

Christ, there will be more scripture. There has been more scripture given from this pulpit during the course of this conference, and it is as much the mind and will of the Lord as any recorded in the standard works. When the Church establishes, as it did a little over eleven years ago, a welfare plan, a plan announced by the First Presidency of the Church, then, knowing what we know, we are entitled to accept it as a revelation, to receive it as the mind and will of the Lord to the Latter-day Saints.

### HARMONY WITH THE SCRIPTURES

There is nothing about the Church, there is no doctrine, no procedure or no ordinance, no law or principle, that is not in complete harmony with the scriptures and with reason. We can establish that everything we have is reasonable and scriptural and that we are in whole accord with the identical Church of Christ that was set up two thousand years ago. But after we have done that, and after we have put our houses in order and have harmonized our lives with the doctrines that have been revealed, then we are entitled to know that this is the Lord's kingdom and to know it as a matter of faith and testimony, as a matter of feeling and revelation. Once we get that in our hearts we enter into the rest of the Lord and are not driven about by every wind of doctrine or by the cunning craftiness of men. Because our testimonies are secure, we rest from all anxiety and turmoil of spirit, and if we continue in diligence and valiance in the kingdom, we will eventually rest with our Father in heaven in the eternal worlds, "which rest is the fulness of his glory." (D. & C. 84:24.)

I think there is no occasion for any person in this Church to fear for the destiny of the kingdom. We do not need to steady the ark, but we do need to have in our hearts a fear that we may not make ourselves worthy, that we may not hew to the line of righteousness and keep the commandments of God with that degree of valiance which will give us our exaltation in the eternal worlds.

I would like to bear you my witness, as one elder in this kingdom, that I know this is the work of the Lord; that God has spoken in this day; that Joseph Smith was the prophet and instrument in his hands of giving us the laws and ordinances of salvation; and that just as surely as we will live in harmony with them, we will have glory and honor added upon our heads forever, and our calling and elections will be sure. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

Some weeks ago I had an interview with a young man who is just making a remarkable recovery from very serious wounds that he received on the European battlefield. In an explosion of a land mine this young man had suffered a severe spinal injury that had

almost completely paralyzed him, and when the rescue squad came and was carrying him off the field, the enemy turned loose a burst of machine gun fire from which he suffered six bullet wounds in his chest. He was taken to the hospital in what was thought to be a dying condition. As he lay there on his cot after having been treated by the surgeons, a chaplain came to him wearing an insignia of a sectarian church. He asked this young man what his religion was. On being told that he was a Latter-day Saint, the chaplain said: "Well, then, perhaps you would rather I would not pray for you."

#### PRAYER OF CHAPLAIN

"Oh, yes," said the young man, "I would like to have you pray for me if you feel inclined to."

Then the chaplain with great deference said: "Well, I will remove the insignia of my church and kneel down here at your cot. The two of us will then just pray together as two men of God."

The young man said the chaplain prayed for about twenty minutes. The burden of his prayer and the chief thing that he could remember of what the chaplain said was this, that sustained him and put into him the feeling that he wanted to live:

O God, help us that in our living we are not afraid to die and that in our dying we are not afraid to live.

I have thought about that prayer many times since, and I have asked myself the question: How many thousands are there among us today who are living such lives that would make them, unless they repent, afraid to die, and that in their dying they might be afraid to live hereafter?

The purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to teach men to live so that when they die, in the words of the immortal "Thanatopsis":

Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust. . . .

#### GOSPEL "PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY"

The Apostle Paul defined the gospel as the "power of God unto salvation," and to the Apostle James the gospel was the "perfect law of liberty."

The Master enlarged upon that latter definition in his statement to those who listened to his words when he said:

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32.)

The nature of this liberty and this freedom of which the Master spoke he further explained in a revelation given to us in

our day, speaking of Adam and all his posterity which are represented in all of humankind. Said the Lord:

Wherefore, I, the Lord God, caused that he [meaning Adam] should be cast out of the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked at the last day when I shall say: Depart, ye cursed. But, behold, I say unto you that I, the Lord God, gave unto Adam and unto his seed, that they should not die as to the temporal death, until I, the Lord God, should send forth angels to declare unto them repentance and redemption, through faith on the name of mine Only Begotten Son. And thus did I, the Lord God, appoint unto man the days of his probation—that by his natural death he might be raised in immortality unto eternal life, even as many as would believe; And they that believe not unto eternal damnation; for they cannot be redeemed from their spiritual fall, because they repent not; . . . (D. & C. 29:41-44.)

### "YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN"

That revelation given to us in our day makes more understandable the answer the Master made to Nicodemus who came to him asking what he must do to be saved. In answer the Master replied, "Ye must be born again,"—born of the water and of the spirit, or he could not see nor enter the kingdom of heaven.

Baptism by immersion symbolizes the death and burial of the man of sin; and the coming forth out of the water, the resurrection to a newness of spiritual life. After baptism, hands are laid upon the head of the baptized believer, and he is blessed to receive the Holy Ghost. Thus does the one baptized receive the promise or gift of the Holy Ghost or the privilege of being brought back into the presence of one of the Godhead, by obedience to whom and through his faithfulness one so blessed might receive the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost in his daily walks and talks, even as Adam walked and talked in the Garden of Eden with God, his Heavenly Father. To receive such guidance and such direction from the Holy Ghost is to be spiritually reborn.

### PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Unfortunately, there are many of those who are blessed to receive the Holy Ghost and that companionship of one of the Godhead in their mortal lives who fail of their blessings. This was taught plainly by the Master in the parable of the sower who was represented as the teachers of the gospel. He classified those to whom the gospel was taught into four different groups! Of one group he said, in effect: "These are those who received the seed by the wayside, and the birds came quickly and caught it up and stole it away," suggesting those who heard the word but lacked understanding and the devil was quick to take the word away from their hearts lest they would receive it and would believe to their salvation.

Another class he compared to those who received the seed

on stony ground, and it began to take root, but when the sun came out, it was scorched and withered away because it had not much root, suggesting those who received the seed and for a time had joy in that understanding, but then when persecution and affliction come because of the word, they become offended and dwindle in their belief.

Another group of those who hear the gospel are the ones who receive it as among thorns, and the thorns after a time choked out the seed. These, he said, were like those who let the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures and the lusts of the world, destroy their activity in the Church that might have brought them safely into eternal life.

Fortunately, there were some who received the gospel in good ground, and these brought forth some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold and some thirty-fold. And that is just about the way the active membership of the Church seems to be grouped among us today, some giving full hundred percent service and some, unfortunately, only thirty-fold.

#### FAILURE TO REALIZE BLESSINGS

Again, in this day the Lord gave us a revelation that suggested clearly the reasons why some men fail of their blessings. He said:

Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson— That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. (D. & C. 121:35-38.)

That it seems to me, as we have experienced it, is about the progressive way that men begin to fall away. They first begin to "kick against the pricks." I have wondered what that means. These no doubt are the pricks of the gospel. I wonder, perhaps, if they are not those things referred to in President Clark's remarkable article some years ago in *The Improvement Era*, that he called "restraints," the restraints of the Word of Wisdom, the restraints imposed in keeping the Sabbath day holy, injunctions against card playing, the restraints imposed by following out the welfare program. And so we might go on. These are the restraints against which some people seem to rebel and are kicking constantly against—the "pricks" of the gospel.

I remember in this connection what somebody said in classi-

fying humankind. He said there were only three kinds of people in the world—"Saints, Ain'ts, and Complaints," and perhaps the "Complaints" would represent those who seem to be kicking against the pricks. These are the ones who next begin to "persecute the Saints" and, finally, "to fight against God."

#### APOSTATES IN DARKNESS

Speaking of those who would persecute the Saints, I am reminded of what the Prophet Joseph said while he was upon the earth. He said:

From apostates the faithful have received the severest persecutions. Judas was rebuked and immediately betrayed his Lord into the hands of his enemies because Satan entered into him. There is a superior intelligence bestowed upon such as obey the gospel with full purpose of heart, which, if sinned against, the apostate is left naked and destitute of the Spirit of God, and he is, in truth, nigh unto cursing, and his end is to be burned. When once that light which was in them is taken from them, they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their powers should be enlisted against the truth and they, Judas like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 67.)

Yes, persecution seems to be the part of those who would teach the truth. You remember what the Master said:

Blessed are ye, when man shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, . . . for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matt. 5:11, 12.)

I remember a few years ago, upon assignment from the Presidency and the Council of the Twelve, I interviewed a man who, because of his sinning, had fallen away and had been excommunicated from the Church. He said to me: "I want to bear you this testimony that the last few years have been a pretty rugged road. When I received the pronouncement of the court that excommunicated me from the Church, it was just as though someone had turned off the light to my soul. I was left in complete darkness from that time forward."

#### PURE IN HEART SEE GOD

In the Master's Sermon on the Mount, he made another very expressive declaration when he said:

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. (*Ibid.*, 8.)

You will remember that in his lifetime there were some who saw him only as the son of the carpenter. There were some who said that because of his words he was drunken with strong wine—that he was a winebibber. There were some who even thought him to be possessed of devils. Only those who were the pure in heart saw him as the Son of God.

So it is today. There are some who look upon the leaders of this Church and God's anointed as men who are possessed of selfish motives. By them the words of our leaders are always twisted to try to bring a snare to the work of the Lord. Mark well those who speak evil of the Lord's anointed for they speak from impure hearts. Only the "pure in heart" see the "God" or the divine in man and accept our leaders and accept them as prophets of the Living God.

The testimonies of our leaders, in this connection, have been very significant to me. I remember hearing President Grant on several occasions say:

Whenever certain individuals who are not living good lives, begin to compliment me and to speak well of me, I say to myself, "Heber J. Grant, what's the matter with you; you must not be doing your duty, or this kind of person wouldn't feel so kindly toward you."

I remember the prophetic pronouncement that was made from this stand by President George Albert Smith eighteen months ago when he said:

Many have belittled Joseph Smith, and those who have will be forgotten in the remains of mother earth and the odor of their infamy will be ever with them, but honor, majesty, and fidelity to God attached to Joseph Smith's name and exemplified by him will never die.

I wish that statement could be heard to all the ends of the earth.

#### CRITICS SPIRITUALLY SICK

I want to bear you my testimony that the experience I have had has taught me that those who criticize the leaders of this Church are showing signs of a spiritual sickness which, unless curbed, will bring about eventually spiritual death. I want to bear my testimony as well that those who in public seek by their criticism, to belittle our leaders or bring them into disrepute, will bring upon themselves more hurt than upon those whom they seek thus to malign. I have watched over the years, and I have read of the history of many of those who fell away from this Church, and I want to bear testimony that no apostate who ever left this Church ever prospered as an influence in his community thereafter.

It is well that we remember today that statement of the prophet of old which was sung so beautifully as the words of the Master by the choir today. It was the Prophet Isaiah who said:

... Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. (Isaiah 57:19-21.)

Brothers and sisters, my prayer is for all of us, that we may so live, that when our time comes, we may not be afraid to die, and that when we die, we may look confidently forward to a life, an eternal life, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the celestial kingdom, and I pray it humbly, in his name. Amen.