

Elijah feared God but he knew no other fear. His dominating and persistent personality was a power in the period in which he lived; it is a powerful influence in the present dispensation. The wonderful truth he revealed is sufficient proof that there is consciousness beyond the grave.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah. (I Peter 3:18-20.)

In the following chapter are these comforting words:

For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

In the spirit world, the Prophet Joseph Smith and his brethren are preaching those glorious principles, faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the truth of the Bible, the truth of the Book of Mormon. And we here will preach the same Gospel until every knee shall bend and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, Amen.

ELDER LeGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

This is not the first time I have had the privilege of succeeding President Charles A. Callis, but I am as proud of the opportunity to follow him today as I was to succeed him in the Southern States Mission.

As a member of the Presiding Bishopric, when we were set apart to preside over the temporal affairs of the Church, I thought that must be a tremendous responsibility; but when we were appointed and set apart to preside over the Aaronic Priesthood of the Church, I realized that that indeed was a responsibility.

During the last six months we have visited most of the Stakes of Zion, and have met with the stake and ward officers, discussing matters pertaining to the Youth Program, Budget System, and other things which we felt would lead to finer standards among our young people.

AN INCREASE OF FAITH NEEDED

While I have always been impressed with what a marvelous work the Church is doing, I believe that if there is one thing that we need in the Church today more than any other, it is increased faith in the hearts of our boys and our girls in the restoration of the Gospel, in the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and in the fact that God lives, that every boy and girl will answer to him for their lives. It was Paul who said: "But without faith it is impossible to please him, for

he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

I believe that unless this faith is planted in the hearts of our boys and girls they will not be able to meet the temptations of the day and come out gloriously victorious, true to the faith, and true to the standards of this Church. We have felt that education might achieve this end. We now have compulsory education of our youth, and yet today there seems to be more immorality, more use of liquor, more use of the things which God has forbidden, than in any other day.

It seems to me that in our Church we must be able to plant in the hearts of our boys and girls a faith in the promises of God, that if they will shun these things, they will receive of his blessings. Think of the promise given to those who will observe and keep the Word of Wisdom! Surely every father and every mother and every teacher in Israel should want these promises to become real in the lives of their boy and girls: to run and not be weary; to walk and not faint; that the destroying angel might pass by and not slay them, as he did the children of Israel; and that they might receive knowledge, yea, even hidden treasures of knowledge. This is what I would like to have come into the lives of my children.

I realize that in the achievement of this great end we have a great responsibility as parents, in the home and as officers in the Church, for the Lord has placed in the Church officers for this purpose. He has given us apostles and prophets and pastors and teachers, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ * * * that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

A LACK OF FAITH AMONG YOUTH OF THE CHURCH BRINGS REPROACH

It would be a terrible thing, if, as our boys and girls come out of Latter-day Saint homes, they come with their faith destroyed, with lack of confidence in the leaders of this great Church, lack of faith in the divine and holy principles that God has established in the Church in these latter days; and it would be a great reproach upon us if our boys and girls come out of our auxiliary organizations, our Priesthood quorums, our Church schools or seminaries, with lack of faith in these great eternal truths.

During my travels I learned of a few instances where our young people had been taken out of our institutions because the parents felt that their faith was being destroyed, rather than strengthened; and I think that this is a reproach.

God has placed this great army of officers in the Church as watchmen upon the towers of Israel, and I believe the Lord expects the presidents of stakes and the bishops of wards to know that there is nothing being taught that will destroy the faith of their boys and their girls. I might be just a little specific. I met a young lady who told me of what she had been taught in one of our institutions. She was told that patriarchal

blessings were not really to tell us what the Lord had in store for us, but they were beautiful thoughts that might encourage us to try to live better lives. Now, if that were true, it would be all right; but as far as I am concerned, it just is not true. If it be true, then I think one of two things must be acknowledged: that God has withdrawn his spirit from this Church, or that we have no need of patriarchs in the Church.

VALUE OF PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS

I call your attention to the patriarchal blessings given upon the heads of the sons of Israel of old, when their father Jacob, the Patriarch, said: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." One of the great fundamental truths of Mormonism is based upon the promise made upon the head of Joseph, when he was promised a new land in the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, for his blessings should exceed the blessings of his progenitors.

I was privileged to be raised in the home of a patriarch. Today, my father is the acting Presiding Patriarch of the Church, and it might be more appropriate that he should speak on this subject than that I should; but I received my first blessing at his hands when I was eight years old, and I want to say to you that all the philosophizing in this world could not make me believe that my father knew what he pronounced upon my head of his own knowledge and his own understanding. That blessing has been a guide to me all my life, and I thank God that I received it when I was a boy eight years of age.

FAITH-PROMOTING INCIDENTS

While working in the field with my father when I was a mere lad, I received one of the greatest testimonies that ever came to me, and that through the giving of a patriarchal blessing. My father related to us three boys, who were engaged with him in filling up an old cellar, a visit he had made the night before to administer a patriarchal blessing, and after he had taken his hands from the head of the brother blessed, some disappointment was expressed that Father had not promised him that he should get well and live, because he was very sick. Father related this experience to us, and if there had been no inspiration in this Church, and no inspiration in the calling of a patriarch, where would the faith of his boys be today? He said when he placed his hands upon the head of this brother, something seemed to say to him that he should not give him too good a blessing for this life, for his days were numbered. So he promised him the blessing of eternal life for his faithfulness, and then disappointment was expressed, and the voice of inspiration came again, and he said: "If I am inspired by the Spirit of the Lord, Brother So-and-so will not live more than so many hours," and he told us the time.

While we were still working together a good brother passed along the old hedge fence. Father called to him and asked if he knew how Brother So-and-so was. He said he had passed away. Father asked

the hour and he told us. Then Father looked at us, because it was the exact time he had told us.

When I was called on my first mission I walked into the office of Brother George Reynolds on crutches, with my leg in a plaster cast. He said: "What are you here for?" I said: "I am here to answer a call for a mission." He said: "It looks to me like you had better go home and take care of yourself." I said: "I will be ready to go at the appointed date." He said: "When do you want to go?" I said: "In April, with my other friends." That was February.

I went out to Tooele, where my father lived, a patriarch of God. I told him I wanted a blessing so I could go on that mission, and my father promised me that I should go and that I should not be handicapped because of lameness—and I never lost a day's work. I threw my crutches away a few days before it was time to leave, and I went on that mission.

Now, here a few years ago, seven years ago to be exact, my wife and I laid away in the grave our oldest son, who was nearly sixteen years of age—the greatest sorrow that has ever come into our lives. We had four daughters before he was born. Less than a year prior to that we took him and his younger brother, only sixteen months difference in their ages, into the office of the Patriarch of this Church, Brother Hyrum G. Smith, and he gave them each a blessing.

Now, I ask you, suppose the Patriarch had known that one of these boys was to die within a year, could he not promise him anything? What would it have meant to the eldest son, had he walked out of the Patriarch's office with no promise and no blessing, and the younger son had all the promises and the blessings, for the older boy truly loved God and kept his commandments. When that boy passed away, and I met with my counselors—for I was then President of the Hollywood Stake—I said to them: "There is just one thing, if God could only give us to understand that boy's blessing." I said: "I wish you brethren would help us, if you can, so that Sister Richards and I might be comforted."

A few nights after that I took Sister Richards for a ride. We asked the younger boy if he would like to go with us. He said: "No. I think I will stay home." The next morning was Sunday morning. He came in and crawled up on his mother's bed, holding in his hand the two patriarchal blessings, and he said: "Mother, while you were out riding last night I read these blessings." He said: "You see, you haven't understood them."

I think just for the matter of getting it clearly before you I shall read a few words from the two blessings, as they were given by the Patriarch. In the oldest boy's blessing, the one who passed away, the Patriarch said:

For it will be thy privilege to bear the holy Priesthood and to go even among strangers and in strange lands, in defense of truth and righteousness.

This we could not understand. And to the younger boy he said:

For thou shalt bear the holy Priesthood in defense of righteousness and truth, both at home and abroad.

The boy said: "You see, Mother, I am going to labor at home and abroad, but," he said, "LeGrand was to go to strange lands and strange people;" and he said, "They are not on this earth. We know all the lands of this earth and we know all the people that are here."

And to the oldest boy the Patriarch said: "And in due time thy home shall be a fit abode for the spirits of thy loved ones;" and to the younger boy he said: "Thou shalt enjoy the comforts of a happy home and the blessings of honored fatherhood, for thou shalt see thy posterity grow up around thee, to honor thee in the same kind of way in which thou hast honored thy parents." Now, reverse the blessings and give the younger boy's blessing to the older boy, and there would be no explanation. He said: "Mother, you see, LeGrand's home is to be the home of the spirits of his loved ones, and my home is to be here on this earth, where I will see my children grow up around me."

You cannot tell me that God, the Eternal Father, did not give that fourteen year old boy the inspiration and revelation to understand these blessings, and our hearts have been comforted.

PROMISES OF THE LORD SURE OF FULFILMENT

My faith in God and his eternal purposes is such that I never doubt but that he has made adequate provision for the fulfilment of every promise, and to complete and perfect the work which he has here commenced. In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph, he said: "His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand." And again: "I give unto you a new commandment, that I, the Lord your God, am bound when ye do what I say, and when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise." And when we receive a promise from the Lord through his servants, it is my faith that that promise shall be realized if we keep his commandments, if not in this life, then after this life.

Now I ask you if you understand all the things in the scriptures? Did not the Savior say, when he taught in parables, and his disciples came to him and asked him why he spake in parables: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given."

If there were time I would like to refer to some of the prophecies of ancient Israel. I was reading in the Book of Mormon, the other day, that when Christ our Lord appeared here in this land of America he quoted some of the prophecies of Isaiah, and he bore his solemn, sacred testimony, as the God of heaven, that every prophecy of Isaiah should be fulfilled; and there are prophecies there that no learned man in this world could interpret or explain, without the knowledge and the information that have come through the restoration of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes I wonder why we go to the world for explanation of the scriptures, when we have the revelations of God, the Eternal Father, to guide us.

IMPORTANCE OF REVELATION

I would like to show by reading two lines here how very particular the Lord is. When he speaks there should be all attention, and when he commands, obedience should follow without hesitation, without murmur or fault-finding. Somebody might ask, which is the most important revelation in this wonderful book? I will answer you that I do not know, I have not the wisdom nor the understanding to determine that question. All of the revelations of God are important. He speaks to a point that is definite. Whenever he appears there is a reason, as there was when he appeared with his Beloved Son to Joseph the boy. There was a reason for his being there; it was not just an excursion from heaven down to the earth, but something important was about to happen. The Father spoke to the boy and said, "This is my Beloved Son, hear him!" So it appears there was something important to be said on that occasion. The Son spoke to the boy and said, "What do you want?" Not quite so roughly as that of course, but "What would you like?" And the boy replied in a simple way—it was the language of a boy—I want to know which one of these Christian sects is right. There are quite a number of them here and they have created very considerable disturbance. They contradict one another; they say Christ is here, and Christ is there, I want to know which one is right and which one I am to join?

That was an important question for a boy fourteen years of age to put up to Deity. But he was in earnest about it, he wanted to know, and the Son said: You are not to join any of them, for none of them is right, and their worship is not acceptable to me, or words to that effect.

The boy evidently was astonished. He did not know what to make of that statement. He thought one of the various churches must be right and the others of course wrong. But none of them was right, and he was told not to join them. He was given to understand that he had a work to do.

Somebody might say, "Well, Brother Clawson, that was a wonderful vision, but why did the Lord wait; why didn't he just lay hands on the boy and bless him and bestow upon him divine authority to solve his problem?" Well, that was not the method the Lord used at that time, or perhaps any other time. The boy was not prepared to receive any authority. He was hardly prepared to endure the vision of the Father and the Son. I suppose he had to be transfigured in order to enjoy their presence. The boy must have some training, some schooling before he could do the work required of him, just as we need training and schooling for our work. We need to study and delve into principles of the Gospel and become acquainted with them. So this boy was ministered to by angels from heaven. He wanted to know about the principle of baptism. The Father and the Son sent John down to tell him and Oliver Cowdery and to give them what authority was needed at that time. The young boy would rapidly be growing older. Peter, James, and John, who held

the Melchizedek Priesthood in the days of the Apostles, came later, and laid their hands upon the heads of Joseph and Oliver and committed to them the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

I am telling you now something you already know, of course, but I presume there are many people here and in the Church who have not looked much into the Doctrine and Covenants. I do not think any of us spends any too much time in doing so. It is a big question. This great Gospel takes some thought and a good deal of prayer to comprehend it, and authority to exercise the Priesthood. There will be a gathering of the Priesthood in this building Saturday night and a great company of men of the Church and young boys will fill this house; it will be a wonderful sight. If that body of men who shall come together were all equally faithful in keeping the commandments of God one hundred per cent, they could make this great building tremble on its foundation by the exercise of their faith.

DANIEL'S PROPHECY

I am talking to you now briefly, brethren and sisters, about the kingdom that Daniel saw when he looked down through the ages, down and down, until he came to that time when the world was broken up into small kingdoms. "There will be kings in that latter day." We are right in the midst of it, and then Daniel said by the spirit of prophecy: "In the days of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

Now we are identified with that kingdom, that something that must endure forever, and as long as we hold on to the kingdom and are faithful we will live forever in that kingdom.

A MARVELOUS WORK

Now I want to show you how very particular the Lord is. I am going to read from section 6 of the book of Doctrine and Covenants, being a revelation that was given to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery for their benefit, but it applies perhaps equally to all of the members of the Church. A general obligation goes with this section:

A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men.

I think you will get the idea from what I have said that it is a tremendously important work. The Lord calls it a marvelous work, and he uses that expression in other sections. And then he goes on to say:

Behold, I am God; give heed unto my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore give heed unto my words.

You see the Lord must not be trifled with, and when he gives a commandment and we do not receive it and do not carry it out, what

becomes of us? That man who takes such a course will become blind in his mind. While he thinks he is right and probably boasts of his standing in the Church he is nevertheless in the dark because he has ignored or broken the commandment of God.

RICHES OF ETERNAL LIFE

I am passing over a number of paragraphs here until I come to the seventh paragraph in this revelation:

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. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.

I remember reading about the funeral of a brother in moderate financial circumstances. President Young was one of the speakers, and he pointed to the casket in which the remains were resting under the pulpit and said: "There lies a rich man." And yet he had been poor all his lifetime in the flesh. His talents, his ability were not of a financial character. There is really a sermon in that which might be developed if I had time.

Then I pass on to the 13th verse. It is all good, brethren and sisters, but there are limitations:

If thou wilt do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be saved in the kingdom of God, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation.

So if we seek for wisdom and we use it, that is what we will get, the gift of salvation.

This is a very fine subject. It is a good thing to take a few moments in the Conference here to point out some of these things that may possibly be discussed by other speakers.

I know that this is the kingdom of God, as referred to by Daniel. I verily believe that the temple on this block is the temple that Isaiah saw in vision: "The mountain of the Lord's house," and this is the people of God and I love them and am happy to be identified with them.

I pray God to bless you, and bless the Presidency, the Twelve, and other Authorities, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER ANTOINE R. IVINS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

My brethren and sisters: I deem it a great responsibility to stand here before you this afternoon and occupy your time, and I trust that for the few moments I am here you will lend me your faith and prayers, that the testimony I may render to you may be directed by the Spirit of God, for my only purpose is to give you a true testimony of my feelings regarding the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

GRATITUDE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

"We believe in God the Eternal Father and in his Son Jesus Christ."