

Chester W. Hill conducting. The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Moroni M. Larson, formerly president of the Western Canadian Mission. The Choir will sing.

The opening number by the Ricks College Choir was "Lost In The Night."

Elder Moroni M. Larson, formerly president of the Western Canadian Mission, offered the opening prayer.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation was just pronounced by Elder Moroni M. Larson, formerly

president of the Western Canadian Mission. The Ricks College Choir will now sing, "Joseph, the Seer." Elder Delbert L. Stapley will speak following the singing.

The Ricks College Choir sang "Joseph, The Seer."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Hugh B. Brown.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters, I am indeed grateful for your fellowship as we assemble in worship in this great conference of the Church today. I am grateful for my brethren of the General Authorities, for the messages which they have given, so stimulating to our faith and, I hope, encouraging to all of us to keep more faithfully the commandments of our Lord.

In the midst of today's worldly enticements which are glamorous but deceptive, it is so easy to become careless and digress from the straight and narrow way that leads to life eternal. The Savior recognized the weakness of men to transgress and sin even though they possess the truth and knowledge of all gospel ordinances with their requirements for salvation.

His parable of the Ten Virgins teaches a profound lesson of great value to his disciples, present and future. Its application reaches into the homes of the Saints and forewarns of possible unpreparedness on the part of some for the great day of his coming. In this parable the Savior likened the kingdom of heaven unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. As members of the Lord's kingdom, they were entitled to the wedding invitation. However, only five were wise and by greater vision and good works had prepared themselves

acceptably for this joyful privilege and were permitted entrance to the wedding. The five foolish virgins were unprepared and unready, having procrastinated obtaining oil for their lamps, and when they belatedly sought admittance to the wedding, the Lord replied, ". . . I know you not."

"Watch therefore," he admonished, "for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matt. 25:1-13.)

I wonder, my brothers and sisters, which of the two categories we as members of the Church fall into? Do we and our families belong with the wise virgins or the foolish? Will we heed the Savior's warning given in this parable and make honest and wise preparation for entrance into his kingdom? Preparation for eternal glory must go progressively forward every day of our lives if we are not to be caught unprepared when earth life is finished or the great day of the Lord comes.

As descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we are heirs to all the promises pledged to them and their posterity throughout their generations. We are bound by covenants and obligations to God even as our forefathers were.

Perhaps we should define the meaning and significance of a covenant. In a spiritual application a covenant is a solemn, binding compact between God

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and man whereby man agrees to keep God's commandments and serve him in righteousness and in truth unto the end. The gospel covenants and obligations bind Church members to obedience to laws and principles given of God which lead to happiness, love, and eternal joy. A covenant then is an agreement which includes obligations and is given as a principle with promise of blessings for obedience.

The Lord revealed to Moses that if the Children of Israel would obey his voice and keep his covenant, they should be a peculiar treasure unto him above all people. (Ex. 19:5.)

Belonging to the house of Israel, we today are also a covenant people to whom the choice promises of God apply. Blessings, however, are predicated upon faithfulness in keeping the commandments of God. Israel was bound by covenants and obligations which they were required to keep by sacrifice.

Perhaps in Church assemblies today we do not stress sufficiently the importance of gospel covenants and the Saints' obligation to them. It is our duty to learn and understand the sacred and binding nature of the covenants we accept at baptism and the covenants and obligations associated with all other ordinances of the gospel found along that narrow path which leads to life eternal.

During the ministry of Moses, the Lord gave the Sabbath as a perpetual covenant to Israel throughout their generations. (*Ibid.*, 31:16.) Faithful observance of the Sabbath, freeing it for a day of worship and meditation, is as binding upon the people of the world now as it was at the time given. The Ten Commandments also were given by way of a covenant and have always been in force upon the peoples of the world.

When the Savior came among men, he established a new covenant and gave a new testament, even the sacrifice of his own life for the great cause of truth, of which he was the author. The new covenant established by our Lord, with its obligations, was maintained for a brief time only. Shortly after the death of the apostles, spiritual darkness covered the earth. It was not intended that this spiritual darkness should continue always upon the

earth. The Lord promised that in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times all things were to be gathered together in Christ in preparation for his glorious second coming. Today is the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times spoken of.

Through revelation all the ordinances and covenants belonging to the gospel of our Lord have been restored in this time for the salvation, happiness, and eternal life of God's children.

The ordinance of baptism into the kingdom of God is a binding covenant upon all who receive that ordinance. Early in the history of the Church, in consequence of some who had previously been baptized into other churches and desired to unite with the Restored Church without yielding to another baptism because they considered their former baptism efficacious, the Lord gave a revelation which made clear and unmistakable the course which they should follow. He declared:

"Behold, I say unto you that all old covenants have I caused to be done away in this thing; and this is a new and an everlasting covenant, even that which was from the beginning.

"Wherefore, although a man should be baptized an hundred times, it availeth him nothing, for you cannot enter in at the straight gate by the law of Moses, neither by your dead works." (D&C 22:1-2.)

President Brigham Young added this significant contribution to the obligation associated with the covenant of baptism:

"All Latter-day Saints," said President Young, "enter the new and everlasting covenant when they enter this Church. The covenant to cease sustaining, upholding and cherishing the kingdom of the Devil and the kingdoms of this world. They enter the new and everlasting covenant to sustain the Kingdom of God and no other kingdom. They take a vow of the most solemn kind, before the heavens and earth, and that, too, upon the validity of their own salvation, that they will sustain truth and righteousness instead of wickedness and falsehood, and build up the Kingdom of God, instead of the kingdoms of this world." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 160.)

These admonitions and instructions emphasize the sacred and binding nature of the covenant which baptism into the Church places upon every soul receiving this gospel ordinance.

The ordinance of the Sacrament is also a sacred covenant. It reminds us of the great sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross, which makes possible our redemption, salvation, and, if worthy, exaltation and eternal glory. It also gives us the opportunity to renew and keep in force the sacred covenants and obligations which we have entered into with our God.

President David O. McKay made this choice statement to the Council of the Twelve regarding the blessings of this ordinance:

"What a strength there would be in this Church if next Sunday every member who partakes of the Sacrament would sense the significance of the covenant made in that ordinance—every member willing to take upon him the name of the Son, a true Christian, proud of it, and always remember him, in the home, in business, in society, always remember him and keep his commandments that he has given them. How comprehensive that blessing and how significant the covenant we make each Sabbath day."

This admonition, my brothers and sisters, we should always remember as a part of the preparation necessary in meeting the requirements of the covenant of the Sacrament.

The Holy Priesthood is accepted by an oath and covenant and is binding upon those who receive it. They obligate themselves to keep faithfully all the commandments of God and to magnify their callings by honoring and exercising the priesthood in righteousness for the benefit and blessing of mankind.

Like the Children of Israel of old we, today, cannot meet the obligations of gospel covenants without sacrificing the things of this world—our personal ambitions, our time and means and, if need be, membership in every organization not established for the building up of Zion.

The Lord has promised that those who faithfully keep the oath and covenant of the Holy Priesthood will be

given all that he has. And what does this promise mean? President Wilford Woodruff made this explanation:

"Who in the name of the Lord can apprehend such language as this? Who can comprehend that, by obeying the celestial law, all that our Father has shall be given unto us—exaltations, thrones, principalities, power, dominion. . . ."

And then again, President Woodruff asks: ". . . Who can comprehend it?" (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 79.)

Can we, my brothers and sisters, comprehend the significance and far-reaching benefits of this promise? To realize fully these expectations, the Lord has revealed another covenant, the new and everlasting covenant of marriage, which binds together by the authority of the Holy Priesthood, man and wife for time and for all eternity. Children born to them, or later sealed to them, become theirs, if true and faithful, throughout all the eternities of time. What a glorious covenant this is, so full of blessings and promise of rich rewards.

Perhaps the sacredness and far-reaching effects of all these covenants and obligations and others unmentioned can be summed up in the words of two past Presidents of the Church.

President Wilford Woodruff taught:

"We are under sacred covenants to stand by the truth.' . . . We have received the light, the knowledge of God; we are under sacred covenants to stand by the truth, and by one another in righteousness. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 81.)

President Joseph F. Smith emphasized with forceful language the obligation of Latter-day Saints to the covenants they have received with this counsel and admonition:

"Among the covenants are these, that they will cease from sin and from all unrighteousness; that they will work righteousness in their lives; that they will abstain from the use of intoxicants, from the use of strong drinks of every description, from the use of tobacco, from every vile thing, and from extremes in every phase of life; that they will not take the name of God in vain; that they will not bear false witness against their neighbor; that they will

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seek to love their neighbors as themselves; to carry out the golden rule of the Lord, do unto others as they would that others should do unto them." (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 107.)

Now, my brothers and sisters, the Lord has not left us without instruction concerning how the covenants and obligations of the gospel are to be maintained in our lives. In the revelation setting forth the oath and covenant which belongs to the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, the Lord gave this comprehensive warning and advice:

"And I now give unto you a commandment to beware concerning yourselves, to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.

"For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." (D&C 84:43-44.)

If we prayerfully meditate this instruction, we can understand why it is profitable for each of us to be more careful henceforth in observing and keeping our vows with the Lord.

It is well to remember that we kept

our first estate in the pre-existent world; therefore, how tragic it would be if in this interlude of mortality, which is such a small part of our eternal existence, we should forget our heritage and transgress the commandments of God and thus lose all the credits acquired there.

Our safety and happiness lie in keeping fully the commandments of God and maintaining, through good works, all obligations connected with the covenants entered into with him to the end of our days.

I pray God will give us the strength, my brothers and sisters, to do so, for our joy and happiness, which I ask humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. Elder Hugh B. Brown of the same Council will now address us. Elder Richard L. Evans will follow.

ELDER HUGH B. BROWN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

As we are still enjoying the afterglow of Easter, the emphasis throughout this great conference has been on the divinity of Christ. From the profound and scholarly opening address of President J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Saturday morning, through all the sessions of the conference, all have borne witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I cannot hope to add anything to what has been said unless, perhaps, emphasis by repetition.

Little is known of the details of the Master's sojourn on the earth except during those three transcendent years of his ministry, the most eventful years of history. If we are to get a proper concept of the moral and spiritual significance and splendor of his unique life—from Bethlehem to Bethany—we must view it in the light of eternity. He lived his life on this earth at the summit of time, and on the high point of that summit we see the light of the resurrection, the most glorious beacon in the

universe, flashing hope and courage to a benighted world. Let us from that eminence look back—back beyond Eden, and there we shall find that Jesus the Christ was with God the Father in the beginning.

And that beginning must have antedated the beginning of which we read in Genesis when the earth was created, for the obvious reason that he was its Creator. Yes, he lived before time began as we understand time. There is ample scriptural evidence to support the belief that Christ had a pre-mortal existence. Time will not permit quoting or reading many of the passages of scripture, but I should like to refer to one or two.

John, in his inspired preface, said:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

"The same was in the beginning with God.

"All things were made by him; and