

ELDER DAVID A. SMITH*of the Presiding Bishopric*

My brethren and sisters, I assure you I appreciate the privilege of standing before you today. I fully realize that this is a difficult position to occupy. Not that it is difficult to bear testimony of the things of God, but one standing in this position and realizing the great responsibility, fears that he may not do justice to his subject. In the spirit of humility I approach this task and humbly pray our Heavenly Father that he will bless me in my attempt to address you.

I was greatly impressed this morning with the remarks of President Grant. I had a feeling of joy come over me when he promised that if we would obey the law of tithing God would bless us. I am wondering how many of us are going to take this promise seriously. The Lord has made a similar promise before and has also reminded us that we have many things to do and repent of, for we are not pardoned because we seek to counsel in our own way. (D. and C. 56:13, 14.) Is it not worthwhile to receive these promises sincerely and with faith in their fulfillment through obedience to the laws of God? Surely none of us doubts that President Grant has a right to make this promise, and we should have no doubt that it will be fulfilled. May we take the spirit of this promise to our homes that we may be encouraged and encourage others in attempting to keep the commandments of the Lord.

I was happy to hear President Grant read Section 11 of the Doctrine and Covenants and comment upon it. This section has always been interesting to me. I was attracted to it at first because it is a revelation given through the prophet Joseph Smith to my grandfather. To me this revelation contains a wonderful sermon which in my opinion was not intended for him alone but for all those who receive the priesthood. May I explain why I reached this conclusion? Since the beginning of the Church, men have been chosen and sent into the mission field to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have not been chosen because of their educational attainments, but because of their humility and willingness to serve the Lord to the best of their ability. One of the many evidences that this is the work of the Lord is seen in the results of their labors. Very few have failed in their effort and we have no record of an elder, while serving as a missionary, leaving the Church to join another. We have looked upon this condition as being normal and in keeping with the gospel plan. Many times have I heard Church members say, in some cases as an excuse for not supporting the priesthood quorums, the Sabbath school or the Seminary work, that the Lord does not require men of great learning to preach the gospel, for he has promised to establish the gospel through the weak things of the world; and they point to the success of our missionaries to justify themselves in their failure to take advantage of the many opportunities afforded them to gain a better knowledge of

the gospel of Jesus Christ, which, with the spirit of humility and faith, qualify them for this service. For faith, humility and knowledge are the weapons to be used in defense of truth and righteousness. Have we been guilty of "counseling in our own way?" In this interpretation is it not an attempt to justify ourselves? Did the Lord intend to convey to his children the thought that they should wholly depend upon him? Are they not required to prepare themselves by storing up useful knowledge? To my mind these questions are of vital importance to us and I believe a careful examination of the scriptures will convince those in doubt that the Lord expects much of his servants by way of preparation on their part to qualify them to render efficient service, which preparation must come through a sincere desire to gain a knowledge of the gospel through diligent research carried on in the spirit of faith and humility.

Referring to Section 1:19 and Section 35:13 of the Doctrine and Covenants, who are the weak things referred to? The answer given is he who does not "counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh." How are they to thrash the nations? and the answer "by the power of my Spirit." How are they to receive that power? The words of the Lord to Hyrum Smith in Section 11 give us the answer: "Therefore if you will ask of me you shall receive; if you will knock it shall be opened unto you." "Seek not for riches but for wisdom; and, behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich." (D. and C. 11:5, 7.)

About eight years after this revelation was given the Lord said to Joseph Smith, "Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph Smith, I am well pleased with your offering and acknowledgments, which you have made; for unto this end have I raised you up, that I might show forth my wisdom through the weak things of the earth. (D. and C. 124:1.)

We will recall that when the Prophet Joseph Smith was first called to this work he was a boy, unlearned but intelligent and capable of understanding the words of God. He was not a man of letters and had not learned to "counsel his fellowmen nor put his trust in the arm of flesh." Realizing that there was something lacking in the teachings of men and believing in the promises made by God to his children, as recorded in the scriptures, he went to the Lord to ask. His prayers were answered. That weakness, "speaking in the language of men," became strength, showing forth the wisdom of the Lord through the weak things of the earth. And it took years of patient study, intelligent research, and unquestioned faith, to prepare him for this great service. And through him the Lord has given us his word to direct us in our effort to prepare for his service. The following quotation from Doctrine and Covenants 84:106-110 is a notable example:

"And if any man among you be strong in the Spirit, let him take with him him that is weak, that he may be edified in all meekness, that he may become strong also.

"Therefore, take with you those who are ordained unto the lesser priesthood,

and send them before you to make appointments, and to prepare the way, and to fill appointments that you yourselves are not able to fill.

"Behold, this is the way that mine apostles, in ancient days, built up my church unto me.

"Therefore, let every man stand in his own office, and labor in his own calling; and let not the head say unto the feet it hath no need of the feet; for without feet how shall the body be able to stand?

"Also the body hath need of every member, that all may be edified together, that the system may be kept perfect."

It would appear that many of us have neglected to follow this instruction.

"And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

"Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand."

"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, even by study and also by faith." (D. and C. 88:77-79; 118.)

This quotation also gives us a better understanding of the need of preparation for service in his great Church.

The time is limited; it would therefore be unwise to comment longer upon these passages. May I therefore read a few passages from the Bible having a bearing upon this subject? Let us consider Paul's advice to Timothy.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

"That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

"Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen." (I Tim. 6:17-21.)

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." (II Tim. 2:11-16.)

Also Paul's instructions to the Corinthians found in I Cor. 1:17-31.

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

"For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

"Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

"For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

"But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

"And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are:

"That no flesh should glory in his presence.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

"That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Solomon calls our attention to the need of such training for we read in Proverbs 1:2-7:

"To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;

"To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

"To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

"To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

Now, my brethren and sisters, it seems to me the Lord has given us his plan in clearness, and our duty is clearly defined and definite. Ample provision has been made available for such training for all who should be prepared to engage in the work of the Lord. For years we have urged that young men serve as Ward Teachers that they might have an opportunity to discuss gospel principles in the homes of the saints, thus applying in actual service the information gained through study in their quorum and auxiliary meetings. We have also urged that we carry out the commandment of the Lord in requiring the priest to "preach, teach, expound, exhort and baptize." It is such experiences that give to those who go into the mission field a burning testimony of the gospel, and which sometimes, I am sorry to say, some lose after their return, because of lack of proper Church activity and spiritual food. How much more successful would the work be if all missionaries were sent out with the training and testimony found in

those who return. In certain sections this is being done. Why not in all? Surely we are left without excuse when we fail, and how much easier would be the task for the mission presidents who are constantly pleading for missionaries, as well as for the missionary himself, if such interest were taken in him before his departure.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (II Tim. 1:7.)

May the Lord bless you. I rejoice in his great work. I am thankful to him that I bear his holy priesthood and that I am permitted to labor with you in this great cause. May God bless us and help us to carry on this great work and responsibility which he has placed upon us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

It shall be my purpose, brethren and sisters, in the brief period allotted to me this afternoon, to introduce to you two great characters with whom you are more or less acquainted and whose power and influence has actuated the minds, the hearts and lives of the people of this world from the beginning. I desire also to bring to your attention the work and purpose of each of these great characters which, I may say, are diametrically opposed to each other. I read to you from the first chapter of the Book of Moses:

THE WORKS OF GOD

"The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain,

"And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence.

"And God spake unto Moses, saying: "Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless?"

"And, behold, thou art my son; wherefore, look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all, for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease.

"Wherefore, no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth.

"And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior, for he is full of grace and truth; but there is no God beside me, and all things are present with me, for I know them all.

"And now, behold, this one thing I show unto thee, Moses, my son; for thou art in the world, and now I show it unto thee.

"And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created; and Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are and which were created; of the same he greatly marveled and wondered.

"And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that His glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth;