

ELDER GEORGE F. RICHARDS
Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

If my remarks this morning shall be addressed, principally, to members of the Church, others listening in, or who may afterwards read what I shall say, may perhaps learn something of the requirements, covenants, and obligations of those who join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which all men and women must do, if they would be saved with an exaltation in the kingdom of God.

But 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 marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: . . . (1 Peter 2:9, 10.)

COVENANTS ENTERED INTO BY CHURCH MEMBERS

The Latter-day Saints are the people of God, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a covenant people, and a covenant-making people.

The greatest and most important blessings our Heavenly Father has for his faithful sons and daughters are received by covenant. One of the greatest blessings he has to bestow is membership in his Church and kingdom. This is received by solemn covenant.

When I was baptized, and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I was required to raise my right arm to the square, and covenant before God, angels, and witnesses present, that I would henceforth keep the commandments of God, as fast as they should be made known unto me. This represents the nature of the covenant entered into, by every person who is baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is frequently spoken of as the covenant made in the waters of baptism. The nature of this covenant should be explained to every applicant for baptism, and he should manifest a willing acceptance, before being baptized.

Every man who has received the Melchizedek Priesthood, has received the oath and covenant belonging to the priesthood, that he will magnify the same; to do which, he must live a righteous life, and answer every call of authority that may come to him in the Church, keeping all other covenants he has entered into, or may do in the future. The Lord on his part covenants to give him all that he the Lord hath.

But whoso breaketh this covenant after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. (Doc. and Cov. 84:41.)

The blessings of the temple are of inestimable value. The goal of our existence, that of eternal life and exaltation, cannot be attained without them, but to receive these blessings, we must enter into solemn covenants of faithfulness.

There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. (Doc. and Cov. 130:20, 21.)

We who have no other intent than to be faithful in all things do not hesitate making covenants to that end. Every covenant we enter into with the Lord, is for our own good and blessing. If there are any among us who are weak and hesitate, being fearful lest they might not be able to keep the required covenants of the gospel, they should lean more heavily upon the assistance the Lord has promised to all such, when he said.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matt. 11:28-30.)

CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR ACTIONS

I would have the Saints, myself included, avoid as far as possible the disappointments and sorrow here in life, and hereafter, resulting from sin and neglect. Many of our sorrows, and the greatest sorrows we experience in life, are of our own making, and could have been averted.

Remorse of conscience, resulting from sin, is among the greatest of sorrows, and the hardest to heal. No person can afford to commit sin. There is no satisfaction derived from so doing that will justify the sorrow and remorse that result therefrom. Many of our sorrows in life are the result of thoughtfulness on our part. We do things that are unwise, and hurtful to ourselves and to others, not having first thought the thing through, and considered the inevitable consequences. This thought is emphasized in the story entitled, "Clarence and Mother":

A woman, left a widow with one child, was obliged to take in washing for a living. One morning Mother called Clarence earlier than usual, saying: "We have a larger wash than usual, and will need quite a lot of wood." Clarence made no complaint, but dressed himself, and going to the wood yard cut up and carried in a wood box full of wood. Then he wrote a little note to his mother and put it under her plate at the table. When Mother turned her plate over, she found Clarence's note which read like this: "Mother owes Clarence 50c for cutting up a wood box full of wood." The mother's countenance fell for a moment, then she went where she kept her meager earnings, and found 50c and brought it and gave it to Clarence. There was not much said at the table, and the mother ate but little breakfast.

The next morning when they turned their plates over at the table there was a note from Mother to Clarence which read as follows: "Clarence, debtor to Mother, for going down into the valley of the shadow of death, to give him life, nothing; for board and lodgings nine years, nothing; for clothing, and washing and mending his clothes, nine years, nothing; total, nothing."

Clarence had not thought the matter through to a correct conclusion, how much he was indebted to his mother, and that the hard work she had to do was as much for the boy as for the mother, and what an opportunity was here afforded, for him to show his love and appreciation for his mother, for what she had done and was doing for him. Clarence had not thought how deeply indebted he was to his mother, nor the fact that he could not live long enough, nor work hard enough, to pay fully the debt of gratitude he owed to her. Many of us grownups do things thoughtlessly that are just as censurable.

Many members of the Church, young and old, through carelessness and thoughtlessness, are pursuing a course in life that will surely be a great sorrow to them in the future, and to those who love them most, if they do not change their course. And even should they in the future repent, and mend their ways, they may, like Saul of Tarsus, forever after have a thorn in the flesh.

My sympathy goes out to all such, and I would like to help them to see and choose the better way.

There are in the Church today more than 45,000 men past twenty-one years of age, who hold some office in the Aaronic Priesthood, who, if worthy, should have been ordained to the office of elder in the Melchizedek Priesthood, at nineteen years of age, according to the order of the Church, but who have never received the Melchizedek Priesthood, nor the endowments and sealing blessings in the house of the Lord.

Being past twenty-one years of age, a large percentage of them are married men, and as men of the Church, may not receive the endowments and sealing ordinances of the temple without first receiving the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is clear that they have not been married in the new and everlasting covenant, and that if they have children, they, the children, have not been born in that covenant. If the parents of children who have been thus born ever have their children for eternity the children will have to be sealed to their parents, but this is impossible while the father does not hold the Melchizedek Priesthood. Should a man of this class die before the death of his wife, he has no assurance that if he has rejected these ordinances, his widow will go to the temple, after a year has elapsed, and be sealed to her dead husband, and have their children sealed to them. She may decide to be sealed to some man who is worthy to go to the temple, and who has proved his love for her, and his desire to have her as his wife for eternity. Such decisions are frequently made, and then the mother wants to have her children sealed to her, and the only way that can be done is to seal them to the mother, and the man to whom she is sealed. This done, the father has lost his wife, and lost his children. Have these adult members of the Aaronic Priesthood, having wives and children, thought this matter through, and decided to run the risk of losing their wives and children, and their own salvation? Such thoughtlessness, indifference, and neglect, may prove a source of everlasting sorrow.

Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been. (From *Maud Muller*.)

... neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. (I Cor. 11:11.)

A fulness of glory may not be had outside of the marriage relation, in the new and everlasting covenant, and nothing short of a fullness of glory will be satisfying in the end. It will be just too bad if through carelessness and neglect, men of the Church shall lose their wives, their children, and their salvation. These are among the greatest blessings our Father has to give. The Prophet Joseph Smith has left of record a statement that when God offers to a man knowledge or blessing, and he rejects it, that man is damned. (*Compendium*, p. 279.) If through neglect, a man lose his wife, his children, and his salvation, that would be condemnation, self-inflicted.

OUR DUTY TO OUR DEAD

There is born unto every man in the Church a responsibility to his kindred dead, to find them out by genealogical search, and then to do the temple work for them, or have done, all gospel ordinances necessary for the living, being alike necessary for the dead. Since the visitation of Elijah, to the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, April 3, 1836, genealogical societies have been organized, and genealogical libraries established, throughout this and other countries, and the spirit of Elijah has been in evidence among the people of the world, in their search to know of their kindred dead (See *Comp.*, p. 282), and many thousands of family histories have been published and placed in these libraries, and are thus made accessible to members of the Church. In this we see the hand of the Lord manifested through nonmembers of the Church, in accomplishing his purposes in the redemption of the dead.

The genealogical search is the first step to be taken in the work of redemption of the dead, and as the temple work cannot be done until sufficient information is had, that will identify the dead upon the records, it makes the importance of genealogical research, on a par in importance with the temple work itself.

The Prophet Joseph Smith has said that, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead." (*Comp.*, p. 254.) That includes both genealogical and temple work.

If while we are in life, we altogether neglect this sacred duty to our dead, there is no doubt that we will be deservedly reproached by them, when we meet them. Have we thought this matter through and reached correct conclusions, as to what our future will be with respect to this feature of our religious work, and responsibility?

It is to be hoped that in the end there will be no disappointments and remorse come to us because of neglect.

Are we quite sure that we have done our full duty to our neigh-

bors, and associates, who are not of us, in an effort to make known to them the fact of the restoration of the gospel? This is a time of warning, and he that has been warned is to warn his neighbors. (See Doc. and Cov. 88:81.)

Have we thought this matter through and satisfied our conscience on this point? There are ever before us the hope of reward, and the fear of punishment or disappointment, as incentives for us to do the things that we know we ought to do, and to leave undone the things we know we ought not to do, all of which makes for salvation, for it is written:

... until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law, (Romans 5:13) and, ... where no law is, there is no transgression. (Romans 4:15.)

A TESTIMONY OF THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL

We have received the gospel, the law, and will be justified only when we have lived the law as we understand it. Nor will we be justified in living in ignorance of the law with such wonderful opportunities as are ours, to learn and to know.

As a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, I desire to bear to you my testimony, that I do know that the work in which we, as Latter-day Saints, are engaged, is the work of the Lord, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, restored to earth in this the gospel dispensation, in the fulness of times, with all its gifts, ordinances, and blessings, through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, whom God raised up to be the mighty prophet of the last days. It is the power of God unto salvation unto all those who receive its ordinances, and obey its precepts. It is being taught, practiced, and authoritatively administered to the repentant believers, by the Latter-day Saints, commonly called "Mormons." Its effect upon one who conscientiously accepts it is to establish him in habits of conduct, which make for a better life, a nobler character, a fuller and more enduring peace, and a greater hope of eternal life. It has a restraining and a stimulating effect upon one's life, restraining him from doing that which is wrong, and stimulating him to do that which is right. It teaches one the way of life and salvation, and encourages him to walk therein.

The gospel teaches me that I am a spirit-born son of God the Eternal Father, a brother of Jesus Christ, of most noble birth and ancestry. It teaches me, that I inherited from the Father those qualities and attributes which in their perfection make God, the Father, what he is; that I am placed here on earth for the purpose, in part, of perfecting the qualities and attributes of Deity in me implanted, with the command:

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. (Matt. 5:48.)

It is also written:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (Phil. 2:5, 6.)

A high aspiration indeed, but both scriptural and reasonable. It is written that things earthly are typical of things heavenly. It is most natural that the Son should desire to become like his Father, either in an earthly or heavenly sense. In this thought, and *possibility*, there is great comfort, and encouragement for one to enter into every necessary covenant of faithfulness, and to keep faithfully the covenants entered into.

We have a God-given responsibility to preach this gospel of the kingdom in all the world for a witness unto all nations before the end shall come; and we invite all men to come unto Christ in his kingdom, by obedience unto the laws, ordinances, and precepts of his gospel, of which we are his exponents and his witnesses.

May the Lord add his blessings to us all, according to our several needs, is my prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, Come, Ye Saints," L.D.S. Hymns No. 194.

President Clark: We will now turn over the conference to the regular Columbia Church of the Air Service, on which President George Albert Smith, President of the Council of the Twelve, will deliver the address.

COLUMBIA CHURCH OF THE AIR SERVICE

Theme: "Sweet is the Work." Open with approximately fifteen seconds of organ music.

Announcer, Richard L. Evans: The Church of the Air was established by the Columbia network so that representatives of the major faiths might bring their messages to a nationwide congregation of worshippers. This series, which is now in its fourteenth year of continuous broadcasts, presents two devotional programs each Sunday. Today, the network service of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints comes to you through the facilities of Station KSL and originates in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City where the 115th Annual Conference of the Church is in session. The speaker will be President George Albert Smith of the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall, provides the music for the service. Alexander Schreiner is at the organ.

The Choir sang an anthem, "My Redeemer Lives," Gates.

(President George Albert Smith)

The Choir sang "Turn Thy Face from My Sins"—Sullivan.

Theme: "Sweet Is the Work"—(Organ with humming Choir).