

on earth, and good will to men which Christ himself came to bring, the missionary activities of the Church will play a most important part.

And it is our further conviction that the Kingdom of God is here established, that the Gospel will be preached to all the people in all the world, and that then will come again the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the Prince of Peace, to reign as King forever and forever. May we do well our part to speed his coming, I humbly pray.

(End of *Church of the Air* Broadcast)

The Choir and congregation sang the hymn, "Do What is Right."

ELDER STEPHEN L RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I wish to speak for solidarity in the Church. By this I mean simply, —standing together,—all striving to promote the common cause. I scarcely need point out the results of unity. They are many and they are apparent. I will name but two. The first is individual and collective happiness.

FRIENDLY TIES IN PRIESTHOOD

Association within the Church is of such a nature as to promote pure friendship. Next to family ties, the bonds of the Holy Priesthood which are by revelation said to be "stronger than the cords of death," and other companionships we enjoy in the Church, knit the souls of men and women together more perfectly than do any other relationships. I have known a man to travel across the continent to renew friendship with a missionary companion with whom he had spent but a few months in the service of the Master. Since all Church service is cooperative, we must be congenial to enjoy it. A man is neither happy nor effective in the cause if he is not one with his fellows. The Savior said, "Except ye are one, ye are not mine."

A COMMON PURPOSE NECESSARY

Another result of unity is efficiency in achievement. Discord and dissension are the wrenches thrown in the machinery. Concord is the oil which smooths the operation of the plant and immensely increases the output. A careful study of the history of the Church will disclose the fact that while it has suffered tremendously from persecution and oppression from without, yet a large part of all its difficulties has been attributable to dissenters and traitors within its own ranks. The driving of the Saints, particularly from Nauvoo, the revocation of the Nauvoo Charter and even the martyrdom itself may be laid largely to disaffection and betrayal. Perhaps the most potent enemies of God's work have always been, ostensibly at least, within it. Internal unity is indispensable to success.

In the present day we are not wont to look for enemies and traitors within the camp. And if we did I am sure we would not find them as in times gone by. There are no overt acts of treachery, for which we must all be grateful. But can we feel assured that there are not other things, of less gravity, perhaps, which militate against the unity and common purpose of our people? It is of these things I wish to speak. Undoubtedly I shall not be able to enumerate all of them but I will mention a few which have occurred to me.

PRIVATE INTERPRETATIONS OF DOCTRINE HARMFUL

First. I point out a growing tendency toward private interpretation of scripture and doctrine and this I do not regard as particularly serious in point of perverting the general doctrines of the Church. It is with reference to the status of the individual that I feel concerned. For instance, I hear people, young and old, contend that the Word of Wisdom does not prohibit tea and coffee, certain commonly sold drugs and modern beer, claiming that these items are not specifically prescribed in the 89th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. I find people, also, sometimes officers in the Church, attempting to justify a private interpretation of the law of Tithing, particularly with reference to a deduction of debt, living expenses, losses through speculation and other items from salaries and personal income before tithing is computed. I am sure there are hundreds attempting to persuade themselves that going to picture shows, playing baseball and golf and participating in other commercialized amusements are not infraction of God's law commanding that we keep the Sabbath holy. There are people in the Church, far too many, who are at variance with the President of the Church and his associates, the General Authorities, in the interpretation of our Temple ordinances and ceremonies and some of their requirements. These are what I call private interpretations of the doctrines of the Church as contra-distinguished to the long established interpretations of these items by the General Authorities. Perhaps I should brand these variances as attempted justifications of individual weaknesses, but I do not wish to be harsh or inconsiderate of anyone who has sincerely convinced himself that his own interpretation is right.

PRESIDENCY INTERPRETERS OF GOD'S LAWS

Now who is entitled to interpret the doctrine of the Church, granting that some items are susceptible of different constructions? I am sure that upon serious reflection there is no real difference of opinion on this question among the members. It is so well established by the revelations which we have received and the practice of the Church that the President and his Counselors are invested with this authority that I cannot believe any member will seriously dispute it. In the language of the revelation they, the Presidency, are constituted "a quorum . . . to receive the oracles for the whole Church." They are the supreme court here on earth in the interpretation of God's law.

In the exercise of their functions and delegated powers they are controlled by a constitution, a part of which is written and a part of which is not. The written part consists in authenticated scripture, ancient and modern, and in the recorded utterances of our latter-day prophets. The unwritten part is the spirit of revelation and divine inspiration which are appertinent to their calling.

In formulating their interpretations and decisions they always confer with the Council of the Twelve Apostles who by revelation are appointed to assist and act with them in the government of the Church. When, therefore, a judgment is reached and proclaimed by these officers it becomes binding upon all members of the Church, individual views to the contrary notwithstanding. God's Kingdom is a kingdom of law and order. He is the Lawgiver and the Supreme Judge but he has delegated authority and conferred the keys of the Kingdom upon these men whom he has chosen. They act for him and, thank the Lord, we accept them. It is the only safe thing to do.

There are some, perhaps who may feel that it is subversive of individual freedom of thought and expression to be controlled by the interpretations of our leaders. I wish to assure them that any feeling of constraint will disappear when once they secure the genius and true spirit of this work. Our unanimity of thought and action does not arise, as some suppose, from duress or compulsion in any form. Our accord comes from universal agreement with righteous principles and common response to the operation of the Spirit of our Father. It is actuated by no fear except one. That is the fear of offending God, the Author of our work.

THOUGHTLESS CRITICISM UNPROFITABLE

Now the second contributing factor which I would mention which militates against unity in the Church is the proneness of men to criticize and condemn. I am not here today to contend that everything is perfect. I know nothing about the Church that is perfect, excepting only the plan itself which is God-given. Things that men do will never be perfect until they themselves reach the perfection of Christ, the Perfect One. I suppose none of us realizes his own imperfections, at least not to their full extent. It is probably salutary to be told of them occasionally. We may reform if we are told. But I have never felt that much good came from telling *others* of my weaknesses.

President Grant is one of the most democratic men ever to come to the Presidency. Some of us feel that his office is too open and that he permits too many impositions upon his time and patience for the good of his health. I believe that there is not a man or woman in the Church, or out of it for that matter, from whom he would not courteously receive a constructive criticism or helpful suggestion.

With such a disposition, what a cowardly and mean thing it is for members of the Church to attempt criticism behind his back and thus undermine his influence and reputation. Fortunately there are but few

who are so mean. I do believe, however, there are many who are thoughtless, who speak lightly and carelessly and disrespectfully of leaders and principles and sacred phases of this Church. I think it is a shame to jest about sacred things and sometimes it is as blasphemous as taking the name of God in vain. I rebuke those who do it and I call upon them to stop and think. If they will but think, I believe they will realize the incalculable harm they do, the faith they destroy and the unhappiness they bring.

I cannot pass this point without importuning some of my brethren to stop swearing. No man can love God and damn him anymore than he can love his wife and damn her. Think again, please. Think of the utter futility of this vulgar habit. Think of its effect in youth. Men teach boys profanity. It is not congenial with the race. It is the nature of man to love God and not to damn him.

This proneness to criticism and careless judgment I must carry a step beyond its chief victims,—the authorities and officers of the Church, to the relations among the people themselves. Someone has said that the supreme charity of the world consists in simple obedience to the divine command, "Judge not." Certain it is that a large part of the unhappiness of the world results from inconsiderate judgment. Many a pillow is wet with the sobs of those who are its victims. We cannot read the hearts of man. We may not know their good intentions. We often judge them only by their failures, and we are unkind enough to circulate our judgment in the form of rumors and gossip and thus do irreparable damage. Every *man* who is a *man* prizes his good name, for, as the immortal Shakespeare said, "He who steals my purse steals trash, 'twas mine, 'tis his; but he who robs me of my good name filches from me that which enriches not himself and makes me poor, indeed."

God grant that we, the disciples of the Master, who bade us forgive all men and love even our enemies, may be free from adding to the burdens and the unhappiness of our brethren and sisters by inconsiderate judgment.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS BRINGS UNITY

I wish now to mention the third and last factor in my brief summary of causes contributing to disunity within the Church. It is the indifference to and poor attendance in the regularly established meetings provided for the people. My observation has taught me, and I believe all will agree, that no person can regularly go to the meetings of the Church and mingle with his brethren and sisters without catching the spirit of the work and developing within him a warmth of affection and a fervor of devotion which will tend to make him one with his fellows. The sacrament meeting which was given of the Lord by revelation is designed specifically to promote unity. We are even admonished not to partake of the sacrament if we entertain unkindly feelings in our hearts toward others.

TRUE BROTHERHOOD IN QUORUMS

The quorum meetings, too, in this respect have a vital purpose to conserve. A quorum is three things: first, a class; second, a fraternity; and third, a service unit. Within it the men of the Priesthood learn of the principles of the Gospel, establish true brotherhood, and carry forward the work of Christ. It is a God-given association from which they derive more of lasting advantage than from any other fraternal organization in our society. Its prime purpose is to encourage and safeguard the individual. You can't tell me that men can absent themselves from their quorum meetings without losing something vital to their own well being and that of the Church also.

I fear we have some men who have received the Holy Priesthood who feel themselves too big and too important to associate with their brethren in the quorum. I am sorry for them. They are making a great mistake. For it is they, chiefly, who are retarding the progress of the work of God. I am certain that I am right when I say that if all of the men of the Priesthood would be loyal to their quorums the work of the Church would be accelerated beyond anything we have ever known.

In our concept of the Kingdom of God, every individual shares responsibility. We have no priests as distinguished from the laity. We are all priests in the kingdom, that is, we men folk, and the women, too, are priestesses therein. Every member either helps or hinders. There is no middle ground.

So I present these items which I have mentioned,—private and oftentimes perverted interpretations of our doctrine, ill-considered criticism, and non-attendance upon meetings and duties, as among the chief factors contributing to disunion within the Church. In so doing I hope I have given no offense. My sole purpose has been to assist in rectifying conditions that militate against our success.

UNITY BRINGS SUCCESS

And what success we could have with complete unity and harmony in the Church! How effectively could we demonstrate the efficacy of applied Christianity if all our people stood together as one man behind our leaders! When we consider the things we might accomplish, the impressions that we might make, what a pity it seems that our progress should be stayed by those of our own membership who are not one with us in purpose and deed.

I know that to many it seems a very insignificant thing to smoke cigarettes, to take a drink, to gamble a little, to swear moderately, and to make the Sunday a holiday. I do not deem it my province, nor is it my desire, to condemn to purgatory those who are guilty of such infractions of our standards but I do appeal to them with all the fervor of my soul to stop these discordant practices and come in line with the great procession of their Church. It is such a little thing to endure a slight deprivation in personal desire or appetite as compared to the success and triumph of a mighty cause that would soon envelope the whole earth if we were all faithful to it.

So in kindness I plead for solidarity, union, and love in the Church of Christ. God is forgiving. We all have need of repentance. No one has strayed so far that he cannot turn back. It is a strong man who will acknowledge his mistakes. We need each other's help and we need God's help. With unity and his aid we can bless this troubled world as it never has been blessed before. May he grant us this high privilege, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER WILLIAM T. TEW, JR.

President of the East Central States Mission

I do not know that I have ever recognized the truth of the statement of King Benjamin to the ancient Nephites more fully than I do at the present time, wherein he told them to remember the greatness of God and their own nothingness.

I feel very humble and very weak in this great work that I am called to perform in the East Central States Mission. I feel that we have received, this morning, help for us as we return to the mission field. I am sure that if other mission presidents are as I am, we often sit in with our own individual thoughts; we wonder, we think and meditate, we pray and consider the plans and the methods of procedure in the mission field. We are alone, only as we consult with our Heavenly Father and receive his inspiration in the things we are to do.

Coming to these wonderful conferences we meet, as it were, in a great clearing house of ideas, doctrine, and principles. I think now of St. Paul's admonition in the scripture wherein he said:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Why all of these things?

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

I rejoice in the fact that we can meet together in these conferences and hear scripture from our living prophets, our living leaders, who speak under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. To me it is scripture, even though it is orally expressed. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were oral gospels for many years before they were committed to writing. Why should not we as Latter-day Saints, knowing as we do that these men have been called of God, that they speak under the authority of the Holy Priesthood, and under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, I say, why should not we members of his Church in conference assembled accept these statements of theirs as scripture to us?

I rejoice in the remarks, the doctrines, the instructions, the corrections and the reproofs that we have received in this conference, Brethren and sisters, and friends who are here today, I feel that Saint Paul of old had, at times, difficulties the same as we mission presidents