

God, constitute the Church that our Eternal Father had in mind when his Son preached that it should be built upon a rock. These men are not swerved when the winds of adversity blow; they know how to weather the storm. We find them always solidly and squarely established in the revelations of God our Father; while, on the other hand, those who yield to temptation, who will not keep the commandments of God, are shaken as a reed in water, and many fall, because their foundation is not secure.

This conference will be a great epoch in the history of this Church. The great anniversary today of the organization of the Church, the experiences of yesterday, and the inspirational sessions on Saturday add another great chapter to the program of God our Father by which men and women may know that those who are appointed to direct his affairs on the earth are at the helm, that they are watching over the flock, that they are constantly building and keeping in harmony and in tune with the work that has been established by our Father through the Prophet Joseph, who is a prophet of the living God, and was, and always will be. Those who have succeeded him were and are likewise prophets of God.

May we remember the words we hear and carry them back to our people, I pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

ELDER JOHN WELLS

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I hope the Lord will give me words to express what is in my heart to say to you this morning. I desire to call your attention to the parable of the Master called the "Lost Sheep," which is recorded in the 15th Chapter of Luke. The chapter commences with the following words:

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

The sinners, and the publicans who were largely the officials of the Roman government and mostly tax gatherers, did not live up to the strict interpretation of the doctrines of the Pharisees. In my opinion, the Master in giving this parable to the scribes and Pharisees intended to impress them with the necessity of looking after their lost sheep, the publicans and sinners.

The use of parables was common among Jewish teachers. Jesus was but following the custom of the time in using a descriptive allegory

founded on a real scene or event such as occurs in nature and human life, with a moral or religious application. The Master's parables were simple and effective. He talked in the language of the people. When in wheat fields he spoke of wheat and tares and the mustard seed. When on the shores of the sea of Galilee, he spoke of fish. When in Judea he spoke of sheep.

A flock of sheep usually numbered one hundred. The shepherd is portrayed as leaving the ninety and nine, safely in the fold, while he went in search of the one that had strayed. He rejoiced in finding it. When he returned home, he called together his friends and neighbors, and asked them to rejoice with him, for he had found his sheep which was lost.

The Master discloses the real purpose of this parable when he said: "And I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." He brings to our attention the duty of servants of the Master in all ages. The Master deemed it of great importance to go after those who had strayed from the fold of Christ. There is need for the application of this parable in our day.

One of the objectives of the Church is to perfect the lives of those who have accepted the truth. This is a great responsibility. There are among us in every ward and stake in the Church, members who have become indifferent to the teachings of the Gospel and who for one reason or another absent themselves from quorum and sacrament meetings. Recently I examined the records of the Church and was alarmed to find that these missing sheep had increased by 5000 last year. It is our duty to do everything possible to bring them back into active participation in the Church. We are our "brother's keeper" and should feel keenly this trust. These neglectful members should be visited and labored with, with all diligence and with patience. They should be encouraged and again brought to see and understand the beauties of the Gospel and the benefits of active Church membership.

I recently heard of an individual who was indignant when asked some questions about his salvation. He had not objected to the brakeman on the train asking where he was going. He felt the brakeman inquired of him in order to save him from a possible mistake. The man who asked about his salvation had the same motive, only the case was a great deal more serious. Yes, some you will visit will not take kindly at first to your interest in them, but if labored with perseveringly and in all meekness, they will later call you blessed.

A mother of several boys had difficulty in getting her boys to keep neat and tidy and she had to give them personal inspection before they left for school. She realized that they had neglected to look at themselves in the mirror. She hung a beautiful mirror in the front hall, where they could not help but note their appearance. She now has no need to inspect them, for the glass tells them how they look. For after all, the mother added sagely, "I think one of the principal steps toward reforming people is to get them to look at themselves." With tact and understanding, can we help these indifferent members to see themselves

as others see them and through our earnest efforts and kindness bring them back into service in the Church?

Are we as officers of the priesthood quorums of the Church doing our full duty in encouraging neglectful members to attend their meetings? Are ward teachers taking their responsibility seriously and with kindness and tact endeavoring to bring disinterested members back to activity in the Church? As Bishops who preside over the Aaronic Priesthood of the wards, are you watching so carefully over your flock that none in the future will be lost or go astray? Are you making a conscientious effort to bring back those men and boys holding an office in the Aaronic Priesthood, who because of indifference, lack of home training or the allurements of the world, have drifted away? It is our duty to labor with them persistently and bring them back into the fold. Are the auxiliary officers of the Church giving attention to those who should be enrolled as members of their organizations? As individuals, are we taking a brotherly, sisterly or neighborly interest in those about us who do not enjoy the full benefits and blessings which the Church extends to its active and faithful members?

Are these members grateful for your interest in them? Let me cite to you some cases which have come to my personal attention. To my office came a man, who for twenty years had done nothing in the Church. Through the missionary work of the Bishop of that ward, this man was brought back to service in the Church. He realized the many years he had lost. As he stood outside the Logan Temple, with his wife and children, having had them sealed to him that day, he said, his heart full to overflowing: "I wish my Bishop had given a little attention to me when I was a lad."

I was deeply impressed with the story of a man in one of the stakes of Zion at a stake conference. He stated that through the insistence of the members of his quorum, he was urged to attend his meetings. At first he was reluctant. Then, since they wanted him to come so much, he decided to please them. He became interested and active, and now has a renewal of his testimony of the Gospel. He has taken his wife and children to the temple. His heart is filled with gratitude because the members of his quorum had interested themselves in him and labored with him and brought him back into church activity. There were tears in his eyes as he told of his joy.

The Master said there was great rejoicing over one who repenteth. There are three who rejoice, when, figuratively speaking, a sheep which has strayed is brought back to the fold: the individual who has strayed away, he who is responsible for his reclamation and "likewise there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

In this day, hear the word of the Lord regarding the worth of souls, and the joy of bringing souls unto him; as recorded in the 18th Section of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and which was mentioned by President Grant in his opening address:

Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;
For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh;

wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

And he hath risen from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him, on conditions of repentance.

And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth!

Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!

And now, if your joy will be great with one soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!

I sincerely plead with you to give this matter of the indifferent members of the Church serious reflection and attention. Whether it be friend, neighbor or relative, by long-suffering, meekness and patience, win their respect and love and help them to again see the beauties of the Gospel. Bring them back into the fold that they might again enjoy the blessings of the Gospel and be numbered actively with the Church of Christ.

To those of you who are within the sound of my voice who may have become indifferent to the teachings of the Church, I urge you to take inventory of yourselves this day. Consider where your course in life is taking you. Is it bringing you happiness and contentment and peace of soul such as does the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or is it bringing you only passing pleasures? Are your hearts set upon the things of this world, the money, position, good times which it brings, or upon the Kingdom of Heaven with its rich treasures?

I personally know the joy and satisfaction which comes in this missionary labor; the joy of seeing friend and relative become active and useful in the Church, after years of indifference, and I rejoice with them in their blessings. My testimony is that in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found the restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. I know that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I know that the Gospel is the plan of life and salvation unto all who accept it and are faithful and obedient. May we live the Gospel and may we ever be diligent in teaching it, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and the congregation joined in the singing of the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

"A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief," was sung by the Choir, solo by Emma Lucy Gates Bowen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

It may be of interest to those who do not already know it that this song of fourteen verses, by Montgomery, was sung in Carthage Jail by John Taylor; after he had finished singing it he was asked to sing it again. He replied that he did not feel like singing, he was oppressed