

ELDER SYLVESTER Q. CANNON

Presiding Bishop of the Church

I have been much impressed, my brethren and sisters, with the instructions given to us this morning. I realized while listening to the remarks and instructions that in what has been said there is inspiration for many sermons. I would like to discuss for a moment the statement contained in the Doctrine and Covenants to the effect that there is "a law irrevocably decreed, in heaven, before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated, and when we obtain any blessing from God it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." In effect, as I understand it, this means that obedience to principle and law brings blessings. Conversely, we may say that disobedience to principle and law will fail to produce desired results.

I am impressed with the statement made by Brother David O. McKay with regard to the matter of integrity. This great fundamental characteristic is too often lacking among mankind. Some years ago one of the great national engineering societies, composed of many thousands of members, sent out a questionnaire to these various men throughout the country, asking them to indicate the requisites to success in engineering work. The result of that questionnaire was in some respects rather surprising. Instead of specifying the first requisite as technical skill and knowledge, the statement generally made was that the first requisite is character and integrity, and that other things should follow. I am sure that that characteristic is recognized as being most important for the welfare and lasting success of men everywhere. There are conditions prevailing, as has been stated today, that require the development of integrity and stability among the people of the United States and of the world generally.

To produce the greatest results in this direction it will involve thorough training of young people. Theodore Roosevelt declared, in speaking of the development of boys, that "if you are going to do anything permanent for the average man, you have got to begin before he is a man. The chances of success lie in working with the boy and not the man." I think it was Henry VanDyke who stated that few men over twenty-five years of age change their habits of thought and action. I do not believe that to be entirely the case, although it is probably true in most instances.

In my own experience in the gospel of Jesus Christ, I know that the Lord has power to and does change men's hearts and their desires and determination when they are much older. This occurs when they are brought to a condition of repentance, through an understanding of the fact that the things they are doing are not in conformity with his laws. No matter what their age may be they can repent and change entirely their habits and course of action, and their desires and determination. If time would permit, experiences could be related indicating such changes which have entirely altered the course of life of

men in the world who have come to a knowledge and acceptance of the principles of the gospel.

It being the case that character and integrity are recognized generally as a prime requisite to success and progress, I am sure that the principles of the gospel which we have espoused, if they were observed by the people of the world generally, would develop these very qualities in them. I appreciate the fact that obedience to the principles of the gospel requires will power, and will power is developed through integrity. So that, in a sense, the observance of these principles requires integrity, and also produces integrity. That is true with regard to every principle of the gospel.

So far as the Word of Wisdom is concerned we realize that, as the Lord has said, those who observe this principle and endeavor to live in accordance with the spirit of it will receive blessings—temporal and spiritual blessings. They develop physically, mentally and spiritually, and as they do so they develop their will power to resist the things that are contrary to the desires of the Lord and their own well-being.

If time permitted we could discuss at some length the benefits that come from observance of the Word of Wisdom, and the bad results that come from the lack of observance of that principle. Medical authorities are agreed that the use of cigarettes is harmful, that it tends to weaken the moral fiber of men and women, and that in addition thereto the use of cigarettes by women not only weakens their moral vitality, but also interferes with the functions of motherhood and the welfare of their children. Shall it be said that those who use cigarettes are morally unfit, or that they are not living in accordance with moral principles? I will not say that, but I do say that they are able to maintain their morals in spite of, rather than because of, the use of cigarettes and tobacco. I realize the fact, and I believe it is recognized, that those who do use tobacco are weakened thereby, and any success they enjoy is in spite of the fact that they use it. This is just as true of the use of liquor and narcotics, which injuriously affect the moral stamina as well as the physical body.

Some time ago the claim was made to me by a man who is giving his main efforts toward money-making, that the most successful men of today in the business world are using liquor notwithstanding it is contrary to law. At random I have noted the statements made by various men of prominence relative thereto. I would like to show the attitude of such men, some of whom did not use liquor even when it was not against the law.

Richard Washburn Child said of Theodore Roosevelt that in years of intimate acquaintance he never knew him to take any stimulant other than hot milk. Henry Ford is strongly against the use of liquor, and does not even allow smoking by his men. Tom Mix, the noted movie artist, does not smoke or drink. Calvin Coolidge is opposed to the use of liquor. Mussolini, the great Italian dictator, says, "I abstain rigidly from all kinds of alcoholic beverages, even from the lightest

wines." Also, he says, "Coffee is never served me at any meal. It is a stimulant, compelling by its action a useless nervous effort, resulting in no concrete good." Charlie Chaplin, the noted movie comedian, says he does not use liquor. It is further stated that once in a while he uses a cigarette, but without enthusiasm.

The result of the observance of the Word of Wisdom is that it develops integrity and character in men and women. Whether they acknowledge that these principles have been given of the Lord, or whether they accept them as coming from medical science, the observance of the same makes for their welfare. From whatever source or idea they gain the conviction, it is for their benefit if they observe it; and, if they fail, it is for their injury. In like manner every principle of the gospel brings its own blessing.

Now, of course, as Latter-day Saints we realize that the thing the Lord desires of us is that we should observe his commandments because we love him and because we recognize in him the fulness of wisdom. Yet, while we accept these things as coming from the Lord, we also gain understanding of the reasons why they are for our blessing.

The principle of tithing is for many people a difficult one to observe. Yet there are many people outside of this Church who, while not recognizing any direct revelation from the Lord for the observance of the principle, read the Bible and find that in early times this principle was observed. Therefore, they are undertaking to live it. They call themselves tithers, and are faithful in the observance of that principle. Not long since there was a man in my office from the East—a Presbyterian—and we were discussing the principle of tithing. He stated that anyone who would observe the principle of tithes, would find that nine-tenths of his income would go as far as the ten would otherwise go. It seems from an economic standpoint a difficult thing to understand and appreciate, and yet that is the testimony of many people.

I would like to relate to you briefly an instance that occurred in a ward in one of the stakes in Canada. Some years ago the people were in a critical financial condition because of the failure of crops. At that time a special tithing campaign was inaugurated and the people were encouraged to fully obey this principle. From that time, about five years ago, up to the present they have continued to suffer at least partial losses of their crops. Some of the people moved away, mainly non-members of the Church. But the members of the ward undertook faithfully to live the principle of tithing, and as evidence of that it is shown that in the six months' report for this year, 90 per cent of those who should observe the principle of tithing had observed it.

What is the result? In spite of the fact that crop conditions and climatic conditions have not been entirely favorable; in spite of the fact that at the time they were financially embarrassed, the people have been blessed and prospered. They have practically gotten out of debt, they have become more united, their attendance at meetings is remarkable, and the activities of the ward are unusual. They are living the prin-

ciples of the gospel. They have been relieved of their obligations. They have learned how to do things, they have brought in dairy cows, sheep and hogs, and have learned to manufacture the raw materials of the farm into products that will sell profitably. The result is that they are in a position to go forward, and they are now building a meeting-house which they expect will be paid for within a year. A little ward of that kind, under the most unfavorable conditions, through renewing their covenants and observing this principle, have gained financial blessings. More than that, they have gained spiritual blessings which come through the observance of it. And so the blessing comes to every one of us according to the way we live it.

I am convinced of the fact that the principle of tithing is a principle of blessing, spiritually first, financially second, and that it offers opportunity to relieve ourselves of obligations that may press upon us, and will increase our progress and growth in the gospel and in life. I know that it develops in every one that obeys it the qualities of integrity and determination to be worthy of the trust that is placed in us, so that our word shall be as good as our bond. I know that the observance of this principle will bring us up to that standard.

It is the same with regard to the principle of fasting and fast offerings. The Lord declared many years ago through his servants that the Latter-day Saints should observe fasting. The Savior in his day taught this principle. Those who observe that principle are physically stronger and better off, the digestive system has the opportunity to rest and to gain strength and vigor to be able to carry on its functions. Some of the worst diseases of the people of the United States today are due to digestive troubles through overeating. The principle of fasting, properly observed, will help us to enjoy greater vitality. It will also help us to develop increased will power and determination, to overcome and to resist the temptations which come to us in life, and it will develop in us the spirit of sympathy and consideration for our fellowmen. And so, the observance of this principle will bring the blessings which we desire to enjoy and which we need to enable us to become better men and women.

In like manner the observance of the principle of prayer yields remarkable blessings. It is a principle that is being neglected very seriously throughout the world today by many people who have gotten away from the love of God and faith in him. This principle, drawing one to the Lord in humility, and in faith, asking him for the things we desire, and giving him gratitude and praise for his blessings to us, is a source of strength and power that will enable us to overcome our weaknesses, and develop in us faith and determination to do right.

I do not feel that I ought to take more time, my brethren and sisters. I desire to testify to you that the observance of these principles will bring blessings to men that will develop in them integrity and uprightness, initiative, faith, and ability to stand against all the winds of contrary doctrine, or of temptation or trial. Observance of these

principles will enable us to go forward and live in humility in accordance with the will of the Lord.

May the Lord bless us that we may train the young men and women especially, that they may be qualified and developed in the observance of these things, and thereby become men and women of integrity, in order that the next generation shall be able to carry on every phase of activity in the most effective way, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

Senior President of the First Council of Seventy

I call your attention, my brethren and sisters, to what is designated as our Twelfth Article of Faith, which reads:

“We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates; in obeying, honoring and sustaining the law.”

I think by reading this Article of Faith as a text I shall be able in my thinking to be in harmony with the spirit of this meeting by reason of what our president has said, and this meeting may be the dominating influence of the entire conference.

On my way home from the East recently, when passing through Scranton, Pennsylvania, I picked up the current paper of that day, and in it was a statement from the census returns of the United States, taken from the Census Bureau, Washington, that crime was increasing, in proportion, faster than the growth of our population, according to the increase of persons sent to prison. Complete returns from thirty-one states, covering fifty-eight of a total of ninety-nine state prisons and reformatories, listed 27,018 new prisoners received by these institutions in 1926, as compared with 21,054 in 1923, the first prison census year in this country, or an increase of 28.3 per cent. There were 34.1 prisoners for 100,000 population jailed last year, as against 27.9 in 1923.

Then as we came through Denver, I picked up the *Rocky Mountain News*, and in it found a column devoted to crime and its increase. I do not have time to read it, but it would be very enlightening to do so. It would, however, occupy too much time. Let it be sufficient to say that the writer of that special column traced the crime of our country from the highest stations in political life, from those who had been found guilty of crime in the President's cabinet, through governors of states and mayors of cities, down to the lowly stations in life. It constitutes a rather severe arraignment of the present status of the United States in the matter of law observance. One statement was to the effect that according to General Lincoln C. Andrews, former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, there are no less than 40,000,000 drinkers in this prohibition country, and “home-brew is becoming a nation-wide enterprise.”

And so throughout in the column he discusses the question of violation of law and the increase of the volume of it.

Then, on the evening that I arrived home, I chanced to pick up