heart of how many

Seventies? How many of the thousands of Elders who have partaken of the spirit of this conference have expressed this feeling? How many of the Lesser Priesthood? Into the hearts of how many of the Latter-day Saints has that sentiment penetrated? It means that, into as many hearts as that feeling enters, there are as many members and officers in this Church who are determined to carry out their individual responsibility; that not because it has been urged upon them by someone else; no, that is not the true spirit of the Latter-day Saint. I believe we ought to be influenced in this as a crowd of sailors was governed by one of their number many years ago. It was during the anti-slavery agitation, and a meeting was called in Faneuil Hall, Boston. Some sailors had been hired to break up the meeting. They went there in a body, danced around on the floor, sang, yelled, and in every way possible tried to prevent the orators from addressing the meeting. In vain were they appealed to. Their love of liberty, the memory of their old home, the honor of Massachusetts, all were invoked; but still they continued their disturbance and refused to be quiet. Suddenly a man, evidently one of their number, arose. Quieted for a moment by his appearance, thinking they had found a champion, the mob ceased its noise. The man said, "Boys, I would not be quiet unless I had a mind to." Encouraged by this remark, the mob burst into loud applause, which lasted probably five minutes. When it ceased, because of the men's desire to hear more, the man continued: "No, I would not be quiet if I didn't have a mind to but, if I were you *I would have a mind to*, not because of the memory of this hall, not for

the honor of Massachusetts, not for loyalty to her government only, but because you are men; and honorable men always stand up for the liberty of right, justice and free speech." They were quieted; their manhood had been touched. As members of the Church in conference assembled, I believe that we ought to go home determined to carry out the responsibility that is upon us, not merely because these brethren have urged us to do so, but because we have it in our souls to do it.

And what is this responsibility that rests upon every member of the Church? I turn to the 107th section of the Doctrine and Covenants, and there find enumerated the duties of the various organizations of the priesthood, and I read in the 99th paragraph the following:

"Wherefore now let every man *learn* his duty, and *to act* in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence."

Two principles in that admonition stand out as the duty of the officers to whom this revelation was given. First, the *learning*, the knowing what one's duty is; second, *to act* in all diligence in the performance of that duty. To know one's duty, to learn the truth, is the duty of every Latter-day Saint, of every man and woman in the world, including those outside of this Church. All mankind, I believe, are being impelled, lifted upward by that Spirit which makes them desire the truth. In the political world even, you find great men who have been searching for political truth, for truths that would relieve political situations. In the world of morality you find great reformers reaching out for truths that will alleviate harmful social conditions.

The same sentiment is found in the financial world. Scientific men are among the foremost searchers after truth. We were told this morning about that Power which impelled Columbus to go out into the ocean. In response to that feeling inspired within him to demonstrate a truth of which he felt confident, he could not content himself; he had to give expression to it. There is a natural feeling which urges men and women towards truth; it is a responsibility placed upon mankind. That responsibility rests upon the Latter-day Saints in a greater degree than upon their fellowmen. If you turn to the 88th section you will find the following admonition: And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom. Seek learning"—how? "even by study," but not alone by study, as the world searches for it, "and also by faith."

The Latter-day Saints have learned the truth that the everlasting Gospel has been restored. And what does this knowledge bring to them? It brings to all, who have honestly and sincerely obeyed the principles of repentance and baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which enlightens their minds, quickens their understandings, and imparts unto them a knowledge of Christ. The Latter-day Saints have a guide, a help, a means to assist in their acquisition of truth, in their desire to know what their duty is, that the world does not possess. And this guide is necessary; man cannot find out truth; he cannot find out God by intellect alone. It has been said that no man can find out God by a microscope. Reason alone is not a suf-

ficient guide in searching for truth. There is another, higher, more sure guide than reason even. Dryden, I believe it is, who says:

"Dim as the borrowed rays of moon and stars  
To lonely, weary, wandering travelers,  
Is Reason to the soul; and as on high  
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,  
Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray  
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,  
But guide us upward to a better day."

Leads us to what day? To the sunlight of faith—that principle which draws our spirit into communion with the Higher Spirit which will bring all things to our remembrance, show us things to come, and teach us all things. To acquire that Spirit is the responsibility of the Latter-day Saint who would know truth.

But knowing a thing, or merely feeling an assurance of the truth, is not sufficient. "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Now, where are we? Think of the instructions that have been given during this conference. You and I know now, as probably we have never realized before, what the duty of the individual Latter-day Saint is, and what the duty of the various organizations is. "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

This thought brings us to consider the second duty mentioned in this revelation by the Prophet Joseph Smith: "Wherefore now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence." The man who knows what his duty is and fails to perform it, is not true to himself; he is not true to his brethren; he is not living in the

light which God and conscience provides. That is where we stand, and it comes right home to you; it means me. When my conscience tells me that it is right to go along in a specified line, I am not true to myself if I do not follow that. Oh! I know we are swayed by our weaknesses, and by influences from without; but it is our duty to walk in the straight and narrow path in the performance of every duty. And mark this: Every time we have opportunity and fail to live up to that truth which is within us, every time we fail to express a good thought, every time we fail to perform a good act, we weaken ourselves, and make it more difficult to express that thought or perform that act in the future. Every time we perform a good act, every time we express a noble feeling we make it the more easy to perform that act or express that feeling another time.

I am reminded of a circumstance of the Russian woman who felt sympathy; she knew how to sympathize with the poor heroine on the theatre stage. This Russian lady sat in her box, comfortable in her furs and silks, and as she looked at the performance she wept in sympathy with the heroine who was suffering imaginary torments; and while that Russian woman was sympathizing with the stage heroine, her own coachman froze to death on the carriage seat outside, because of insufficient clothing. It is not enough to *feel*; we must act, so that it will benefit somebody.

We have been reminded of our personal duties in regard to the Word of Wisdom, in regard to the Priesthood; and we have been reminded also of unity, of loyalty, of love for our enemies. Nearly every duty of the Latter-day Saint has

been mentioned in this conference; there is one more which I wish to emphasize, as an application of this principle of individual responsibility. When you go home to your ward, look around next Sunday and try to estimate how many of the Latter-day Saints are absent from the Sacrament meeting. It may be that there are twenty per cent, or fifty per cent absent. Suppose your estimate is fifty per cent; then there are that many people in the Ward who are neglecting one of the duties of a Latter-day Saint. Upon whom does the responsibility of fetching in these brethren and sisters rest? First, in my opinion, it rests upon the Bishopric. As the Bishop sits there, let him look around, and notice if all the Presidents of the various organizations in the ward are present. If the presidents of the Priesthood quorums be absent, it is the duty of the Bishopric, I think, to visit those officers and bring them. They may go farther; it is their duty to visit the various families and members who are absent and endeavor to bring them in. But it is not the Bishopric's meeting; this Church rests upon all, and not upon a few. If one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventies quorum in that ward is present, and he finds that some of the Seventies are absent, the responsibility of bringing them to meeting rests upon him. If presidents of the various quorums of Deacons are present, they should note what quorum members have absented themselves from that meeting, and let them assume the responsibility of visiting those members. And so throughout the various organizations in that Ward. Where is the responsibility, then? It is divided as it should be, as God

intends it to be, among the people composing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the responsibility does not rest upon the officers alone, it rests upon the members also. God has blessed them with—what? Wealth? No, probably not. With intellectual superiority? Possibly not; but He has blessed them with moral strength, and with a knowledge of the Gospel, or else they were not true to themselves when they went down into the waters of baptism. He has blessed them with a knowledge of the truth; and the knowledge of the truth is not enough unless it is expressed, unless it is bringing others to that knowledge. That is the spirit and responsibility of the Latter-day Saint, and it rests upon all. Said the poet:

"Admire the goodness of Almighty God!  
 He riches gave, He intellectual strength  
 To few, and therefore now commands to  
 be,  
 Or rich or learned, or promises reward  
 Of peace to these. On all He moral  
 worth  
 Bestowed; and moral tribute asked from  
 all.  
 And who that could not pay? Who born  
 so poor  
 Of intellect so mean, as not to know  
 What seemed the best; and knowing,  
 might not do?  
 As not to know that God and conscience  
 bade?  
 And what they bade not able to obey?  
 And he who acted thus obeyed the law  
 Eternal and its promises reaped of  
 peace;  
 Found peace this way alone: who sought  
 else,  
 Sought mellow grapes beneath the icy  
 pole;  
 Sought blooming roses on the cheek of  
 death;  
 Sought substance in a world of fleeting  
 shades."

"Wherefore let every man learn his duty, and act in all diligence in the performance of it. He that is slothful shall

not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved, shall not be counted worthy to stand."

I do not know whether I have succeeded in expressing the feelings of my heart so that you understand them; but I wish to leave this thought: that every man, every woman, must bear a part of the responsibility of this Church. Feeling that, does not necessarily make him imagine that it is resting upon him only. There is no man so important who cannot sink without making even a bubble, not a ripple in the great ocean of life; at the same time his importance is so great that his actions go a long way towards establishing the power, the dignity, the advancement of God's kingdom on earth. Then, no matter where we are, if we are in the hills one week from today or tomorrow, wherever circumstances or business affairs may call us, be it in the canyon or elsewhere, and we are tempted, on a cold morning, to break the Word of Wisdom by drinking two or three cups of tea or coffee, let us feel then the responsibility of right. Let each one say to himself, "The responsibility of membership in the Church is upon me; I will not yield. What though nobody sees me, I know and God knows when I yield, and every time I yield to a weakness I become weaker myself and do not respect myself." If you are in business, and your companions say, "Come, let us go in and have a drink on this bargain, or this sale," let your answer be, No, no! What though your thirsty appetite makes you long for it, be men, be Latter-day Saints, and say, "No; the re-

sponsibility of membership in the Church rests upon me." When you are tempted to stay away from that Seventies' meeting, from that Elders' meeting, from that Deacons' quorum, and you shrink from going there, because you feel you will not be interested, say, "I will go; the duty of a Latter-day Saint is upon me; the responsibility of membership in that quorum is upon me, and I must go and help make that meeting interesting." And so, if you carry that feeling in all the duties of a Latter-day Saint, you will come to the conclusion that every time you stand by the truth, you are more of a man, you are more in harmony with God's Spirit. He loves to dwell in such tabernacles; He will guide you into all truth; He will make your soul to rejoice, and you will know this Gospel is true. "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them" is the one that is likened unto the wise man. "It is not everyone that saith Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "Therefore, be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

God bless you and all of us, that we may be Latter-day Saints in deed, children of our Father, standing always, everywhere, in all conditions, for the right, for virtue, for purity, and for the duty that rests upon us in our various quorums. This is my prayer, and I ask it in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Sister Emma Lucy Gates sang very effectively the beautiful sacred solo, "Angels ever bright and fair."