

Saturday, October 3

First Day

taken a rest this afternoon and in all probability will not be with us tonight. We feel that he is wise in thus conserving his strength.

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

WHILE sitting here upon the stand, realizing that I might be called upon to speak, I have wondered what I might be able to say that would be germane to this occasion, something in which we might all be interested and possibly be profited. I have come to this conclusion, brethren, that everyone of us is a candidate for the blessings of eternal life and exaltation, and that nothing short of a fulness of glory will satisfy us after this life. That suggests that we have something to do while we live here upon the earth and should not forget the purpose of our being here—the goal of our existence and that which we desire to attain. And if we attain eternal life, brethren of the Priesthood, it will be through the Church and the gospel of Jesus Christ with the Holy Priesthood.

The Savior said to Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, "Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." We are all on common ground again in that we have, all of us, been born again of the water and of the spirit and have entered the kingdom of God on earth and have received our membership in this way. Where we have received blessings of this character from the Lord, the saving ordinances of the gospel, there is always a covenant of faithfulness attached. And so we might ask what is the covenant that we have entered into in receiving the gospel. I can say for myself when I received baptism I was placed under a covenant that I would henceforth keep the commandments of God as fast as they are made known unto me. This was done with uplifted hand before God, angels, and witnesses present.

I do not know to what extent that practice obtained in the Church or how long since it obtained in that particular ward where I was born and where I was baptized, but I have reached this

conclusion, brethren, that every person that has been baptized into this Church has received this covenant or has made this covenant, if not verbally, the very fact of accepting the gospel through baptism, and confirmation, has made this covenant. That responsibility rests upon every member of the Church. We hear people, sometimes, in praying, ask the Lord to help us to keep the covenants that we have made at the waters of baptism. I know of no other covenant that we have made in entering the Church through baptism, and that is very important, brethren. The gospel, with our membership in the Church and kingdom of God here on earth, is one of the greatest blessings that our Father in heaven has to give, and necessarily a solemn covenant of faithfulness should be exacted.

Another thing, we all hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. In this we are on common ground; and in receiving this Priesthood on the same principle we have entered into a solemn oath and covenant with God our Father that we will magnify that Priesthood, and He with us, that all He has shall be given unto us. Most of these brethren hold offices that grow out of the Priesthood, and in order to magnify the Priesthood we will have to magnify these offices which we hold.

We have had the privilege and many of us have accepted the privilege of going to the temple and receiving the holy endowments, and there we are told that they are to prepare us to enter into the celestial kingdom and to receive an exaltation therein. But we have to enter into covenants of faithfulness; and any man who desires to be faithful and intends to be faithful in keeping the commandments of God will not be afraid to make covenants of faithfulness. Now be it known that a man cannot go to the temple to receive those endowments un-

til he has received the Melchizedek Priesthood and that makes the receiving of the Melchizedek Priesthood a condition of salvation, to every male member of the Church. We have had the privilege, many of us, of going to the temple, having first received the Melchizedek Priesthood, and receive certain sealing ordinances there, entering into the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, and it is in that covenant that the greatest blessings that our Father has to give to us are given. Those who have attained those higher blessings, that is husband and wife sealed for time and

eternity, they are to have an offspring, an eternal increase. It is unthinkable that that condition could be obtained outside of the marriage relations that the Lord hath ordained. Priesthood is necessary in order to receive those blessings. We ought then, brethren, to appreciate this Priesthood which God has permitted us to hold and keep all the covenants we have entered into with the Lord, and be prepared for that which we hope to receive when we have finished this brief period upon this earth. May God help us to this end, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ALBERT E. BOWEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

ALMOST every day we hear it said, or read it, that we are living in a changing world. I don't believe many of the people who use that phrase have any very clear idea about what they mean by it. It sounds good, seeming to imply a penetrating insight into the portent of the times, no matter how nebulous or muddy the thinking behind it may be, so it is freely used.

But I don't want to talk about that. A companion phrase is that we can't go back—we'll never go back to things as they were before. Well, the man who finds himself finally hanged on the gallows is the man who, when he got started off wrong, wouldn't go back. My judgment is that when we get started on the wrong way the sooner we turn back the better. The whole doctrine of repentance assumes a turning back from wrong to right.

But I don't want to go into that, either. I merely want to remind you that, amid all the changes in an ever-changing world there are some immutable things which do not change. They are as steadfast and unchanging as the heavens, which are the same now as when the first man looked out upon them. They are the basis of the moral order of the world which is the foundation upon which our civilization itself is built. The task of today is to preserve, though all else change, man's al-

legiance, unshaken, to those eternal foundations.

The Ten Commandments, for instance. They cannot be abrogated without abrogating the moral order of the world, shaking down the very foundations upon which our civilization rests. They set forth the law of life and can never be outmoded or rendered obsolete while life endures. They are of just as much binding force today as they were on the day when they were spoken with the voice of thunder out of the clouds on Sinai. They can no more be violated without disastrous consequences than one can violate any law governing in the physical world without being visited with the inescapable penalty.

As I listened to the powerful message of the Presidency, delivered this morning, I was impressed with the importance of that idea. From that message, if we were attentive to it, we learned that as to basic things there is no middle ground. Either we live by them or we pay the penalty of departure from their inexorable commands. They are not subject to modification or interpretation, but stand wholly as given, to be accepted in whole and lived completely.

It is the same with the basic things upon which we have rested our faith.