

world for gain or for the honor of men. (See 2 Ne. 26:29; Mosiah 18:26.) He will be a preacher of righteousness speaking forcefully against sin, having an eye single to God, not to personal gain, honor, or popularity among men. He knows worldly aspirations leave the door open wide to apostasy.

8. The teacher himself will be in the process of continual personal repentance. (See Moro. 8:26.) He will be an example of meekness, charity, pure motives, dependence on the Lord. He will not just be teaching the doctrine, but also applying it. (See D&C 41:5; 52:15-16.) All in all, it will be evident whom he represents.

Full purpose of heart

In summary, then, how does one keep himself from falling, as some have, into teaching and living semi-truths? Is it not by maintaining his own spirituality? What is true spirituality? Is it knowledge, intellect, academic learning? Perhaps more than anything else it is an ongoing, purifying condition of the heart. It is an eye single to God. It is a broken heart and a contrite spirit. (See 3 Ne. 9:20; D&C 136:32-33.) It is a "full purpose of heart."

As I have had opportunity over the years to be among the Brethren, the one distinguishing characteristic that seems to be found in all of them, as well as in other spiritual leaders, is their intense desire to take upon them the name of the Lord with "full purpose of heart," a desire to serve the Lord above all else, at any cost. (See

D&C 18:27-28, 38.)

It should not surprise one to see that the Lord's requirements to serve him in church callings are conditions of the heart (see D&C 4; 12:8; 41:11), nor that the Lord has said, "I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." (D&C 137:9.)

Brothers and sisters, no Latter-day Saint will go astray if he will follow the inspired counsel of the Lord and his servants. I testify that if a man will maintain his own spirituality—

- by praying without ceasing,
- by studying and pondering the scriptures continually, and
- by obeying his leaders and the light and truth that he presently understands—

He will not be deceived.

May the Lord bless all of us not to be fooled by illusions created by the devil. May we maintain our spiritual fine-tuning by yielding our hearts to God, becoming firmer and firmer in the faith (see Hel. 3:35), is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Ronald E. Poelman

The Galilean fisherman Simon Peter, upon recognizing for the first time the divine power of Jesus, exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (Luke 5:8.)

Father's strengthening influence

Each one of us, at times, may feel as Peter, conscious of our failings and uncomfortable at the thought of

approaching the Lord. Transgression causes us to feel estranged from our Father in Heaven, and we feel unworthy of his love and fearful of his disapproval.

Yet, having transgressed his laws or disobeyed his commandments, we need the strengthening influence of our Father to help us overcome our weakness, to repent and become reconciled with him. Unrepented sin tends to become habitual and is frequently accompanied by a deepening sense of guilt which may make repentance increasingly difficult. This feeling of estrangement from the Lord becomes, itself, an impediment to repentance and reconciliation with him.

Knowing we have offended our Father in Heaven, we are afraid to ask his help, feeling that we don't deserve it. Paradoxically, when we are most in need of the Lord's influence we deserve it least. Nevertheless, in such circumstances he says to us, as Jesus said to the trembling Peter, "Fear not." (Luke 5:10.)

Example of merciful forgiveness

My message today might best be illustrated through the experiences of a young couple whom I will call John and Gayle.

John was a thoughtful, kind young man, affectionate, with a frank and open manner. He sincerely tried to obey the Lord's commandments and found honest contentment in the joys of family life. Gayle, his wife, was young, attractive, high-spirited, but inclined toward more worldly interests and activities. The society in which they lived was, in general, one of affluence and materialism. People seemed preoccupied with temporal gain, social status, entertainment, and self-gratification. Religious leaders were concerned about the apparent breakdown in family life and moral standards.

In the early years of their marriage, John and Gayle were blessed

with children, first a boy and then a girl; but Gayle seemed uninterested in her domestic responsibilities. She longed for glamour and excitement in her life and was frequently away from home at parties and entertainments, not always with her husband. In her vanity, Gayle encouraged and responded to the attentions of other men until eventually she was unfaithful to her marriage vows.

Throughout, John encouraged Gayle to appreciate the joys of family life and experience the rewards of observing the laws of God. He was patient and kind, but to no avail. Shortly after the birth of a third child, a son, Gayle deserted her husband and children and joined her worldly friends in a life of self-indulgence and immorality. John, thus rejected, was humiliated and brokenhearted.

Soon, however, the glamour and excitement that had attracted Gayle turned to ashes. Her so-called friends tired of her and abandoned her. Then each successive step was downward, her life becoming more and more degraded. Eventually she recognized her mistakes and realized what she had lost, but could see no way back. Certainly John could not possibly love her still. She felt completely unworthy of his love and undeserving of her home and family.

Then one day, passing through the streets, John recognized Gayle. Surely he would have been justified in turning away, but he didn't. As he observed the effect of her recent life, all too evident, a feeling of compassion came over him—a desire to reach out to her. Learning that Gayle had incurred substantial debts, John repaid them and then took her home.

Soon John realized, at first with amazement, that he still loved Gayle. Out of his love for her and her willingness to change and begin anew, there grew in John's heart a feeling of merciful forgiveness, a desire to help Gayle overcome her past and to accept her again fully as his wife.

Through his personal experience there arose in John another profound awareness, a realization of the nature of God's love for us, his children. Though we disregard his counsel, break his commandments, and reject him, when we recognize our mistakes and desire to repent, he wants us to seek him out and he will accept us.

John had been prepared, through his personal experiences, for a divine mission. Though I have taken some literary license in telling the story, it is the account, perhaps allegorical, of Hosea, prophet of the Old Testament, and his wife, Gomer.

Portraying God to ancient Israel as a loving, forgiving father, Hosea foreshadowed, more than most Old Testament prophets, the spirit and message of the New Testament, the Book of Mormon, and modern revelation.

God's love transcends our transgressions

In these latter days the Lord has said:

"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance;

"Nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven." (D&C 1:31-32.)

By disobeying the laws of God and breaking his commandments, we do offend him, we do estrange ourselves from him, and we don't deserve his help and inspiration and strength. But God's love for us transcends our transgressions.

When we disobey the laws of God, justice requires that compensation be made—a requirement which we are incapable of fulfilling. But out of his divine love for us, our Father has provided a plan and a Savior, Jesus Christ, whose redeeming sacrifice satisfies the demands of justice for us and makes possible repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation with our Father. For indeed, "God so

loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

We may accept this great gift through faith in Jesus Christ and repentance, followed by a covenant made with him through baptism of the water and of the Spirit. Then, each week, as we receive the sacrament, we renew our covenant that we will "always remember him and keep his commandments." The promise attached to that covenant is that we "may always have his Spirit to be with [us]." (D&C 20:77.)

Repent and forgive

Hosea's ancient message is repeated and elaborated throughout the scriptures. Through Isaiah, another Old Testament prophet, the Lord said to his people:

"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

"Learn to do well. . . .

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1:16-18.)

The Lord, speaking to Alma, the Nephite prophet, says: "Whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

"Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me." (Mosiah 26:29-30.)

Too often we make repentance more difficult for each other by our failure to forgive one another. However, we are admonished in modern revelation that "ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth con-

demned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

“I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.” (D&C 64:9-10.)

Also from modern revelation comes one of the most comforting, hopeful pronouncements ever spoken:

“He who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more.” (D&C 58:42.)

God’s love, infinite and unconditional

God is our father; he loves us; his love is infinite and unconditional. His sorrow is great when we disobey his commandments and break his laws. He cannot condone our transgressions, but he loves us and wants us to return to him.

I know of no greater inducement to repentance and reconciliation with our Father in Heaven than an awareness of his love for us personally and individually. That such awareness may increase within each of us is my prayer, to which I add my personal witness to you individually that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, the Savior of all mankind, and the Redeemer of each of us individually, in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Romney

Elder Ronald E. Poelman, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just addressed us.

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker.

Elder LeGrand Richards

I am proud to be a member of this great church—The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. What an appropriate name for the true church of Christ to bear in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. I love the Church because of what it teaches me.

Church teaches me I am a son of God

Some years ago during the war, Elder John A. Widtsoe went to the land of Great Britain to preside over the European Mission. When the immigration official saw his papers and who he was, he said, “Nothing doing. We have been letting your missionaries in, but we don’t want any of your leaders—go sit down.” So Brother Widtsoe went and sat down.

In a few minutes, he called him back and he said, “If I let you enter my country, what will you teach my countrymen?”

And Brother Widtsoe said, “I’ll teach them where they came from, and why they are here, and where they are going.”

The man looked up at him and he said, “Does your church teach that?”

And Brother Widtsoe said, “It does.”

“Well, mine doesn’t,” he said.

To me, that knowledge is worth more than all the wealth in this world. If we don’t know where we came from, and we don’t know why we are here, and we don’t know where we are going, nor how to get there, we are just like a ship on the ocean without a rudder, or a sail, or anyone to guide it. We might keep afloat, but we would never come into port.

My church teaches me that I am a son of God the Eternal Father, and therefore I have all of the attributes in embryo to develop like my Father, just like my sons have become like me and I became like my earthly father.