

mendable, and it must be pleasing in the sight of the Lord. Among them, not to be overlooked, are those much unnoticed, unsung men and women, who day after day, month after month, year after year, labor in the temples of the Lord, giving vicarious service on behalf of the dead. Along with them are those who do research work, hiding behind desks and files, where nobody knows about them, spending hours and money and time and energy that the work might be perfected. It is one thing, you know, to do something for those who can return the goodness and who can thank you, but these people—this great army of those who do vicarious service, who do not expect a return in thanks, at this time at least—I think win our most sincere commendation and our admiration for that type of dedication.

Paul has said that “. . . He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

“. . . let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (II Cor. 9:6-7.)

With the Apostle Paul, brothers and sisters, let us say, as we go from this conference,

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor

powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39.)

May it be so with us. I testify that this is the work of God; that his power is within this Church—the power to bring redemption to the dead and salvation to the living, and I am honored to be affiliated with the membership of this Church and to do my little bit in furthering the work. God bless you and keep you and comfort you when you need comfort, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

The congregation will please rise and sing one verse of “Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah.”

The Combined Chorus and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, “Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah.”

President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve will now address us.

ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY BELOVED brothers and sisters: President McKay began this great conference on a note of gratitude. My soul immediately responded to the theme. The spirit of it has inspired the proceedings of every session of the conference. In harmony with it, let me say that I am grateful for the peace that has come into my heart during the conference, and for the peace of this moment as I stand before you to express my feelings.

Among the many things for which I am thankful is the sanctifying process of repentance. I am grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ who, through the

atonement he wrought, gave us the gift of repentance. I am grateful that he was willing voluntarily to give his life for us: That is literally what he did. He did not have to give it; he did not have to die. Because he was the Son of God, he was not subject to the fall, as were men. Within him was power to live forever. “. . . I lay down my life for the sheep”—he said. “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” (John 10:15, 18.) He inherited power over death from his divine Father.

It took a person with power over death to pay the debt to justice to bring men

forth in the resurrection. It took a sinless one, a god, even the sinless Son of God, to satisfy the demands of justice for men's sins. They themselves could not make an atonement which would either bring about their resurrection or pay for their sins and bring about their spiritual rebirth.

And so I repeat, I am grateful for my Redeemer, grateful that he paid the debt and brought about the means of repentance so that by repenting of my transgressions I can bring my soul within the reach of his atoning blood and thereby be cleansed of sin; for, after all, it is by the grace of Christ that men are saved, after all they can do. The thing they can and must do is repent. I love the doctrine of repentance.

During the past few months I have seen the need of it—oh, how I have seen the need of it. I have seen missionaries, saints, and non-members of the Church, in far-off lands sorrowing with a godly sorrow for sin. I have heard them say, "Oh, Brother Romney, do you think there is any hope for me, any chance for me to get on even the bottom rung of the gospel ladder?"

And as I have witnessed their sorrowing, I have remembered the sorrowing of repentant men in days of old; Zeezrom, for example, whose "soul," after he realized what he had done in opposing the ministry of Alma and Amulek, ". . . began to be harrowed up under a consciousness of his own guilt; yea, he began to be encircled about by the pains of hell." So severe were his sufferings that he ". . . lay sick at Sidom, with a burning fever, which was caused by the great tribulations of his mind on account of his wickedness." (See Alma 14 and 15.) And Alma, who said of the suffering he endured for "seeking to destroy the church of God":

I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins. Yea, I . . . was tormented with the pains of hell; . . . with inexpressible horror, . . . even with the pains of a damned soul. (See *ibid.*, 36.)

But then I also remembered the rest which came into their souls when, through repentance, they found forgive-

ness. "Yea, I say unto you," said Alma to his son Helaman, that as "there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains"—so ". . . on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy." (*Ibid.*, 36:21.)

And so I was comforted and encouraged those who confided in me, and I encourage all sorrowing, repentant men to be comforted—comforted by the experience of Alma and by Paul's assurance that ". . . godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. . . ." (II Cor. 7:10.) For today, as well as in days of old, there is hope, there is peace, there is rest in Christ for all whose godly sorrow brings them to that repentance which worketh salvation. Forgiveness is as wide as repentance. Every person will be forgiven for all the transgression of which he truly repents. If he repents of all his sins, he shall stand spotless before God because of the atonement of our Master and Savior, Jesus Christ; while he that exercises no faith unto repentance remains ". . . as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death." (Alma 11:41.) Such is the gist of God's merciful plan of redemption.

My brothers and sisters, there are many among us whose distress and suffering are unnecessarily prolonged because they do not complete their repentance by confessing their sins. You will recall the following words of the Savior,

I command you to repent, . . . and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken. (D & C 19:20.)

In another revelation he said,

By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them. (*Ibid.*, 58:43.)

Repeatedly he says that he forgives the sins of those who confess their sins with humbleness of heart, ". . . who have not sinned unto death." (See *ibid.*, 61:2; 64:7.) And he adds,

. . . he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. (*Ibid.*, 58:42.)

But how are we to fulfil this commandment? To whom are we to confess our sins? In the fifty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord, with other directions concerning his "holy day," says,

. . . remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord. (*Ibid.*, 59:12.)

I would assume that we are to confess all our sins unto the Lord. For transgressions which are wholly personal, affecting none but ourselves and the Lord, such confession would seem to be sufficient.

For misconduct which offends another, confession should also be made to the offended one, and his forgiveness sought.

Finally, where one's transgressions are of such a nature as would, unrepented of, put in jeopardy his right to membership or fellowship in the Church of Jesus Christ, full and effective confession would, in my judgment, require confession by the repentant sinner to his bishop or other proper presiding Church officer—not that the Church officer could forgive the sin (this power rests in the Lord himself and those only to whom he specifically delegates it) but rather that the Church, acting through its duly appointed officers, might with full knowledge of the facts take such action with respect to Church discipline as the circumstances merit.

One having forsaken his sins and, by proper confession, cleared his conduct with the Lord, with the people he has offended, and with the Church of Jesus Christ, where necessary, may with full confidence seek the Lord's forgiveness and go forth in newness of life, relying upon the merits of Christ.

Let us in this manner clear for righteous living the decks of our own lives, and get on our way to eternal life. Only by so doing can we rid ourselves of those guilty feelings of unworthiness, depression, fear, uncertainty, and self-

condemnation which block our upward climb. So long as we put off either the forsaking or confessing of our sins, just so long do we delay the day of our redemption.

Let not the past hang heavy as a millstone to thy heels,
To drag thee downward as each upward impulse to thy nobler self appeals;
But as the joyous butterfly from its chrysalistic shell breaks free,
So from the past must thou rise jubilant, thine own true self to be.

This we may do today if we will, for Amulek assures us that

. . . if [we] will repent and harden not [our] hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto [us]. (See Alma 34:31.)

And President Joseph F. Smith spoke these comforting words:

. . . none of the children of the Father who are redeemed through obedience, faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and who live in that redeemed condition, and die in that condition, are subject to Satan. . . . They are absolutely beyond his reach just as little children are who die without sin. (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 570.)

God grant that it may be so with us all, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Clifford E. Young will please come forward. Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us, and some of you will be wondering who the Elder is who spoke just prior to our singing. It was Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder Oscar A. Kirkham of the First Council of Seventy.