

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.

The testimony is direct and positive and irrefutable. Many have not believed but no one has ever had the knowledge to disprove it. The character of the Holy Ghost as a member of the Godhead came to the Prophet later through revelation with a clarity and definiteness exceeding other scriptural pronouncements on the subject. He set forth, "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us." The identity and functions of the Holy Ghost are by him also differentiated from those of the Holy Spirit.

#### JOSEPH SMITH'S CONCEPTION OF PRIESTHOOD

Second, I point out a new conception of the nature of the priesthood. I pass by the restoration of the priesthood on which there is testimony of a character entitling it to admissibility in any tribunal, because the restoration postulates a withdrawal of the priesthood from men, which is a controversial subject. On the nature, duties and offices of the priesthood, however, I look in vain for any definitions comparable to those given by the Prophet.

First there is the wide distribution of the powers and offices of the priesthood among men and boys of the Church. This was a complete innovation so far as modern Christian practice is concerned. None but a selected few had ever claimed or held the right before, although there is respectable historical evidence, not known to the Prophet, to warrant the belief that the same practice was extant in the early church.

But even more important in its novelty do I regard the new constitution of the priesthood as revealed through Joseph Smith. To my thinking there is nothing more beautiful or truly Christ-like in all scripture than this lovely exposition of the divine commission to men to act in the name of God. Listen:

Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—

That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.—Doctrine and Covenants 121:34-37 Incl.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.—Doctrine and Covenants 121:41-46 Incl.

Here is the genius of the government of Christ. No compulsion,—just persuasion; no unrighteousness or autocracy,—only goodness and love. Here is the answer to the religious intolerance and crimes of the centuries; the complete refutation of the alleged injustice of God.

#### NEW CONCEPTS THROUGH LATTER-DAY REVELATION

I mention next the matter of new revelation, by which is meant divine communication from God to men in these latter days. While this subject is highly important, I need not elaborate it,—first, because it is well understood both within and without the Church; and second, because its novelty has never been denied. I do not mean that the validity of the revelations to Joseph Smith have not been denied. They have,—but all concede the principle and practice to be an innovation. All logical persons will likewise concede that this doctrine once established is the end of all controversy as to authoritative religion.

Then comes the new concept of man, his past, present and future state. I do not maintain that ideas had not been advanced, prior to the Prophet's time, that were in some respects comparable to his. Undoubtedly the pre-existent state of man was in the belief of many. It could not be otherwise with students of the Bible, but no such comprehensive, coherent, and definite understanding as that set forth by the Prophet had ever appeared before. The continuity of intelligence and intelligencies; the fatherhood,—and motherhood too, of our individual spirits; the free agency and choice which were ours in the pre-earth life; spiritual creation preceding mortal creation; the relationship of body to spirit in this life and in the hereafter, the transcendent scheme of eternal progression,—all these and many related items constitute a unified, logical, authoritative exposition without counterpart in Christian literature.

Of special interest is the concept of the body as tabernacle of the spirit. A philosophy of temporal living has been built around this idea. In it a man's body is a sacred thing. It is not his own to be violated with impunity. God provided it in the form of and as the house of his spirit. Any conscious, wilful impairment of the body is an affront to God. And so it follows that the care of the body has real spiritual significance. It is doubtful if any religious body at any time ever received a more unique and novel doctrine than the Word of Wisdom, the inhibitions

of which are known to many but the underlying philosophy of which is understood by few.

Closely related to the state of man is the concept of the whole human family as the children of God. On this subject many entirely new contributions were made by Joseph Smith. He established the universal justice and love of God for all His children as no one else has ever done. His theology denies the resurrection to none. All shall come forth from the grave; all bodies shall be reunited with spirits to constitute eternal souls, through the universal redemption of the Savior. There will be general salvation for all in the sense in which the term is generally used, but salvation, meaning resurrection, is not exaltation. In the hereafter, as in this life, there are degrees of glory, preferential places and conditions. Goodness and obedience will bring their rewards, the highest of which is to dwell in the presence of God and His Son. The prescribed requirements of the Gospel, such as baptism, confirmation, and other ordinances are not prerequisites for the resurrection as many suppose. They are necessary only for exaltation,—the highest station.

Exaltation is not planned merely for a few select ones. It is designed for all who will prepare to enter the Kingdom. Everyone is given the opportunity to prepare, not only those living but they who have died, as well. Such is the justice of the Father.

#### THE PURPOSE OF TEMPLE WORK

That brings me to another inestimable contribution, wholly distinctive and novel. Strange it is that with the rather frequent mention in the Hebrew scriptures of temples and with the pointed and oft quoted reference to baptism for the dead that Joseph Smith should have been the first of all Christians to conceive the purpose of temples and institute vicarious work for the dead. This great project of the latter days deserves an extended treatise of itself. It must suffice for my present purpose merely to call attention to it. In its ramifications and comprehensiveness it embraces substantially the entire scope of the Gospel. The story of life is simplified for the understanding of men. Through the eternal powers of the restored priesthood, ordinances and ceremonies are administered in preparation for entrance into the Celestial Kingdom of our God, and the dead who have lived without opportunity to enjoy these high privileges are accorded, through the service of their kinspeople, the same rights as those who live.

One of the features of temple work should for emphasis be specially mentioned. It is the sealing of husband and wife in the eternal covenant of marriage. Joseph Smith taught that the family circle is the foundation of exaltation and that its projection into eternity is heaven itself. He sanctified the association of loved ones. He made the father a priest and the mother a priestess in the temple of the home. If his glorious interpretation of this divine institution could have general application, the ills of society would be cured and the brotherhood of mankind established. This contribution alone entitles him to a place

on the very summit of distinction among the world's philosophers and benefactors.

#### WISDOM SHOWN IN CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The limitations of this opportunity prevent any further elaboration of additional items within the scope of my theme. I must pass them with bare mention. The organization of the Church; its phenomenal growth; its quorums, divisions, agencies, authorities, officers; its incomparable missionary system were all the product of the inspiration, the wisdom and vision of the Prophet. He was also a builder of cities, a statesman of great foresight and such a leader of men that even after death his influence has grown with the years.

#### THE WRITINGS OF JOSEPH SMITH

His literary labors must not be forgotten. He produced more scripture, that is, the revealed word of God, than any other man of whom we have record. Indeed, his total scriptural productions would almost equal those of all others put together. Within the pages of the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price, which came to the world through him, are to be found such truth gems as, "The glory of God is intelligence"; "Men are that they might have joy"; "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man"; a clear statement of the purpose of good and evil in the world, a philosophical problem which has baffled the scholars of all times, and many others of inestimable value. There also came from him such memorable sayings as, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance"; "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge"; "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life it will rise with us in the resurrection." He wrote history and dissertations on many subjects and was an orator of magnetism and convincing force.

The world's enlightenment of the century following his life has not disclosed a single error in his theological and philosophical pronouncements, and the society which he established is without question the peer, and many students not belonging to it maintain it is the superior, of all social systems on the earth.

What is the explanation? How may we account for these remarkable accomplishments, these transcendent contributions to the learning, the knowledge and wisdom of this age?

#### JOSEPH SMITH CHOSEN OF GOD

The critics of Joseph Smith have ridiculed him. They have emphasized the crudity of his youth, his lack of education and deprecated his intelligence. In so doing, have they helped find the explanation? Perhaps they have, without intent on their part, for the more inadequate

by native endowment and training they make the Prophet, the more certainly do they lead the way to the inevitable conclusion that the explanation he makes of himself and his work is the only explanation. If he had been proved to be a person of unusual brilliance and education there might have been some warrant for the presumption that out of his own mind he had conceived and executed all, but those who have sought to destroy him have robbed the argument of that premise. Perhaps God willed it so. Even the inimical and abusive typesetter who printed the Book of Mormon unwittingly laid a stone in the foundation of evidence establishing the truth of the Prophet's account of the translation when he ridiculed the punctuation and composition of the manuscript, the sentences and words being run together as they naturally would be in the manner of dictation to the scribe described by the Prophet.

There is only one explanation which is tenable. God chose this man. He spoke through him. The virgin, unsophisticated mind of the youth was a fertile field for the planting of spiritual seeds. They grew and matured into a perfect faith that brought Joseph into partnership with God. When that came to be, there was nothing unattainable, for as we are told of old, one man and God are a majority.

Today we proclaim him Prophet and sing his praise as sincerely, as devoutly, as reverently as they did one hundred years ago when they sat in his presence and felt the inspiration of his influence and heard the word of God from his lips.

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah!  
 Jesus anointed that 'Prophet and Seer'—  
 Blessed to open the last dispensation;  
 Kings shall extol him and nations revere.

#### A CHARGE TO BE TRUE

It would seem scarcely necessary to point out the obvious conclusion and purpose of this recital. If any man has received in his heart the witness of the divine truth embraced in the contributions of the Prophet Joseph, I charge him to be true,—true to his testimony, true to the Prophet, the founder, true to the cause and its duly commissioned leaders, true to the covenants he has made in holy places, and true to the brotherhood of man in the service that he renders. If any man has not received this witness, I appeal for his thoughtful, prayerful, sympathetic consideration. I offer to him, out of the experiences of my life, a humble but certain assurance that if he will receive and apply the teachings of Joseph Smith he will be made happy. Doubt and uncertainty will leave him. Glorious purpose will come into life. Family ties will be sweeter. Friendships will be dearer. Service will be nobler, and the peace of Christ will be his portion. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

A vocal solo, "The Lord's Prayer," (Malotte) was sung by Rampton Barlow.