

ELDER GEO. F. RICHARDS

I am very happy to be able to say to you, my brethren and sisters, that my feelings are in perfect accord with those of my brethren as expressed in their remarks in the sessions of the conference yesterday. I hope that I may be guided in my remarks by the Spirit of the Lord so as to speak forth the word of the Lord in truth, that it may find a ready response in the hearts of the Latter-day Saints, and that perchance we may be pricked in our hearts and be resolved that we will, with the help of the Lord, come nearer doing his will in the future than we have done in the past, for our own good, happiness, and salvation and also for the blessing and happiness of others and the glorifying of the name of our Lord.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN CREATION

I call your attention, my brethren and sisters, to the words of the Lord to his servant Moses, spoken to him in the mount where the Lord talked with him face to face. The Lord said: "Behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." This then, I conclude, is the aim; all the other works of God are but a means to this end, to save and exalt his children with him in his kingdom. For this purpose the earth was created, the gospel plan was instituted, and as a part of that plan the Savior was chosen to be the Redeemer of the world. We read this in the holy scriptures: "For God so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whenever I have occasion to use this passage of scripture, in discourse, I feel that an explanation is necessary, or at any rate, is in good place, because of the fact that this scripture is used so largely by religionists in the world to justify themselves in the belief, that faith only, is necessary to salvation; that our Savior has done all, and that all that is necessary for us to do is to acknowledge him and his work, and we will be saved. This is a misunderstanding of the word of the Lord. An explanation is found in the following scripture: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also." So that it is doing the works such as Christ did that is going to save us, rather than the mere intellectual assent or profession of faith in him and his ministry.

LOVE, SACRIFICE, AND SERVICE

There is another impressive passage of Scripture, also corroborative of this fact which reads: "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." There is much other corroborative scripture.

Now returning to that expression that "God so loved the world

that he gave his only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." We see in this three great principles exemplified, viz.: love, sacrifice, and service. The love of God our Father for his children led him to give his first-born Son, in the spirit, his Only-Begotten in the flesh, to a life of sorrow and an ignominious death, that they might be redeemed and saved in his kingdom on conditions of obedience unto the laws and ordinances of the gospel. Then we find the Son also, because of the love that he bore for us, his brothers and sisters, giving himself voluntarily. He said: "I lay down my life for the sheep. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself," and he said again: "Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends." Here we find the love again, an example to the human family. Here we find again sacrifice, all that could be made, a willingness to do the will of his Father at whatever cost of sorrow and of suffering. Here we find a service rendered to the children of men necessary for their salvation; and the salvation of men should be the prize, the pearl of great price, to be desired by them above any and all other blessings.

LET US BE BOTH HEARERS AND DOERS OF THE WORD

We were told by President Grant yesterday, in concluding his remarks, that what he desired is, that the Latter-day Saints will keep the commandments of the Lord. I thought, when he made that remark, of our weaknesses as a people. We are prone in this day and dispensation, as others have been in previous dispensations—as evidenced by the nature of the counsel and instructions given by the prophets of old—to hear the word of the Lord and be not doers of it, or doers of it only in part. We go forth into the world bearing the message of the gospel, and we tell the people it is not sufficient to say: "Lord, Lord;" that that will not save them in the kingdom of heaven, but they must do the will of our Father which is heaven, and his will has been expressed in the life and teachings of our Savior and of the apostles and prophets which have gone before and which are recorded here in the Holy Bible and in the Book of Mormon. We tell them that an assent merely to these things is not all that is necessary. Some of us have entered the Church by baptism and confirmation to membership, and we have halted by the way. Many of us have stopped progress, we are hearers only, of the word of the Lord in regard to bearing false witness, in regard to honesty, in regard to our tithes, our offerings, and many other requirements which are made upon us. What we most need, it seems to me, my brethren and sisters, is to be impressed with the necessity of doing the things that we know we ought to do. We are well enough educated as a people. We know what we should do in order to obtain salvation; and because we know these things, if we do not do them, we will be under condemnation.

HOW WE MAY ASSIST THE LORD IN HIS PURPOSE

I would like, if I could, to impress my hearers on this occasion, with the necessity of assisting the Lord in the great work that he has undertaken, to save and exalt the souls of men and women. He needs our assistance. He has called upon us to so live before the world that they, seeing our good works, will be led to glorify our Father in heaven. That is one way, in which we can assist the Lord in the accomplishment of this particular purpose, by being obedient unto him, by making his mind and his will our mind and our will, even as Christ our Savior who was the great exemplar and prototype of mankind did, for he set the example and told us to follow him. We are required to walk in the light as he was in the light, with the promise that if we will do so, we shall have fellowship one with another, in him, and his blood will cleanse us from all sin; but there are other things that we are called upon to do. We are called to love one another and to sacrifice and to serve one another. The Savior on one occasion was asked by a certain lawyer, who thought to entrap him in his sayings: "Master, which is the great commandment?" The answer of the Savior was: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first great commandment and the second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Even as our Father and as our Savior loved the children of men, we are required to love them also, even as we love ourselves. There would be no back-biting, there would be no evil-speaking, there would be no taking advantage of others, if we loved them as we love ourselves. There would be nothing left undone that we could do for the comfort of others, if we loved them as we love ourselves. If we loved the Lord with all our heart, we would give to him our lives and everything that we possess, if necessary, to assist him in this great work.

WHAT CONSTITUTES THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW WAY?

This gospel we have received is one of sacrifice, service and self-abnegation from beginning to end. That is what constitutes the straight and narrow way that leads to life eternal. Some of us are more faithful, some are less faithful than others in our sacrifices. My brethren and sisters, there will come a time of accounting, and we will be judged and rewarded according to the sacrifices which we make, and the services we render to God and to our fellowmen. Let me tell you here that when we undertake to glorify our Father in heaven by living a good life, we help others along the way. Religion, true religion of the Master, is so different from politics. When we aspire to an office as politicians, and become candidates, our only hope of success is in the defeat and disappointment of somebody else. In this great work, if I, through the help of the Lord, shall be successful in saving my own soul, it will be through works of righteousness, through a good example which will be helpful, and no person

will be deprived of the blessings he is laboring for because of my success, but just the reverse, he will be helped along the way. Now in this work of sacrifice and of service, we need encouragement, and stimulation.

GET SOMEBODY ELSE

There is a little poem that I desire to recite to you because I feel that it will have this effect. And let me say here, that I believe in the poets. I believe there is much inspiration from the Lord outside of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in various ways, not the lest of which is found among the poets. This little poem is entitled "Get Somebody Else." The Lord is always to his servants calling, something more for us to do. Are we willing, or are we too much engrossed with the affairs of life? The little poem reads:

The Lord had a job for me
 But I had so much to do;
 I said, "you get somebody else,
 Or wait till I get through."
 I don't know how the Lord came out;
 No doubt he got along,
 But I felt kind o' sneakin' like,
 I knew I'd done God wrong.

One day I needed the Lord
 Needed him right away,
 But he never answered me at all,
 And I could hear him say,
 Down in my accusing heart:
 "Child, I've got too much to do.
 You get somebody else,
 Or wait till I get through."

Now, when the Lord has a job for me,
 I never try to shirk,
 I drop what I have in hand
 And do the Lord's good work.
 And my affairs can run along.
 Or wait till I get through.
 Nobody else can do the work
 God has marked out for you.

I feel that I have occupied all the time that I should, and will close my remarks here, with my testimony to you, my brethren and sisters, that I know that this is the gospel of Jesus Christ, that it has in it the power of God unto happiness and salvation, in this life, and in the life to come; and I exhort you, with all the earnestness of my soul, to live up to the light which you have received in the gospel, and promise you, as a reward, eternal life in the kingdom of our God. This I do in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

A solo, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace", was sung by Royal W. Daynes.