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that use gives strength; a capacity unused weakens and dies. It is as true of religious instincts as of any other. One need not be a sinner to lose God; he need only forget Him."

With respect to the responsibility of parents teaching religion to their children, the Lord is very explicit in the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 68, 25th to 28th verse:

"And again, inasmuch as parents have children in Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized, that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old, the sin be upon the heads of the parents.

"For this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, or in any of her stakes which are organized.

"And their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands.

"And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord."

Brethren and sisters, let us strive to have fewer broken homes, and in our homes to have harmony and peace. From such homes will go men and women motivated with a desire to build, not to destroy.

Thus in our homes, in our wards, branches, and stakes, we may join the appointed messengers in organized missions, and consistently proclaim the re-

stored gospel of peace unto the ends of the earth.

"Follow with reverent steps the great example
Of him whose holy work was 'doing good';
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

"Then shall all shackles fall: the stormy clangor
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace."
(Whittier)

I hope that in the hearts of those who are listening there will have been awakened a realization that example in the home is entirely essential to the proclamation of peace abroad. The strangers who come to visit us will see that our lives comport with the proclamation of peace, with the ensign of peace that the Church holds up before the world. O Father, help us, that we may be thus blessed by the guidance of thy Holy Spirit, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, who will be followed by Elder Marion G. Romney.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

AFTER LISTENING to President David O. McKay's timely and helpful message, brothers and sisters, I am sure that you feel, as did I, to say again in your hearts:

We thank thee, O God, for a Prophet,
To guide us in these latter days;
We thank thee for sending the gospel
To lighten our minds with its rays.

May we utter that thanks and show it in a fervent and personal response to this appeal of our great leader.

I am sure that what I shall say will

not be new to anyone, but it is a matter to which we should give serious consideration. The Latter-day Saints are a blessed people because they have made covenants with the Lord. As he made covenants with Israel of old, so he has made covenants with us, and we have made personal and individual covenants with him.

A covenant is a bond; a solemn agreement. It involves at least two individuals, and, of course, both parties must abide by the conditions of the covenant in order to make it effective and bind-

ing. The gospel in its fulness, as it has been restored, is the new and everlasting covenant of God. The new and everlasting covenant embodies all covenants, bonds, and obligations that are required of the Lord for peace in the world, for peace in the hearts of men, and for the salvation and exaltation of man.

In a revelation given to the Church through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord, bidding the people to hearken and listen together to his voice "while it is yet day," said to them:

And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it, and to be a messenger before my face to prepare the way before me. (D. & C. 45:9.)

Why does the Lord make or require covenants and commandments and obligations and laws? I have heard people ask, if he loves us why does he restrict us? Just as any father would restrict his child, if it is a blessing to that child, so our Father gives us these laws and ordinances and commandments and covenants, not that we should be burdened or restricted by them, but that we may be lifted up and made free, that our burdens may be light; that we may, through obedience to them, more nearly perfect our lives and thereby prepare ourselves for the glories that await those who are willing to conform to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. His laws are not grievous; they are not burdensome.

Covenants made with the Lord are eternal in their nature. Agreements made between men end when those men are dead. Such agreements are not eternal. The Lord made it very clear that the covenants he makes with men are eternal and that those which are between man and man shall be shaken and destroyed eventually.

Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after

the resurrection, saith the Lord your God. (*Ibid.*, 132:8, 13.)

Every member of this Church has made covenants with God. When we entered into the waters of baptism and were confirmed members of the Church, we entered into a covenant with him. In section twenty-two of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord refers to baptism as "a new and everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning." And in another revelation to Joseph Smith given in 1830, the Lord said, concerning baptism and the covenants associated with it (and I often wonder if we consider seriously enough those covenants and obligations that are connected with our entering into the waters of baptism and into membership in this Church), this he said:

All those who humble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and contrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church. (*Ibid.*, 20:37.)

Those requirements and expectations are rather definite. The obligations and covenants are clearly stated. Both the blessings of becoming a member of the Church and the obligations of such membership should be understood and impressed upon all candidates for baptism and membership in the Church, both the young and the old.

Again, when we partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we enter into covenants with him. We make a covenant that we will take upon us the name of the Son. That means, it seems to me, to be like him as nearly as possible, to do as he would do, to live in our everyday lives as he would live, to be a true disciple of Christ.

Now, he who takes upon him the name of Christ surely will obliterate from his life such things as profane and vulgar language, and evil thinking, "For," says the Lord, "as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.)

Surely those who take upon them the name of Christ will be honest and true,

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chaste and benevolent and virtuous and will do good to all men.

When we partake of the sacrament, we make a covenant to keep his commandments, all of them, certainly to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and with all our might, and with all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. By keeping the commandments made in the sacrament service, one is promised that his Spirit will be with him, to guide him, to direct him, to warn him, and to teach him. There is nothing more desirable that one could ask than to have the accompaniment of the Spirit of God.

Let us be grateful for the privilege we have each week of going to the sacrament table and there renewing our covenants with the Lord. Let us also leave the sacrament table with a determination to keep the covenant that we make there.

When we are ordained to the priesthood we enter into what is known as the oath and covenant of the priesthood. We agree to magnify and honor that priesthood by living by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.

Always there are blessings promised to those who keep the covenants made with the Lord. In the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord mentions such promises, when he says:

For whose is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.

They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.

Therefore, all those who receive the priesthood, receive this oath and covenant [or enter into it] of my Father, which he cannot break, neither can it be moved. (D. & C. 84:33-34, 40.)

Wilford Woodruff, speaking upon this revelation, made note of the marvelous blessings that await the faithful bearers and sharers of the priesthood; our wives are not without the same blessings that come to the men who bear the priesthood. Said Wilford Woodruff:

Do we comprehend that if we abide the laws of the priesthood we shall become heirs of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ? Who

can comprehend that by obeying the celestial law, all the Father hath shall be given unto us, exaltations, thrones, principalities, powers, dominions. Who can comprehend it? And yet it is here stated.

Now, if we keep the laws and covenants of baptism, and honor the priesthood and its covenants, we are then permitted to enter into the temple of the Lord and there again make covenants with him, which covenants if kept will qualify us for the fulness of joy in our Father's kingdom; and to become endowed with powers, rights, blessings, and promises of blessings that may embellish our lives and bless us eternally and bring us joy that is beyond our power to comprehend.

We may also enter into that order of the priesthood known as the "new and everlasting covenant of marriage." Those who remain true to that covenant and to all other covenants are promised of the Lord that they will come forth in the resurrection of the just with their husbands and their wives as their companions, and with their children, if they are faithful and keep the covenants which they shall make, to live with them in a state of never-ending happiness. What hope, what assurance, what joy that should bring to the hearts of men! The great joy and consolation that comes from the divine assurance that the family ties may transcend the boundaries of death and continue eternally is priceless to all who love their families and their friends.

We are indeed a covenant-making people. I hope and pray that we are also a covenant-keeping people. Un-speakable joy, indescribable blessings and associations with those that we love await all who receive the covenants of God and who endure to the end, faithful and true.

For—

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. (I Cor. 2:9.)

And, of course, he has said that they that love him will keep his commandments.

May we go forth from this conference more determined than ever so to do, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.