

## ELDER RULON S. WELLS

(Of the First Council of Seventy)

"If any man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

I have been greatly pleased in listening to the expounding of the law of God, the weightier matters of the law, which have been the theme of this great conference: judgment, mercy, love of God and love of our fellowmen. A great appeal has been made to the Latter-day Saints not to pass judgment upon their brethren, but to be charitable unto all men, and particularly to the household of faith. No greater commandment has ever been given; it is the greatest of all, that we should love God with all our hearts; and the one that is like unto it, that we should love our neighbor as ourselves. These constitute the law and the prophets. If we do these things we will yield obedience to the commandments of God. "If you love me, keep my commandments."

It devolves upon Latter-day Saints to cultivate the spirit of charity, good will and brotherly love toward the members of the household of faith, that we may be united, even as the heart and voice of one man, in all the things pertaining to the upbuilding of the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth; and inasmuch as we ourselves are not perfect, we should not be too eager to pass judgment upon those who perchance may be less perfect than ourselves. Again, let no man boast of his own virtue or of his own righteousness; nor say in his heart or otherwise: "I am holier than thou," for let it be known, there are none righteous. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But if we have in our hearts the love of God and the love of our fellow men, notwithstanding our weaknesses, there is hope for us; we may be redeemed from sin and be brought to a knowledge of the truth; we may be exalted and brought back into the presence of our Father. But, if we have not this love, neither for God nor man, there is no hope. Let no one think that because he may be in his outward life a little superior to some others, that he therefore is assured of his salvation and exaltation; he may be wanting in many virtues which may be hidden in the hearts of those whom he condemns.

Instead of being so ready to judge others let us sit in judgment upon ourselves. Let us take an introspective view and perhaps we shall see that we are full of weaknesses and imperfections—a little selfish—not always true, hard-hearted, greedy, envious, or perhaps our thoughts are not always pure. I am appalled when I take an inventory of my own shortcomings and overwhelmed with the gigantic task that lies before me in my effort to overcome the world of

sin. Then comes to my mind the comforting words of the Apostle Peter: "Charity shall cover a multitude of sins."

Let us then cultivate charity for the sinner. How beautifully did Brother Talmage differentiate between sin and the sinner. There are all grades of sinners, from those whose sins are slight to those who sin unto death; but we are all sinners for "all have fallen short of the glory of God." If we can only appreciate this one truth, that we are all sinners and have need of repentance, and will let our hearts go out in love and charity towards all men, we will not be quite so ready to condemn them. When we bow the knee before the Lord in humble prayer and ask that he "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." I think that our prayers will have greater weight with the Lord if we ourselves have charity and harbor no bitterness in our hearts, forgiving those who trespass against us. All men and all women are, to some extent, under the bondage of sin, and in order that we might be redeemed, in order that we might be cleansed and purified from sin, the Lord in his mercy has revealed his glorious gospel, and happy are those who will receive the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and through obedience make it effectual for the salvation of their own souls.

If we see some others who are not so ready to lay hold on eternal life, through their obedience, as perhaps we have been, let our hearts go out in sympathy for them and let us manifest that sympathy by lending a helping hand. Let us endeavor to lift them up and bring them to a knowledge of the truth. Those that have no love of God and none of the milk of human kindness, have little chance to gain the presence of God. Greater by far are the opportunities of those who are still living a life of sin, if, at the same time, there is something of the love of God and of their fellow men remaining in their hearts. I would rather be a pauper and eke out an existence in the slums of Liverpool, if I may yet have something of the love of God and human kindness still lingering in my heart—than to dwell in a palace and in luxury without it. I would rather be a drunkard and die in the gutter having charity and love for my fellow men in my soul than to occupy a high station among men and be honored by the world and yet be wanting in this principle. The gospel has been revealed for your benefit, for mine, for those who sin but a little, and for those who sin a great deal; and the effect of it is, if we yield obedience to it, that we shall be cleansed from our sins, yea, though they are as scarlet yet shall we be made as white as wool. The very purpose of living upon this earth, at least one of the great purposes, is that we might repent of sin. We are a fallen humanity, fallen from the grace of God, full of weakness and imperfection; but through the atoning blood of Christ we can be cleansed and purified through obedience to his glorious gospel.

Let us then practice the principles of eternal life. Let our hearts be full of charity towards all men, and let us garnish our thoughts with virtue unceasingly. Then we are promised that "our faith shall

wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrine of the Priesthood shall distil upon our souls as the dews from heaven; the Holy Ghost shall be our constant guide and companion, and our scepter shall be a scepter of righteousness and truth; our dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, which without compulsory means shall flow unto us forever and ever." God grant that we may attain these blessings, my brethren and sisters, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER CHARLES H. HART

(Of the First Council of Seventy)

There has been a passage of scripture upon my mind today, one given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, to this effect:

Therefore strengthen your brethren in all your conversation, and in all your prayers, and in all your exhortations, and in all your doings.

I feel that we have been strengthened during this conference by the prayers and by the exhortations of the brethren. It has been a source of continuing satisfaction to me that the spirit and teachings of this conference have been in accord with my own spirit and feelings. This text goes farther than the mere praying or preaching in a meeting. It goes, you will observe, to our daily walk and conversation—to our doings. A sociologist of national repute, in a friendly spirit of constructive criticism, pointed out to me sometime ago, as I was preaching the gospel to him, some weaknesses which he had observed in communities largely made up of Latter-day Saints. I feel that the instructions of this conference will correct, or tend to correct in the fullest, the weaknesses which he pointed out.

One of Tennyson's characters, "wearing the white flower of a blameless life," was one "who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it." Slander and the receiving of slander are condemned not only by the Holy Scriptures as presented in this conference, but by other writings, and by the laws that have been formulated against wrongdoing. The Talmud of old is strong against it, perhaps too strong. It says: "He that slanders, he who receives slander, and he who bears false witness against his neighbor, deserves to be cast to the dogs." Again, "All animals will one day remonstrate with the serpent and say: 'the lion treads upon his prey and devours it; the wolf tears and eats it; but thou, what profit hast thou in biting?' The serpent will reply, (Ecclesiastes 8:2) 'I am no worse than a slanderer.'" The same writings represent Deity (I think it is a misrepresentation) as saying to the prince of hell: "I from above and thou from below shall judge and condemn the slanderer." I accept the idea so far as it represents even the prince of evil as condemning slander. One of the things about slander is the difficulty of correcting it, although the defamer may be penitent. Someone has given us the suggestion of one stand-