

ELDER EL RAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

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I had had a desire to discuss a few truths of the gospel, having in mind particularly those Saints who are in somewhat of a quandary as to what it is all about, particularly those young people who have asked us such questions as: "Why worry so much about us?" "What difference does it make?" "Why is it necessary that we do this?"

For a wise and glorious purpose
Thou hast placed me here on earth,
And withheld the recollection
Of my former friends and birth.
Yet oftentimes a secret something
Whispered, "You're a stranger here."
And I felt that I had wandered
From a more exalted sphere.

So sang the poetess, Eliza R. Snow. Since the Lord has seen fit to open again the windows of heaven and reveal his mind and will to his servants, the prophets, beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith, greater understanding and knowledge has come to man in relation to his origin, his place on earth, and his relationship to God. As we have already heard, this earth was organized for a special, definite, and divinely designed purpose—that we might live here and by following the plan of the gospel of Jesus Christ work out our destiny, our future, our salvation.

Every one of us will die. All of us will be resurrected, and all of us will live forever—somewhere. Where we shall live in the hereafter is left entirely to each one of us as an individual. It is possible for us to rise to exaltation in the celestial world, or, if we are dilatory or disobedient or indifferent, it is possible for us to remain with those of that category.

There are varying degrees of salvation, of happiness, of joy, and the frightening thing to me is that it is left to me to determine where I will fit in, in that life to come. There is nothing, certainly, that I would like more than to find myself with my family, with those I love, with my friends, and with my Brethren, but I know that in order to merit that, I must conform to certain principles, accept all the laws and ordi-

nances of the gospel. I must yield valiant service in the cause of righteousness, in helping to build up the kingdom, and I must, of course, have accepted baptism by immersion by proper authority in order to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Those ordinances are indispensable and essential for all of us. I hope that those boys and girls who have talked to me about this, and others who may be in the same frame of mind, who are seeking for happiness, will begin by conforming their lives to the principles of this glorious gospel, which is a gospel of happiness, a gospel of joy, a gospel that will bring us peace, even the peace that passeth understanding.

The Prophet Joseph Smith once made this statement, which is wonderful to contemplate:

Happiness is the object and design of our existence, and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it, and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and in keeping all of the commandments of God. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pages 255-6.)

That is a simple prescription and it is just as easy to follow as it is to follow the compass once we set our course and get our directions.

Now, I am sure that we must have been faithful, even valiant, in that pre-existent world because we have graduated, so to speak, with some degree of honor into this state of our existence, which was necessary in order to continue the next phase and rise to the heights of joy and happiness and receive all that the Lord desires us to receive. It is here, now, that we determine where and what we will be in that life which follows this one upon the earth. The precious right to direct the life that has been given to us by our Father should be cherished by each individual, for each may determine for himself whether he will perfect his life by keeping the commandments of God or whether he will follow his own inclinations and wayward ways. All of us, however, will be rewarded according to our works,

Friday, April 4

and our salvation will be graded accordingly. In the gospel of Jesus Christ we have the perfect plan for the happiness that we may achieve.

There is no need for any of us to get lost in the wilderness of doubt and uncertainty, and of foolish doctrines, because the way is clearly defined.

It was Emerson who said: "Man has two creators—his God and himself." Having this life given us to live and to plan and direct, it is a tremendous responsibility that rests upon us. We must constantly segregate the things which endure from the things which are transitory. Split-second decisions, which all of us sometimes have to make, can be more safely made if there have been set up beforehand some "musts" and some "must nots." In this day of glamor, enticement, pressure, new temptations, in this day of moral laxity when more and more are feeling less and less the individual and personal responsibility for wrongdoing, it is imperative that each of us develops a firm desire to choose the right regardless of the circumstances.

Someone has aptly said: "Good character is determined by what you stand for, not by what you fall for." Why does the Lord, through his servants, constantly admonish us to choose the right and to keep his commandments? Simply because he is our Father, and he wishes us to be led into eternal happiness. He wants us to be free by avoiding the bondage of sin and of wrongdoing. His commandments are given to help us, not to hinder us. He would impose nothing upon us except it be for our good. He wishes to assist us through these commandments, which are principles by which we must learn to keep in order to find joy and peace, rather than regret and remorse.

"Be faithful and diligent in keeping my commandments and I will encircle thee in my arms of love," the Lord tells us. Why are your parents so deeply concerned over you, their boys and girls, hoping and praying constantly for your welfare? Because they love you; because they realize that there is in the world a force of evil just as certain as there is being directed a work of righteousness, and that between those two forces

there is an eternal conflict with a human soul as the stake.

The Prophet Mormon had this in mind when he wrote these marvelous words:

Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually.

But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God. (Moroni 7:12-13.)

My, what a revelation that is! Only when the spirit yields to the body has the devil power to overcome the spirit and prevail. The Adversary lives! He is not dead! He is active. He is powerful, even though his power is limited. I noted last night a statement of President Brigham Young that I would like to read in regard to this:

The adversary presents his principles and arguments in the most approved style, and in the most winning tone, attended with the most graceful attitudes; and he is very careful to ingratiate himself into the favor of the powerful and influential of mankind, uniting himself with popular parties, floating into offices of trust and emolument by pandering to popular feeling, though it should seriously wrong and oppress the innocent. (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, page 69.)

Satan is cunning. I will never forget what Brother Thomas E. McKay said in an address from this pulpit, "We do not lose our faith by a blowout—just by slow leaks." That is the way the Adversary works. The Book of Mormon makes the statement that he ensnares us, and if we do not repent, he "leads us carefully down to hell." He never jerks, just rather eases us along, unless we turn from the path of wrongdoing.

Your parents, my young brothers and sisters, do not wish their association with you to end with this life, but they realize that now is the time and the place and the opportunity to prepare for that grand reunion beyond the grave. A week or so ago a young couple came to the temple and received their endowments and were sealed in holy matri-

mony. In the group that met with them in the sealing room were represented three generations on each side. That, it seems to me, is as it should be. Families should participate as families in holy places. If we expect to be together as families in the next life, and it seems to me that is the center and the objective of the whole, then it is best and well that we get together as families in these holy temples under such circumstances as that.

The overwhelming desire that should be in the mind of every young boy and every young girl as he or she moves into young manhood and womanhood is to prepare himself or herself each day that he or she lives to be worthy of entering into the house of the Lord, and there receive the fabulous blessings that the Lord extends to those who desire them. How glorious is the doctrine that man was in the beginning with God! How glorious is the doctrine that families may be perpetuated forever! Of all the people upon the earth today the Latter-day Saints should manifest the greatest faith in God—not because we are a more gifted people or a better race, but because through the goodness of God we have received evidence upon evidence of our divine origin, and the knowledge that we are indeed his children.

ELDER GEORGE Q. MORRIS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters, I sincerely pray that the Lord will direct me by his spirit to say what I should say today. I had been thinking along lines similar to what the last two brethren have been speaking of. We have avoided a head-on collision, but we have been pretty close to it.

I have had in mind a statement of Job: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." (Job 14:1.) I suppose at times we all may have that feeling ourselves. That leads to the matter of troubles and evils and sins and adversity which have been referred to today. I rejoice greatly in the revelations that God has given us so that we will understand life, and if we

Not only the Bible but also modern scriptures have revealed to us great and fundamental truths which are not generally understood as to the origin and destiny of man. In addition, appearances of the Lord himself and appearances of his heavenly messengers have added to the faith and knowledge of this people. I pray, brothers and sisters, that all of us, especially those who are coming into manhood and womanhood, may give sober thought to these glorious principles and be able to build our lives upon the sure foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, "whereon if men build they cannot fall."

I testify that he is real, he is the Savior. He was resurrected and he lives, and this is his plan for happiness and exaltation, and I do it humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen has just spoken to us. He is Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, and also president of the Salt Lake Temple. Elder George Q. Morris of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards.

can get the right relation to sin and adversity and its opposites we can intelligently understand life. There has always been a debate through the centuries as to what sin is, and more particularly why there should be so much sin in the world. Some who believe in God think that it is only an illusion. Some faiths are based on the belief that there is no sin—that it is only an idea in the mind. Others who believe in a God think that perhaps he did not quite make a perfect job of the creation, and there are other various ideas advanced as the reasons for sin. The sin and suffering in the world, says the atheist, proves there is no God.

It has been a great satisfaction to me