

Saturday evening an inspirational meeting of the Priesthood of the Church was held in the Tabernacle. The proceedings of this meeting were relayed by closed-circuit broadcast, originating in the Tabernacle, to members of the Priesthood assembled in approximately 600 separate locations in all parts of the United States and Canada, with approximately 95,000 people in attendance.

We extend a cordial welcome to all present this afternoon—special guests, educational leaders, stake presidencies, bishoprics, temple presidencies, general auxiliary board officers, and all the members and friends of the Church who are listening in.

The music for this session will be rendered by the Tabernacle Choir, with Richard P. Condie and Jay E. Welch conducting, with Robert Cundick at the organ.

We shall begin this service this afternoon by the choir singing, "I Stand All Amazed," conducted by Jay E. Welch, assistant director.

The invocation will be offered by

Elder Harold F. Whittier, president of the South Los Angeles Stake.

Singing: "I Stand All Amazed."

Prayer: President Harold F. Whittier, South Los Angeles Stake.

President N. Eldon Tanner

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, will now sing, "Listen to the Lambs."

After the singing, President Joseph Fielding Smith of the First Presidency, and President of the Quorum of the Twelve, will address us.

Singing: "Listen to the Lambs."

President Joseph Fielding Smith, a counselor in the First Presidency, and President of the Quorum of the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

Of the First Presidency and President of the Council of the Twelve

My dear brethren and sisters: I am happy to be with you this day. I do hope and pray that the Lord will bless me with his Spirit, that I may be able to give you something that will be for your good and the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

"He that loveth me"

For a theme I thought I would take the words of our Savior: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father. . . ." (John 14:21.)

I am going to read to you a few words from Paul the apostle, written to the Corinthian Saints. Now, the people out in the world have a strange idea about these epistles of Paul and of the men who have written the epistles we have in the Bible. They apply them unto themselves, and they look upon them as being declared as

messages to all the world. But this is not so. Definitely, each of these epistles was written to members of the Church—not to denominations, but to those who heard the words of the apostles of old, had received them, and had been baptized and confirmed members of the Church of Jesus Christ in that dispensation.

Therefore, we should have the understanding when we read these epistles that the things said by the apostles are not things that apply to those who have not made covenants through the gospel of Jesus Christ and did not in that day. I am going to read a most definite, emphatic statement to members of the Church, some of whom had been drifting a little in that day, just as we do today, some of whom were not fully converted, and some of whom had forgotten the messages that the brethren taught to them and that they received when they came into the Church.

Evidence of the covenant-maker

So Paul instructed these members of the Church and called attention to certain conditions which are peculiar to those who have made covenants with Jesus Christ. And Paul is not speaking to our generation. He is speaking of the generation in which he lived. And so to these Corinthian members of the Church he said:

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stone, wood, hay, stubble;

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

"If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3:12-16.)

Thus he wrote to the Saints in Corinth, and these words apply equally to the Saints of this present day. Paul could not say that to those who had not been baptized and confirmed, for the Lord has said definitely that those who are not members of the Church cannot receive the Holy Ghost; and so Paul said:

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.

"For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (1 Cor. 3:17-19.)

So we should take notice of this. We cannot build on any other foundation. I think that there are members of the Church who have pride, who have placed gold, silver, precious things as their great goal. And they have neglected their duties and responsibilities, which their membership in the Church requires of them.

Now, let me read another passage to these same members of the Church, many of whom had sadly departed from the true teachings that they had received from Paul and others who had been sent to teach them:

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Cor. 6:19-20.) That statement of Paul's is just as true and applies with equal force in the cases of Latter-day Saints today.

Paul could not say that to those who had not made covenants. He could have told anybody anywhere that he was bought with a price, but he could not tell them that the Holy Ghost had been given to them, because it was not given except to members of the Church. But the fact remains that every soul upon the face of the earth was bought with a price—Jew and Gentile, the heathen, the atheist. No matter where a man lives or what he believes or the circumstances under which he lives, he was bought and paid for with a price, a price that was paid by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and he was the only one who could pay it. No one else was ever born into this world who could pay this price.

His "rights"

And from what were we bought? Before I answer that question, I want to say something else. I have heard people say, and members of the Church too, "I have a right to do as I please." My answer is: No, you do not. You haven't any right at all to do just as you please. There is only one right that you have, and that is to do just what I read to you: keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. He has a perfect right to tell us so. We have no right to refuse. I do not care who the man is; I do not care where he lives, or what he is—when the gospel of Jesus Christ is presented to him, he has no right to refuse to receive it. He has the privilege. He is not compelled to receive it, because our Father

in heaven has given to everyone of us, in the Church and out, the gift of free agency. That free agency gives us the privilege to accept and be loyal to our Lord's commandments, but it has never given us the right to reject them. Every man who rejects the commandments of our Father in heaven is rebellious.

Of course, I realize that there are thousands of people who have never heard the gospel. They are not going to be punished for that. We cannot expect a person to observe a commandment he has never heard. But all those who have never had the privilege of hearing it will at some time have that privilege. If it is not in this life, it will be in the spirit world. And every soul will have the opportunity to accept the mission of our Savior Jesus Christ or to reject it. When the Lord commands us, if we love him we will keep the commandments. This is the law to members of the Church, in the words of the Savior: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. . . ." (John 14:21.) Again, the Savior said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

Unfortunately we have members of the Church who set aside the commandments the Lord has given us, who fail to observe them strictly. This is not your right. It is just your privilege, the privilege the Lord has given you to act for yourself. You are agents with the power within you to obey or to disobey. If it were not so, no one could be tried for disobedience. We read in the scriptures that every man will be tried according to his works. Well, if we are not under obligation, who can try us? Did you ever think of that? If there were no obligation for me to keep the commandments of the Lord, if I broke them, I could not be punished.

Benefits of obedience

We do not punish men for doing something that is not contrary to the laws, do we? But the Lord has given us his laws, the gospel of Jesus Christ, not because it is pleasing to him, not because he is going to get anything out of it. He has given us these laws

that we might get something out of them. And, of course, every person who keeps these commandments adds that much to his personal glory. There is no question about that, because when we sustain our Savior and are true and faithful to him, he is the benefactor. But are we not benefited, and are not the benefits greater to us by far than they are to him? Our Lord never gave a commandment in this world to any man that was not intended to be to his eternal benefit. I think sometimes we overlook that.

I hope the Lord will help me to keep his commandments. As I said, his commandments are not hard to keep. He said that himself. Some people say that his commandments are hard to keep. This is an admission, isn't it, that they are not keeping them?

Let me ask you a question: Is there anybody here who has not committed some sin or transgression of divine law? If so, you may please raise your hand. I don't see any hands up. I can't raise mine. Well, did you ever, after you had committed some wrong, feel sorry and get the spirit of repentance and wish you had not done it? If you have not felt that way, you had better see your bishop. I have done things I should not have done, and I have felt sorry. I never committed murder; I have kept my body clean; I have not been stealing from people. When I was a child, I may have taken something that did not belong to me, like the neighbor's apples. But when I have done some wrong, I have been troubled.

He carried the burden

The Savior never committed any sin nor carried any troubled conscience. He was not under the necessity of repenting as you and I are; but in some way that I cannot understand, he carried the weight of my transgressions and yours and the transgressions of every soul who comes into this Church from the days of Adam to our present time and to the end of time. He came and offered himself as a sacrifice to pay the debt for each of us who is willing to repent of his sins and return to him and keep his commandments. Think of it, if

you can. The Savior carried that burden in some way beyond our comprehension. I know that, because I accept his word. He tells us of the torment he went through; the torment was so great that he pled with his Father that if it were possible he might not drink the bitter cup and shrink: "... nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Luke 22:42.) The answer he got from his Father was, "You have to drink it."

Can I help loving him? No, I cannot. Do you love him? Then keep his commandments. If you do not, you will have to answer for them yourselves.

Death, and then redemption

When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, they did not have to die. They could have been there to this day. They could have continued on for countless ages. There was no death then. But it would have been a terrific calamity if they had refrained from taking the fruit of that tree, for they would have stayed in the Garden of Eden and we would not be here; nobody would be here except Adam and Eve. So Adam and Eve partook. Eating of that forbidden fruit subdued the power of the spirit and created blood in their bodies. No blood was in their bodies before the Fall. The blood became the life of the body. And the blood was not only the life thereof, but it had in it the seeds of death. And so we grow old and we die. But it would have been a dreadful thing if Adam and his posterity had been forced, because of the Fall, to die and remain dead; that would have been the case had there been no redemption.

That is what Satan wanted, so he worked on them. I think he had this idea: "Now, I have destroyed the Lord's plan. I have caused Adam and Eve to become mortal and they are going to die; everyone will have to die, and they will become subject to me." And he laughed about it.

"Through Jesus Christ, our Lord"

There was only one way of redemption, one way in which reparation could be made and the body restored

again to the spirit; that was by an infinite atonement, and it had to be made by an infinite being, someone not subject to death and yet someone who had the power to die and who also had power over death. And so, our Father in heaven sent us his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world with life in himself. And because he had a mother who had blood in her veins, he had the power to die. He could yield up his body to death and then take it again. Let me read his own words: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

"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. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:17-18.)

He had power to lay down his life, and on the cross he paid the price for our sins and at the same time for Adam's transgression. His infinite atonement resulted in two things: (1) restoration of the body to the spirit, and (2) the redemption of those who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and who will be loyal in the keeping of his commandments—freedom from their sins.

Now, in conclusion, what are we going to do? Are we going to love him? Are we going to realize the great work he did for us and are we going to be grateful, or are we going to violate his commandments? I would like to read something by Sydney Harris, taken from the *Deseret News* in 1964, entitled "Would We Believe and Follow?"

"If there should be a second coming, would there not be soon a second crucifixion? And this time, not by the Romans or the Jews, but by those who proudly call themselves Christians? I wonder! I wonder how we today would regard and treat this man with his strange and frightening and 'impractical' doctrines of human behavior and relationships. Would we believe and follow, any more than the masses of people in his day believed and followed?

"Would not the militarists among us assail him as a cowardly pacifist

because he urges us not to resist evil?

"Would not the nationalists among us attack him as a dangerous internationalist because he tells us we are all of one flesh?

"Would not the wealthy among us castigate him as a troublemaking radical because he bars the rich from entering the kingdom of heaven?

"Would not the liberals among us dismiss him as a dreamy vagabond because he advises us to take no thought for the morrow, to lay up no treasures on earth?

"Would not the ecclesiastics among us denounce him as a ranting heretic because he cuts through the core of ritual and commands us only to love God and our neighbors?

"Would not the sentimentalist among us deride him as a cynic because he warns us that the way to salvation is narrow and difficult?

"Would not the puritans among us despise and reject him because he eats and drinks with the publicans and sinners, preferring the company of winebibbers and harlots to that of 'respectable' church members?

"Would not the sensual among us scorn him because he fasts for forty days in the desert, neglecting the needs of the body?

"Would not the proud and important among us laugh at him when he instructs the twelve disciples that he who would be 'first' should be the one to take the role of the least and serve all?

"Would not the worldly wise and educated among us be aghast to hear that we cannot be saved except we become as children, and that a little child shall lead us?

"Would not each of us—in his own way—find some part of this man's saying and doing to be so threatening to our ways of life, so much at odds with our rooted beliefs, that we could not tolerate him for long?

"I wonder! I wonder if we are any more prepared for the second coming than we would have been for the first."

When we go to our homes let us get on our knees and thank the Lord for his many blessings, and our Lord Jesus Christ for his mercy and his greatness and goodness for making it possible for us, through the keeping of his commandments, to go back into the presence of God our Father and dwell with him. May the Lord bless you with every righteous desire of your hearts is my prayer, in the name of his son Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner

He to whom we have just listened is President Joseph Fielding Smith.

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy will now speak to us.

Elder Marion D. Hanks

Of the First Council of the Seventy

A few days ago as I pondered this responsibility a letter arrived from an anguished parent whose child had taken a wrong turn in the road and had become enmeshed in serious trouble. About the same time a telephone call brought a request for help from a mother, under similar circumstances. That weekend the "Church Section" quoted in an article a letter from another heartbroken mother whose promising son had been destroyed by drugs. Experience recalls many such matters.

Each of these instances involved parents who had earnestly tried to do their duty, had themselves lived honorable, devoted lives, had reared choice families, had loved and found much to praise in the child who had made the wrong decisions. Nevertheless, the child had made the wrong decision.

Beyond the anguish caused by the errant child in such cases is often the added burden of censure from neighbors, and self-condemnation as scriptures are read or alluded to in classes and meetings and discussions.