

Saturday, October 11

Second Day

Brethren, I see that my time has gone. But the third thing that I would like to mention is that reverence must be a desire in the heart of the individual. There must be a desire to be reverent. It must come from within. True reverence begins in the heart.

I clipped a small article from the Readers' Digest, had it printed and sent out to each member of my ward. It was simply this, an old Methodist saying:

"If every church member were just like me, what kind of a church would my church be."

You, too, can learn something from that saying. You, too, can keep that in front of you as a goal. If every church member were just like you, what kind of a church would your church be.

I know that reverence is not a matter of a meeting house. I held meetings in Germany in beer halls. I swept out the beer bottles and the cigarette stubs and we had wonderful, reverent meetings. I know that it comes from the member-

ship, from the individuals, and I know that you brethren, you who are the Priesthood of this Church and who preside over the members, have got to be the leaders and have got to show the way and lead the way to reverence in our chapels and in our meetings. It can be done. It is being done.

I challenge you bishops and you counselors, accept that challenge of this bishop, who said, "Watch me and do as I and my counselors do." Try it, you will increase your reverence, you will increase the spirituality of your membership.

May the Lord bless you all. I leave my testimony of the truthfulness of this Gospel with you, and I do it, humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We shall now be privileged to hear from President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. of the First Presidency.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My brethren, this is an awesome place to occupy, with the hope and the prayer in my heart, and I hope in yours, you who are seen and you who are unseen, but listening, that what I shall say, and it will not be too long, will be of some benefit to us.

I am sure, President McKay must be heartened and pleased by the report of the practical measures which these two bishops have taken to secure reverence. I am sure that you bishops who are here, and who are listening, will find in these two very able reports from these two young bishops, much food for thought and much ground for the adoption of measures that will bring the reverence that President McKay has been urging for years and the reverence which I believe our Heavenly Father expects if he is to lend to us his listening ears, when we pray to him.

As I said today, there is a royal road from here to our Sovereign, and unlike any other sovereign of whom we know, by some means of which we do not

know, our petitions reach him instantly. Whether that royal road be open to our traffic or not depends entirely upon us.

I wanted to say a few words, if I might, and I will be as brief as I can, because I know you are waiting to listen to the others who will speak here tonight, about the Priesthood. I am not going to undertake to define it. I will regard it as the power of God delegated to those whom he chooses directly or through his regularly ordained servants. It is a part of his power which each and every of you has, for the offices and for the work which is entrusted to those who occupy the offices which we hold.

As I see the work of the Church, I will divide it for my purposes, tonight, into three parts: First, there is the obligation resting on all the Priesthood to keep the home fires burning. By which I mean, as you will guess, the obligation to keep the Church going.

Secondly, and depending upon the efficacy of the first, is the obligation

to spread the Gospel among the living and bring them to a knowledge of the truth.

Thirdly, the obligation upon us to see to it that those who have gone before, without opportunity to hear and embrace the Gospel, have their work vicariously done for them and for this work you in your home capacity are responsible.

But I want to say more particularly, something about this home-work which we have. You know, this Church was badly driven in its early days. The third field, work for the dead was not known in the earliest days. They began the work of the second field and carried it on from the first, but it was hampered and more or less delayed by the mobbings and the drivings and the other indignities and persecutions which were heaped upon the early Church.

We began in New York, we went to Ohio, we went to Missouri, we came back to Illinois, and then we came West. And apparently we seemed to think that when we got West, we should be free from persecution. Such was not the fact.

But in the midst of our wanderings—shall I say—in the East, during the time that the majority of the Saints were in Missouri, grievous and terrible persecution came upon us. We read of the persecution of the early Christians. Those persecutions in the time of Rome were far more dramatic than those which we suffered, but in considerable part they were different and did not involve the humiliation and degradation of families in the way in which our persecutions involved them.

In the midst of all this, in Missouri, they arrested, on charges that apparently involved the death penalty, Joseph and Hyrum, Alexander McRae, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, and Sidney Rigdon. For some reason that I have not been able, in my casual search, to learn, Sidney Rigdon was released, leaving the five men there. I will not go through that. Four and a half months, as nearly as I can count, they were in Liberty Jail, and during the time they were in Liberty Jail, the Prophet wrote a great epistle and certain parts of that epistle have been

taken out and placed in the Doctrine and Covenants as revelations, as they were, glorious in their language, in their principle, and in their instructions.

Out of that Missouri situation arose among some of the Saints, not many, but some of the Saints a feeling of vengeance and revenge that resulted in one of the incidents of our history that we wish we did not have to try to forget. But there were reasons.

You know, I have been in Liberty Jail. There is not much left there of what was there at the time the Prophet and his associates were there, but there is something. And for a long time the Authorities have been talking about restoring that Liberty Jail, or erecting there some kind of a memorial building. I have my own ideas about that but I will not present them.

But these revelations, these great outpourings of wisdom and the Spirit of the Lord, came at a time when the Church was struggling for existence. They were threatening to exterminate us in Missouri. They were threatening to kill our leaders. The great concern at that time was the keeping of what I have termed the home fires burning. They were still going, or had already begun and were still going on converting people, trying to carry out going into all the world and all the rest. But they were having their troubles.

I have been just a little bit disappointed in noting that some of our historians are rather inclined to excuse or to explain the burnings, the robbings, the plunderings, the rapings, and all the rest. Personally, I have no desire to forget all those things—not that I want to cherish them and build hate in my heart, but I do want to have some understanding of what our forefathers went through in order that we might come here. And I recommend to you that you read the last chapters of Volume I, I think it is, of Roberts' *Comprehensive History of the Church*, in which he sums up what happened in Missouri after they had gotten rid of us. It is an amazing story, and I assume accurate.

While the brethren were in prison, the Prophet Joseph and Hyrum and the rest, the Saints were led from Missouri

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to Illinois. Brigham Young led them. He tried to get Bishop Partridge to take out, provide for the getting out of Missouri, of the poor but Bishop Partridge did not and would not take on the work, so Brother Brigham had to do it himself. That was a great experience, one that every descendant, literally or spiritually, and all of us come in the latter group, should find a demonstration, a proof, of the great faith which those stalwarts had.

Now, I want to read, in conclusion, a few verses from Section 121, in which the Lord, through the Prophet Joseph, talks to all of us, not to those engaged just in missionary work, nor to those engaged in vicarious work for the dead, but to them and to all of us, also. I may stop here and there and say a word, but not much.

These are commandments, as I read them, to us for our daily conduct.

"Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?"

"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 hits some of us.

"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."

—You bearers of the Priesthood have there a rule as to your own conduct.

"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."

—Very strong language—not mine, but the Prophet's through revelation!

"Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God.

"We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of

almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion."

—He had just told us what happens to those who exercise unrighteous dominion and then he repeats what he had said above—

"Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

"No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—"

—And the following verse contains what might be one of the greatest tests of what we can do and how we feel.

"Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; . . ." —and now note— "and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; . . ."

—And in carrying forward that, the escape from hypocrisy and believed hypocrisy can be very, very doubtful, we must exercise what is called for there, with greatest care and discretion and without any hypocrisy.—

"That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

"Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever."

I conceive these to be the rules by which we bearers of the Priesthood shall conduct ourselves.

Recently a letter came before me written to be signed by the Presidency, and it gave direction such as would be given

in a letter written with reference to the ordering of goods, or something of that sort.

Brethren, be careful, be prayerful, be wise, when you undertake to make your reproof, when you undertake to direct men who have nothing but their love of the Gospel and their respect of you to impel them to obey you.

Be careful of their feelings. Speak kindly and in such a way that there never will be any question as to your love for them and your desire merely to be helpful.

I bear my testimony to the truth of the Gospel. I bear my testimony that I do have a testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that there is the Holy Ghost. I bear my testimony that the Gospel and the Priesthood were restored through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith and those associated with him. I bear my testimony that the same authority which was given to him has come down to us through all of the Presidents since the time of Joseph Smith, and that it is possessed now by President McKay, who I know strives to carry out these commandments of the

Lord regarding the Priesthood and the exercise of its powers as the Lord has commanded.

May God be with us always and help us to do all we need to do in order to make the home Church strong and vigorous, that we may be able to cover the other fields, spreading the Gospel among the living, and by vicarious work among the dead, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

With Brother Condie leading us, the congregation will now join with the Male Chorus of the Choir in singing, "Do What Is Right."

The congregation and the Men's Chorus sang the hymn, "Do What Is Right."

President David O. McKay:

Brother Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency will now address us.

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

My dear brethren, in some respects I regard this great meeting as of foremost importance in our Conference. When I contemplate standing in the presence of the ten thousand who occupy this building and its environs, plus the many more thousands of the Priesthood gathered in the Church edifices all across the country, I am overawed with the responsibility of taking even this small part of your time. I think, if I know my own heart and mind, that there is nothing that I prize higher than the Holy Priesthood which has come to me, and I gather, if you search your own hearts, that throughout these many meeting places where the Priesthood are assembled tonight, that that same feeling of appreciation exists with you. We all hope and pray that we may so magnify this marvelous power and influence which has come into our lives that we may be worthy of it, and that it may

perform for us the high purposes for which it was given to our Father's children.

Now, without taking too much time tonight, I wish to repeat, and I hope repetition is not too serious an offense, something about two matters that I have brought to your attention on previous occasions. I think it was two and a half years ago this Conference that I took the liberty of bringing to you something from an eminent judge which I thought might operate to some extent to save life on the highways. I remember telling you at that time that whenever I observed the report of an accident on the highway in our area, I was always careful to look up the notice—often the funeral notice—to find out whether the person who had met with the tragic accident was a member of our Church, and one holding the Priesthood. In our own area I was surprised to find such