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Either a thing is, or it is not. To illustrate: This Church is founded upon the proposition that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that through His mediation it became possible for us to attain immortality and eternal life. We cannot deviate from that. He is the Son of the Living God, the author of our salvation, and must be accepted in that light solely and completely. The whole structure of our own Church revolves about that basic fact. We say that the God of heaven came down in answer to the prayer of a boy and that He brought with Him a personage whom He introduced as His son, and He commanded that praying boy to hear His Son. And out of the teachings which were then given, and followed up by subsequent instructions, this Church was established. Now, that admits of no explanation, of no modification. Either those things happened or they

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did not happen. There is no middle ground; and if they did not happen then we have nothing, because our whole structure is founded upon that assumed fact. We accept it as a fact, and we may not temporize with it, try to explain it away, modify it, or liberalize about it. It stands as the basic thing upon which our whole faith is founded. And our whole system of belief exacts of us that we accept those basic truths, without modification or change. As with the moral order of the world so those things may not be changed. They are as binding today as when they were first declared by the voice of God out of the heavens, and they will never change.

May God grant that we may hold steadfastly to them and that we may order our lives so that we shall not find occasions to depart from them, I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (I Peter 2:9)

**N**O one can look into the faces of this extraordinary body of men and partake of the spirit present without being conscious that there is here a power not usually felt in gatherings of like numbers.

The source of this power is, of course, the Priesthood. Each of us bearing the Priesthood, as we do, there should be power in our gatherings, for as Peter wrote to the Saints in his day, so with equal truth it may be said of us, we "are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood," and it is our calling and opportunity to "shew forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness unto his marvelous light."

All who have received the gospel have come from darkness into light, but we, who have been invited to this conference, have been called, also, to leadership in the Priesthood; to be officers in the government of God; to re-

sponsibility in a well-defined field of action in which no one else can function so long as we hold the appointment.

Yesterday, the responsibility of leadership was borne by our fathers; tomorrow, it will rest upon our children; today, it is ours. It is now that we should feel the weight of our callings.

As we labor in the Church, two observations force themselves upon us. One is that there is great strength and devotion among the membership of the Church. No one can visit among the branches, wards, and stakes and see the amount of work that is done and the time freely given to service in the activities of the Priesthood quorums and auxiliaries without being impressed with this strength and devotion. It makes one, with the spirit of this latter-day work, thrill to be a part of it.

The other observation is of quite a different nature. It comes when the individual records of members are examined. They show that in nearly every Priesthood quorum in the Church there is a large percentage of our brethren who count the high honor

of being ordained to the Priesthood as a thing of naught; who enjoy not its blessings because they magnify not their callings. If they continue in their course, they stand in jeopardy of losing their right to the Priesthood.

I call these well-known facts to your attention, because I am persuaded that if this great host of inactive brethren are ever to be awakened, if they are ever to be called again "out of darkness into His marvelous light," it must be done by more effective action on the part of Priesthood quorum presidencies and their committees.

**T**HE Priesthood quorum is an indispensable unit of the Church. The presidencies of Priesthood quorums have the responsibility to see that every member of their quorums honors his calling in the Priesthood, and they, with their quorum committees, can labor with every member if they but have "the will so to do." Instructions as to how to proceed have been and will be given. They should be studied and followed, in order that our activities may be purposeful; but no instructions, and no program, can take the place of "A Will To Do."

We Priesthood officers must shake off our apathy. With the prize of eternal life for our brethren and ourselves at stake, we must not falter. The Priesthood we bear is not of men. Joseph Smith the Prophet received it direct from heavenly messengers. He was instructed by them, and he labored with all the energy of his soul to carry out those instructions.

We bear the same Priesthood he bore; we are called to service in that Priesthood as was he; and we must discharge the responsibilities laid upon us in like manner, if we would share with him in the rewards. Unto us the Lord has said:

Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.

He that is slothful shall not be counted worthy to stand, and he that learns not his duty and shows himself not approved shall not be counted worthy to stand. (D. & C. 107:99-100)

Would that every officer in the

Priesthood quorums could approach his labors with the spirit and determination of Nephi. When his brothers murmured about going for the brass plates, saying it was a hard thing that was required of them, he said to his father:

I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them. (1 Nephi 3:7)

Then after Laman's futile attempt to obtain the plates, and he and Lemuel were about to return to their father, Nephi said:

As the Lord liveth, and as we live, we will not go down unto our father in the wilderness until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us. (1 Nephi 3:15)

Observe that he did not complain that the assignment was difficult, that he had other work which took all his time, that they had done the best they could, nor that they had called on Laban once and that it would be useless to call on him again. What he said was that, "As the Lord liveth . . . we will not go . . . until we have accomplished the thing which the Lord hath commanded us."

**T**HE manner in which he obtained the plates is a familiar story, as is the manner in which he obtained wild game for food when all their bows were broken. Everything he set his hand to do in righteousness, he accomplished. Why? Because he had the faith, and the courage, and the "will to do" what the Lord required of him, until finally he could say, when his brothers ridiculed him for undertaking to build the ship:

If God had commanded me to do all things, I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it would be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done. (1 Nephi 17:50)

The Lord help us, in this Priesthood quorum activity, to approach our work with the spirit of Nephi, that we may

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indeed be "a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people"; and that we may by our works

"shew forth the praises of him who hath called" us "out of darkness into his marvelous light," I pray.

### ELDER CHARLES A. CALLIS

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

THROUGHOUT the precious message we received from the First Presidency, the spirit of Isaiah and Jeremiah, like a golden thread, was in evidence. A true prophet is never popular, because he reproves and denounces, with equal vigor and equal impartiality and justice, the iniquities of the rich and the unrighteousness of the poor.

In this solemn and troubled hour there is an urgent need for the people everywhere to rededicate themselves to God, home, and country. The world is wandering in the wilderness because it is not baptized into the obedience that makes men free. We have been walking proudly, with assumed confidence, as though we were on adamant or the foundations of the world. Really we have been rolling along on parchment beneath which glowed a lake of fire. Lo, we have plunged into the inferno, this terrible inferno of war.

Joshua, the great ruler in Israel, rededicated himself in this way: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." If this nation would refresh its soul with this reconsecration, if the world would awaken and free itself from the fearful enslavement of sin, then the peace of Christ would dawn upon the world, and men, instead of killing each other, would love and save their brothers.

As I regard it, the home is the fundamental, essential unit of civilized society. For the instruction of our children we are depending too much on our Sunday Schools, Primaries, and other auxiliary associations, yea, and on the day school. We are willing that our children should receive instructions, much of them unknown to us, while we sit placidly by in our homes, and feel that the teaching of our children, thrown onto other shoulders, is a relief. This

will end in disaster. The home is the place where character is formed and where faith in God is strengthened.

Let us not delude ourselves; let us not lay the flattering unction to our souls, that if we complain at rulers and leaders our duty is ended. Before God every father in Israel is a ruler in the sense of the Lord's definition of the spirit of the Priesthood. A man is a ruler in his house, and he will be held accountable for the manner and the character of his rule. If in justice and love and patience he exercises his authority, having reverence for the dreams of youth, there will be no need for so many public exhortations on the Word of Wisdom, for liquor and other forbidden things will not be found in the home of "one that ruleth well his own house." I believe that all evils are of a family. Immorality is a brother to drunkenness.

With firm assurance we will magnify our calling and rededicate ourselves to the service of God. The General Authorities of the Church, stake presidents, and bishops hold dominion, righteous dominion, under the awful hand of God, and to Him they are accountable for their overseership.

God bless our country. God bless our homes. In properly conducted homes the children are builded up in character, in faith, in the principles of the gospel. A nation in which such training abounds shall increase in glory from day to day. The delight of such a nation will be not in shedding blood, not to conquer by might or physical power, but to conquer the world in the spirit of Christ along the lines of justice and mercy.

And in the love of Christ we will walk under His banner and bring souls unto Him whose glorious coming is nigh, and he will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.