

Friday, October 1

First Day

testimonies as eyewitnesses. We may deny him and fail to recognize his pre-eminence in nature and in a world of strife, contention, and corruption, but he is a reality. Millions of men have assailed him, and millions are indifferent to him, but he cannot be expelled. He cannot be eliminated by the sophistries of intellectuals or the bigotry of the ignorant. His name and his works of righteousness are secure on the pages of history. He came with a message of peace and goodwill. His program is the only thing that will end war and bloodshed. I hope we will remember that. He demonstrated his love for humanity, a love that knew no bounds and a devotion that has no parallel.

On this very day, in the blaze of the twentieth century since his birth, we need him more than ever. Nations and individuals need to be comforted by something outside and above the avarice and greed of men. All the world is in search of peace. International councils are in session in an attempt to avoid war. So far as the casual observer can see, no headway has been made. We are still groping in the darkness.

#### Goodwill to men

Members of the true Church are aware that Jesus Christ is the Creator of heaven and earth and is the way to peace on earth and goodwill to men. They marvel at the beauty of his creations, and they accept his divine leadership and agree with Paul the Apostle that Jesus is also the author of the plan of life and salvation. "Mormonism" declares to all the world that Jesus Christ lived upon the earth in the meridian of time; that he

preached the Sermon on the Mount to a small group of friends and followers who had gathered on a mountainside to hear him; that he performed many mighty miracles; that he was born of the virgin Mary; that he was crucified on the cross by his enemies who were inspired by disgruntled religious leaders of his day; that he arose the third day from a borrowed grave where he was buried; and finally that he is the Son of God, the Messiah, about whom the prophets of Israel spoke.

#### His Church Restored

"Mormonism" also declares that he chose twelve apostles to be his representatives and witnesses, that he commissioned them to preach the gospel of the kingdom which he had taught them during his three years of ministry among them. And that same gospel was restored to earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This restored gospel makes life in all of its aspects worth living. It gives beauty, significance, and purpose to man's sojourn in mortality and fills him with courage and conviction and satisfies his spiritual longings.

May we live the gospel. May we introduce it into our lives, and may we not forget to remember that Jesus Christ is the Creator and Ruler of all things, I pray in his name. Amen.

#### President N. Eldon Tanner:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve.

Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.

#### ELDER WILLIAM J. CRITCHLOW, JR.

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

#### The Priesthood and Women

A good sister in the Church sent me a lengthy letter—a sort of diatribe, I would call it—on the subject of priesthood. "Why is it," she asked,

"that so many preachers cannot tell us what it [priesthood] is? . . . Please tell me something of its substance—its contents, etc. Describe it [meaning, I take it, What does it look like?] Why can't I have it?" And then, by infer-

ence, Why am I a woman?

Answering her, I wrote:

Dear Sister .....

I don't know.

Sincerely your brother,

Wm. J. Critchlow, Jr.

My reply was obviously too brief and too curt; the page looked almost naked, so I added a line to lengthen it a bit:

Dear Sister .....

I do not know.

I'm not supposed to know.

Sincerely your brother,

Wm. J. Critchlow, Jr.

And then, to give it a little body, I added this postscript:

When He whose business priesthood is wants the sisters to have it, he will let his prophet know, and until then there is nothing we can do about it.

I still didn't have the heart to mail it. What I finally did mail matched her letter space for space, and page for page, with paragraphs to boot. It probably did not satisfy her questions, but it did at least satisfy a principle called courtesy.

If time permitted I would read to you the full text of the sister's letter. You will, I think, be able to fairly well surmise the nature of its content by the nature of my reply.

This is my reply: (edited and supplemented for this talk)

Dear Sister .....

I do not know; the "substance" of priesthood and the forces that operate to produce its power are presently incomprehensible to me. I've never seen them, nor heard them, nor smelled them, nor tasted them, nor touched them, but at times, officiating in the ordinances thereof, they have touched me. Neither do I comprehend the substance of faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1), nor can I explain the forces that operated when the Brother of Jared's faith removed the mountain Zerin. (Ether 12:30.)

The power of faith and the power of God are twin-kindred, godly powers. No man has ever achieved in his mortal state the status of a god, acquiring all of our Father's knowledge, wisdom, and powers—Jesus not excepted. He came in the flesh endowed with

godly powers and by those powers laid down his life and then took it up again. The "substance" of the priesthood power employed in his resurrection or the "contents" of the power of faith that moved the mountain Zerin I simply do not understand, and it does not embarrass me to say I do not know.

And I'm not supposed to know—this I believe. God has purposely veiled some things in secrecy. The "substance" of priesthood is presently veiled knowledge. Even so, God has not denied men the right to use it. Similarly, he has not denied man the right to use that other great power we call electricity. Who knows what that great power actually is? Scientists cannot tell you its "substance." They have never seen it, nor heard it, nor smelled it, nor tasted it; and they have so much respect for it that they avoid the risk of handling it unpreparedly. Carelessness around electric power lines can be suddenly lethal, yet for its many beneficent uses you and I are most grateful.

Miracles are a product of priesthood power. Who knows the "substance" of a miracle? Who understands the forces that operate when the sick are healed? Did anyone with mortal eyes see the forces that Jesus employed when he transformed water into wine? Mortal men, even those who honor their priesthood, do not know the "substance" of a miracle, nor do some who treat their priesthood lightly fully realize that carelessness with priesthood power can be slowly lethal, producing a lingering, withering, spiritual death. The man who works with priesthood power or the man who works with electrical power—neither of them has the right to handle either power unpreparedly, unworthily. Some men ". . . do not learn this one lesson—

"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." (D&C 121:35-36.)

I wish I knew

Why the man is I and the woman

Friday, October 1

First Day

is you;  
 Why I am gentile and my neighbor is Jew;  
 Why some have lovely white-skin faces—others born in colored races;  
 Why some are sound in body and mind—others deformed and some born blind;  
 Why some live but a moment or so—others for years before they go;  
 Why some were born when our Lord held sway—others held for this latter day;  
 Why? I wish I knew.

### No Memory of Heavenly Home

No mortal man, regardless of his place and state of birth, is born with a memory of his heavenly home. God planned it that way purposely. And "Eye hath not seen [purposely], nor ear heard [purposely], neither [has] entered into the heart of man" [purposely] a knowledge of his future home, "which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9.) Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions:" (John 14:2.) The Prophet Joseph Smith called them "kingdoms." In which of these kingdoms or subdivisions thereof did he go to prepare a place for you? Describe your mansion, if you can. Of what substance is it made? Tell me about its contents. Tell me how God hears and answers your prayers. Tell me how my body after death, its remains blown to the four corners of the world, will be restored in the resurrection process, without the loss of a single hair. Surely God has denied his children here on earth some knowledge of things that were, and things that are, and things to be—purposely. And again, it does not embarrass me to say there are some things I do not know.

"... when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things—

"Things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof—

"Things most precious, things that

are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven." (D&C 101:32-34.) In the meantime we must live by faith.

But this I do know: Priesthood is the power of God, presently and purposely denied to women for reasons which he has not revealed. And when he whose business priesthood is wants the sisters to hold it, he will let his prophet know; and until then there is nothing we can do about it. And until the Lord or his prophet speaks, don't ever, Sister, make a pretense to priesthood power, and never simulate a priesthood ordinance.

### Partners with God

Did women by their own first choice choose to be partners with God in his creative processes? Faced with an alternative—partnership or priesthood—did you, Sister, pass up priesthood?

Did women by their own free choice choose to be the family heart rather than the family head? Scripturally "the husband is the head of the wife," (Eph. 5:23) and he is the family priest and spokesman. Did God, however, in his infinite wisdom purposely make mother the family heart, blessing her with subtle power to sway the head?

"There is a center in every home  
 From which all joys must start.  
 Where is that center?

It is in the mother's heart."

God, choosing woman to be his partner in the creative process, tucked away somewhere in her bosom a spark of his divine love, which later, at the time of motherhood, glows to brilliancy in every mother's heart.

A poet sensed this seemingly divine gift of devotion when he wrote:

". . . I feel that, in the Heavens  
 above,  
 The angels, whispering to one  
 another,

Can find, among their burning terms  
 of love,

None so devotional as that of  
 'Mother'. . . ."

(Edgar Allan Poe, "To My Mother.")

Now, Sister, faced with the alternative family head or family heart, did

you turn down the head? Faced again with a choice between mother's love or priesthood authority, did you pass up authority?

Possibly some other considerations influenced you to be woman rather than man. I've listed a few suggestions. Now, which in this list of womanly virtues might possibly have influenced your choice—if and when, of course, you had a choice? At the head of the list I have placed:

Motherhood—cocreator with God. "Architects and builders of all humanity" our mothers are.

Mother's love—that very special kind for children—a spark of his divine love for his spirit children.

The family heart—with subtle powers to sway the head.

The teacher—if little children pray, give mother the credit. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6.)

The dietician—lovingly concerned with the family health.

The cook—employing her daughters in the art.

The nurse—whose loving, tender care a man can never match.

The expediter—lovingly supervising children's chores and study.

The provoker—kindly provoking the husband to good works. (By Joseph Smith, "Minutes of Organization and Proceedings of the Female Relief Society of Nauvoo," March 17, 1842.)

The psychiatrist—principally for her husband, for whom she is the receptacle of all his cares and most of his ill humor. Somewhere it is written that "the virtues of the mothers shall be visited on their children as well as the sins of the fathers."

The "helpmeet"—"Men undertake the doing and women the being. Man does, woman is."

All of these virtues and functions label the mother the homemaker. God labeled the father the provider or breadwinner when he made him the family head.

Now seriously, Sister, were you given a choice—as of right now, or perhaps a choice sometime in the dim pre-mortal past—between homemaker or

breadwinner, would you, or did you at some time, choose to be the homemaker, choosing motherhood over fatherhood?

Fathers, bearing the priesthood, are entitled to inspiration, but not all of them get it.

Mothers, God's creation partners, are endowed with intuition, and they all seem to have it.

Intuition and inspiration are also twin, kindred powers. Intuition is innate. Inspiration is acquired. Women are not denied inspiration. Did God favor them by adding to their precious virtues the extra gift of intuition? Could your awareness of this special gift possibly have been a factor in your choice to be a woman?

God made man the father, the head, the spokesman, the priest to rule over the family clan.

He made woman the mother, the heart, the helpmeet, a partner with him in his creation plan.

He made man rugged, strong—the builder, provider, protector of the family living places.

He made woman gentle, fair—the homemaker, lovmaker, peacemaker, endowed with heavenly graces.

God made both to be happy in their respective places.

If God made man "a little lower than the angels," (Ps. 8:5) he must then have made women his very angels.

Does the lack of priesthood handicap you in teaching children in the home or in the priesthood auxiliaries? Does the loss of priesthood bar you from fellowshiping with sisters and priesthood in activities of the Church? Haven't the Relief Society, the YWMA, and the Primary organizations all prospered without priesthood teachers? Haven't the blessings of the priesthood always been shared with the wives, mothers, and daughters of men who hold and honor their priesthood?

### Blessings for Women

The emancipation of women in this mortal sphere does not yet involve priesthood.

Friday, October 1

First Day

Women in our great nation enjoy civil rights and liberties like men: they can vote and run for public offices like men; they can own property and drive cars like men; they can frequent public places like men; they can work when, where, and if they please like men; they can smoke, curse, and blaspheme the name of God like men; they can eat, drink, and be merry like men; they can cut their hair like men and wear men's clothes. One thing they cannot do as men—they cannot violate the oath and covenant of the priesthood as some men who bear the priesthood do. Maybe you should thank God for that. If that, dear Sister, gives comfort to your soul, then let me disturb your comfort by reminding you that by reason of your temple experience, you do have certain priesthood covenants to keep and to uphold. Had you forgotten them?

Just as that great unseen electrical power flows through wires to bless mankind, so does that great unseen priesthood power flow through ordained men to bless mankind. Can anyone come close enough to its source to actually see and know it?

Unfortunately, some men have and then have turned away denying and repudiating it—even rebelling against the revealed truth. We call them sons of perdition.

The husband is the family head for administrative purposes, solely.

He is first among equals for the sake of order in the family, only.

First among two personalities, husband and wife, is the man. Copartner and equal with him, in the sight of God, is the woman. “. . . neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 11:11.)

Can man achieve exaltation without a woman at his side?

“Let not your heart be troubled,

neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27.) May his peace be with you, dear Sister.

Sincerely your brother,  
William J. Critchlow, Jr.

If the good sister to whom I mailed this letter is listening in on the air, may I say to her: Please pardon me for publicizing my reply to your letter. You will have observed that I have edited it, adding sentences here and there in the interest of clarity. Will a few others to whom I have read this letter please pardon the repetition.

### The Power of God

To all others may I say: Priesthood is the power of God. Only through its saving ordinances can one attain exaltation and eternal life. Priesthood is eternal. Concerning it God has revealed:

“. . . all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord;

“For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me;

“And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father;

“And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.” (D&C 84:35-38.)

Surely man cannot receive all that God has, in this mortal world; but if one will honor his priesthood, there is good reason to believe that God will be merciful unto him in time of need, in place of need, according to his need. This I believe, and to this I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder William J. Critchlow, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder Richard L. Evans of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

### ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

*Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

President McKay and my beloved brethren and sisters: Most earnestly I pray that the Spirit will give life and

light to the words that follow. There would be emptiness in teaching and testifying of eternal truths without