

glad of it—glad to see our brethren and sisters prosper, but we don't guarantee such things.

"Again, if you were seeking office and authority, I would advise you to pass us by. You might, by joining the Church, become a bishop, a stake president, an apostle, or even one of the First Presidency—if the Lord so willed; but we don't promise it. We don't hold that out as an inducement. Such things, if they come at all, come as a gift from God and not because they are sought after."

Digressing for a moment, I remember hearing a young man say concerning our beloved brother, Senator Reed Smoot, that he had achieved every object for which he had set out in his youth, and among these was included the Apostleship. "Young man," said I, "please omit from that list of achievements the holy Apostleship. Men don't get that by aiming for it, and Reed Smoot never made such a claim, neither would he make it."

There are some things that ought not to be aimed at. They are not to be achieved by man's effort, and ought not to be boasted of as trophies of human skill. The Apostleship is one of them.

Resuming as to that gentleman from Philadelphia, said I to him in conclusion:

"If you were seeking honors of that kind you would very likely be disappointed. Or, if you desired the love of the world, its applause and good will, you would be doomed to disappointment by joining this Church; for you would simply inherit your share of the Savior's promise to his disciples: 'You shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.'

"But if you want the fulness of the Everlasting Gospel, the powers of the eternal priesthood, and the illumination of your soul, so that you can know beyond all doubt why you are here, whence you came, what God expects of you, and what awaits you in the great Hereafter,—if this knowledge is of any value to you, then embrace what the world calls 'Mormonism' and these blessings shall be yours."

GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

God's greatest gift is eternal life, but that pertains to Eternity. The greatest blessing that our Heavenly Father can bestow upon us in time, or while we are here, is the power to lay hold upon eternal life. The Everlasting Gospel, through obedience to its every requirement, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, gives this power. It not only saves—it exalts men to where God and Christ dwell in the fulness of Celestial Glory. Such, in substance, was my testimony to that gentleman to whom I refer, and this is my testimony to you, my dear brethren and sisters, in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

Of the First Council of Seventy

There is a saying among the German people that runs like this: "All good things are three." We have in a material way the three

dimensions: length, breadth and thickness. We have the three component parts of this mundane sphere: land, water and air; also solids, liquids and gases, the three forms of matter. We have the three classes of heavenly bodies that fill the sidereal universe: suns, planets and satellites. And in a spiritual way it may also be pointed out that we have the three degrees of glory—celestial, terrestrial and telestial, symbolized by the sun, the moon and stars, on account of their comparative brightness. I mention these things, and might mention many more, not because they have, particularly, any bearing upon what I may say, but more because I have another three in mind, to a consideration of which I would like to devote the few moments that I stand before you.

There are three things which are indispensably important to our wellbeing and are naturally inherent to all mankind. We inherit them from our divine parents. They are divine attributes transmitted to us as the offspring of Deity. They are, in this, like the inalienable rights of man, another three: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, of which we read in the Declaration of Independence. These three things are emotional qualities of the mind and heart of man and of our natures, that may and should be carefully cultivated; but they may and often do exist in a very perverted and distorted form—and we are under necessity of choosing between these divine and noble attributes as they are naturally inherent to us, and their ignoble and perverted counterfeits which can only be acquired by ignoble and unnatural effort. It is a question of choice between good and evil.

These three to which I refer are faith, hope and charity. Whether they be virtues or vices depends upon the form they take. If they assume their natural and hence divine form they are virtues, but if they are perverted or counterfeited then they become vices. Some people regard faith as a weakness, a positive vice. To believe everything you hear, how foolish! They have simply mistaken credulity, the devil's counterfeit, for faith; they are not alike. Credulity is no more like faith than lust, another devilish counterfeit, is like love.

All good things are counterfeited. Our government issues currency in various denominations. It is known as the legal tender wherever we may use it, but it is capable of being counterfeited and palmed off on an unwary public sometimes as the genuine thing, but it is counterfeit. They make coins in various denominations, but some devil will obtain a baser metal and gild it over with gold and palm it off for genuine. Religion is sometimes falsely understood. It, too, has its counterfeit. But let us not despise the pure gold of religion because the devil makes a counterfeit of it in hypocrisy.

What must we believe or in whom must we have faith? are vital questions if we are to choose the true, the genuine faith, and reject the false, the counterfeit. It must be obvious to everyone who thinks that if there is a plan of salvation, a plan whereby mankind can be redeemed from its fallen state and from death and the grave; whereby

it can be exalted into a state of never ending joy where sin shall be no more, a state wherein there shall be a continuation of happy associations of loved ones, husbands and wives, parents and children, such plan must, of necessity, emanate from heaven, for only God can give us such salvation. Surely this is something for which we earnestly hope, or as the poet tells us, "A consummation devoutly to be wished." Do we hope for salvation or do we only hope for the sordid things of worldly pleasures and the gratification of sensual desires? Therein lies the difference between good and evil hopes.

How then may we learn of such a plan, if plan there be? In answer let me say, only as God shall make it known. There is no other way. And how? By revelation, the very foundation upon which he builds his church. He reveals his secrets unto his servants the prophets. Then hearken unto these messengers of life and salvation, these bearers of the glad tidings of great joy. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," for as we read still further in holy writ, "God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life." Herein are these three attributes combined, faith, hope and charity. Paul says, "Now faith is the substance (or assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" but again we read, "Faith is not unto every man, it is the gift of God." Then we may well say it is the assurance which God gives us that our exalted hopes shall be realized. All our hopes of a glorious resurrection, of a future life in celestial glory, are based upon our faith in him, whom God sent into this world, even our Savior, and in his servants and messengers, the prophets and apostles through whom he makes known the glorious plan of life and salvation which dispels the gloom of death and the grave, and fills our hearts with hope. But says one: I have no faith in God and no hope in a future life. How unnatural! How such a one must have resisted every natural impulse of the heart to have fallen into such an abnormal state of mind! No faith, no hope. Spiritual deformities. To look upon a man who is deformed or maimed for life, —a dislocated jaw, a broken nose or an eye knocked out—is naturally revolting. How unsightly and ugly! But not half so hideous or so repulsive is he who is thus physically deformed as he who is spiritually deformed, wanting in these Christian qualities so inherent and natural to all mankind. No faith: he does not ask and hence does not receive; he does not seek and hence he does not find; he does not knock and therefore the door is not opened unto him.

No hope. How unnatural! Pope says:

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
Man never is but always to be blessed."

And another poet, after telling us of the pleasures of hope, exclaims:

"Cease every joy to glimmer on my mind,
But leave, O leave the light of hope behind."

Young women, you daughters of Zion, who delight in making yourselves look fair, I shall not censure you or find fault, you were created so; but if you would be beautiful indeed then garnish your minds, your inner selves, with these virtues, with faith, hope and charity; and lift up your souls in grateful adoration to God, the giver of every good. Then shall these virtues permeate your whole being and shine forth in a matchless beauty that may not be acquired in any other way. Young men, cultivate these virtues; then shall godlike nobility be indelibly engraved upon your countenances, and that intelligence which is the glory of God shall fill your souls with joy and gladness even to overflowing.

"Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Thus writes the Apostle Paul to the Corinthian saints. Then what is charity? Is it pity? Compassion? Alms giving? Mercy? Yes, all these, but still more besides. The dictionary defines it as "universal love." The Prophet Joseph Smith says it is "the pure love of Christ." The Savior tells us that all the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy mind," and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This then is charity, which is the fulfilment of the law. This is the greatest thing of all. This achieved will sanctify us from all unrighteousness and prepare us for celestial glory. All else is merely the means to this desired end. This then is "that which is perfect," the rest is "that which is in part." Or as Paul further writes to the Corinthians:

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

For the accomplishment of this end the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has been revealed, through obedience to which we manifest our faith in him as the Savior of the world and receive the assurance that our hope for a glorious future life will be realized. No other name is given under heaven whereby eternal life, God's greatest gift to man, may be attained, other than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ the very Son of God, whom he sent into the world to be our Savior.

Let us then believe in him and cultivate his divine attributes as they are naturally inherent within us, even the true, the genuine, and reject the false, the counterfeit; then shall we grow in the knowledge of God and good works day by day and eventually receive the crown of eternal life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Amen.