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I am happy, my brethren and sisters, to be in attendance at this conference and to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is the Church of God.

Soon after the social security plan was announced there appeared at the office of the Presiding Bishopric some who requested to join the Church. The questions put to them brought forth the statement that they liked the program and wanted to belong to a church which took care of its poor. Nothing else seemed to matter, the main objective was to be fed and cared for. This has not been unusual during the last six months. It is an almost daily occurrence at the Presiding Bishop's Office. People generally, it seems, have very little conception of what it means to belong to this Church. Generally, they will say: "What difference does it make to what church you belong, they all lead to the same end."

I am not surprised at this coming from those who are not members and who are not familiar with the obligations placed upon members, but I am shocked to find so many who claim membership who apparently have similar ideas. We forget sometimes that the Church of our Lord is founded upon principles with a promise, and to obtain exaltation in his kingdom we must be obedient in all things. The Lord has made it clear to us that it is the responsibility of those who have plenty, to care for those who are in need, but he modifies that to the extent that those who are *worthy* may have claim upon the Church. We find in going over our records that a large portion of those who are in need are not worthy so far as obedience to the Gospel plan is concerned, for they are not obedient to, nor do they have respect for the laws of God. Just how far our responsibility should go towards those who find themselves in this condition is a question that must be answered through the spirit of love and fellowship.

First, it is our responsibility, if they have been baptized and have been accepted into the Church, to labor with them diligently in the spirit of love; teach them the Gospel principles, take them by the hand, so to speak, (for many of them are as the blind) and lead them into the truth and the light, where they may gain an understanding of the Church, the principles thereof, and their duty regarding these principles. While the Church is responsible for its poor, it is clearly set forth that it is the duty of the rich to give of their substance for the support of the poor. The Lord has said, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one, ye are not mine."

We must be impressed with the thought that those who are poor are not entitled to help unless it is earned. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." And, again, "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest." (Prov. 20:4).

"Fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward." (D. and C. 6-33).

In the early history of the Church it was impressed upon the leaders of the Church to urge the people to be united, to have all things in common, that there should be no poor and none who were rich. As they moved from place to place they were given allotments, which were called their inheritance, and when they came to the valleys of the mountains, again allotments were given to Church members as their inheritance. Men did not quarrel over the choice of places; they took that which was assigned to them. They were called to settle the valleys of the mountains and establish homes. They could have taken up in some places whole valleys, but their call was a mission, and the land was secured for them and those who should follow. This has been a Gospel principle, one of the principles upon which the Church has been established, a principle which obligates us in this day, which means that we are not only required to become familiar with the principles of the Gospel, but we are required to apply those principles in our daily walks of life; to walk uprightly before the Lord, to put aside selfishness and those things which come into the lives of men and make them selfish and lacking in consideration one for another, having no desire to be helpful to one another.

In this day the world is troubled because many have not learned to know this principle, or have no respect for it, and therefore seek to take by force that which rightfully belongs to someone else. The world seems to be full of strife and turmoil because of selfishness, lacking in consideration for one another.

The plan of the Gospel as revealed to us in this day permits us through our own efforts, our own faith, our own obedience, to become equal, equal in all things. How many will receive that blessing? How many will be worthy to stand in that group, we cannot say.

In the seventy-sixth section of the Doctrine and Covenants the prophet tells us of his vision in which he saw the Father and the Son; he saw the glory of the Celestial kingdom and those who may obtain it; the glory of the Terrestrial kingdom, and the glory of the Telestial kingdom, and those who should occupy them, showing that even in the time to come there will be a division of equality. This condition will be brought about only through the failure of the children of God to be obedient to his laws which he has established, that his purposes should be brought about and his children receive exaltation wherein is the free agency of man, which makes them equal in all things, at least the opportunity to be equal is embodied in the Lord's plan of salvation.

It seems to me that we should keep these things in mind when we speak of charity, of relief, the priesthood, and the Church, for it takes each individual member to make up the Church, and where one is neglected, where one is left to flounder alone without guidance, someone is responsible, and someone will be called to account. Therefore, it seems to me the way to bring about this condition is not altogether through a

division of property to make men equal, but through living in harmony with the Gospel, in teaching the Gospel in that energetic manner that will carry us into the homes of the wayward ones, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Many of them may not know the cause of their hunger, not having known, or, through disobedience, having lost the taste for spiritual food; they may not discover the cause of their ailment unless someone who understands and appreciates the blessing thereof carries this spiritual food to them, feeds them, and helps them to understand.

So I say, my brethren and sisters, it takes more than food to prepare us to be equal; it takes more than Gospel principles to develop the Church. It requires the untiring effort of those who have received the priesthood, and thus taken upon them obligations which require that we serve our Father faithfully in the great work entrusted to our care, this obligation having come to us through acceptance of the holy priesthood.

May we be worthy of the Lord's help, may we become more united. With turmoil all about us, it is incumbent upon us that we draw near together in spiritual and temporal matters, that we become more obedient to the commandments of God. May we remember to pay our tithes and offerings, and meet together often, that we may partake of his Spirit and be edified, strengthened and become equal in his sight. May he bless us to this end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER STEPHEN L RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I shall attempt to enumerate briefly the unique and distinctive contributions of Joseph Smith. I shall not try to appraise their relative importance or set them forth in logical or chronological sequence. Most of these contributions are in the field of theological doctrine. Some, however, are of a more temporal nature.

CERTAINTY CAME WITH FIRST VISION

I name first a new conception of God and the Godhead. There can be no doubt that in the religious world of the Prophet's boyhood there prevailed a very nebulous and uncertain doctrine with reference to the personality of God and the personages of the trinity. The creedal statements of the day appear to us now as being most difficult of interpretation and understanding if not wholly unintelligible. To this situation the First Vision brought clarity, definiteness and certainty, not as the product of reasoning, argument and sophistication but with the sureness of experience. When Joseph came out of the grove he had no need to argue for a theory,—he knew the facts. God is in form like a man. He has a voice. He speaks. He is considerate and kind. He answers prayer. His Son is a like but distinct person. He is obedient to the Father and the mediator between God and man. The presumption of God as a mere essence or principle of power and force in the universe was for all time exploded.