

Blessings Secured By Faithfulness

Remarks by President Heber C. Kimball, in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, April 4, 1866.

Self-preservation is the first great law of nature. It is true, whether it be applied to temporal or spiritual salvation. If a man does not try to save himself through the means which are provided in the Gospel, he cannot be saved. If people will not stop committing sin and learn to do better, my doing so will not benefit them. It would be just as reasonable to argue that I can eat, drink, breathe, and reflect for them.

When a minister of the truth arises to address a congregation it aids him much when the people give their undivided attention to him; but when their attention is drawn off by some trifling interference that may occur in the house, their minds are closed to the effects of truth, and the spirit of the preacher is grieved, and so is the Spirit of the Lord. Paul says, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted." "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

No one man knoweth everything, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;" "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," "dividing to every man severally as he will." If we exercise upon the gifts we possess in simplicity as little children, striving to do good to one another, and to build up the kingdom of God upon the earth, then we shall be entitled to greater gifts and greater blessings. Let no man lay a snare for his neighbor because of the simplicity of his words, and because he reproves in the gate. If the truth, simply told, is unwelcome to people, it is because they are themselves guilty of sin unrepented of; and by this ye may know that ye need repentance.

The faithful love the truth, though it may be told in the most simple manner; it is sweeter to them than honey or the honeycomb; they are no more afraid of it than they would be afraid of eating a piece of good honey. And to the same extent that they love the truth plainly and simply told, do they hate a lie, and the more so when it is dressed up in the garb of truth to deceive the unwary. Truth is the sanctifier of those who love it and are guided by it, and will exalt them to the presence of God; while falsehood corrupts and destroys, or, to use a common scriptural figure, it lays the axe at the root of the tree. As the axe cuts down and destroys the fruitless trees that cumber the ground, so do wicked acts destroy and overthrow all who persist in them.

Truth is an attribute of the nature of God. By it he is sanctified and glorified. Jesus Christ proceeded from his Father. He is called "His only begotten Son," and inherited germs of his Father's perfections and the attributes of his Father's nature, so that he sinned not. So with us; if the attributes of our nature become refined and regenerated by the truth, our offspring must inherit those perfections, more or less. Then, how essential it is that parents should, by living their religion, improve themselves for the improvement of their race. We, too, are the children of God, but we are the offspring in the flesh of fallen and degenerate parents, and we are prone to sin as the sparks fly upward; but by observing the truth, and by following the direction of the Holy Priesthood which has been restored in our day, we may overcome the evil that is within us and that is in the world, begin to improve and perfect the attributes of our nature, which are like the attributes of the nature of God, and lay the foundation of goodness and truth in our offspring.

The devil was a liar from the beginning. Truth has no place in him; but it being a principle of power associated with all goodness, he hates it, and so do all his faithful followers. It is written, "And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the First-born." "Truth is a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; And whatsoever is more or less than this is the spirit of that wicked one who was a liar from the beginning." "He that keepeth the commandments of God receiveth truth and light until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things." "Truth" is a principle of power, and "is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as well as intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence."

Under President Young I have presided over the giving of endowments for the last fifteen years. Last Saturday

there were over twenty persons in the house to receive their endowments. They came well recommended by their bishops as being worthy, good, and faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I had previously had an impression that many of the people were becoming lukewarm, and even cold, in the performance of some of their duties. After the company had gone through I gave them a lecture, and it came to me by the Spirit of God to try if my impression was correct or not. After instructing them that they must not lie, steal, nor bear false witness, etc., I asked them how many of them prayed in their families, and it transpired that there were many who neglected their duties in this respect; yet they were all recommended by their bishops as good, faithful members of the Church of Christ. It made me think of the parable of the ten virgins, five foolish and five wise. Shall we thus cease to perform our duties, while the wicked are striving with all their power to introduce their wickedness in our community and into our families; while they are seeking to influence our wives and children to be disobedient to us and to God? Should we not rather be more faithful in the performance of every known duty, that God may hear us when we pray to him for strength to aid us to resist the encroachment of evil?

The revelations which Joseph Smith has given to this people were given to him by Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world; and this people cannot be blessed if they lightly esteem any of them, but they will lose the Spirit, and sorrow and vexation will come into their families. The Lord designs that we shall be separate and distinct from every other people, and wishes to make us His peculiar people, and to raise up for himself a pure seed who will keep His law and walk in His statutes. For this purpose did He give the revelation on plurality of wives, as sacred a revelation as was ever given to any people, and fraught with greater blessings to us than we can possibly conceive of, if we do not abuse our privileges and commit sin. This doctrine is a holy and pure principle, in which the power of God for the regeneration of mankind is made manifest; but while it offers immense blessings, and is a source of immense power to God's people, it will bring sure and certain damnation to those who seek through its means to defile themselves with the daughters of Eve. All those who take wives from any other motive than to subserve the great purpose which God had in view in commanding his servants to take unto themselves many wives, will not be able to retain them. Wives are sealed to men by an everlasting covenant that cannot be broken, if the parties live faithfully before God, and perform with a single eye to his glory the duties of that sacred contract. Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees, when they tempted him upon the subject of a man putting away his wife, "For the hardness of your heart Moses allowed you to give a bill of divorcement, but from the beginning of the creation it was not so." "What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

I speak of plurality of wives as one of the most holy principles that God ever revealed to man, and all those who exercise an influence against it, unto whom it is taught, man or woman, will be damned, and they, and all who will be influenced by them, will suffer the buffetings of Satan in the flesh; for the curse of God will be upon them, and poverty, and distress, and vexation of spirit will be their portion; while those who honor this and every sacred institution of heaven will shine forth as the stars in the firmament of heaven, and of the increase of their kingdom and glory there shall be no end. This will equally apply to Jew, Gentile, and Mormon, male and female, old and young.

The words of the Lord to the Church, through Joseph the Prophet, in Sep., 1832, will apply very well to many now—"And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—Which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and a judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion. For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land?" Unless we keep our families in order, and instruct our children to be faithful in keeping the commandments of God, not suffering our wives and children to speak lightly of the Priesthood of the Almighty, and of the holy order of marriage which He has revealed for a great purpose—I say, unless we do this, God will visit our families with a scourge, and if they continue in their disobedience they will be removed out of their place, and their names will not be found on the record of the faithful. But, on the contrary, if we are righteous and keep faithfully all the commandments of God, we, with all that portion of our wives and children who also have been faithful, will go into

the celestial inheritance prepared for us in the presence of our God. Will the unfaithful, disobedient, and unbelieving of our families enter with us into the celestial kingdom? They will not. The Lord said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, the house of Israel to me has become dross." So with the unbelieving and disobedient of our families, and of this people; they will be separated from the pure silver, to occupy a place in the mansions of our Father according to their worth.

If our wives would remember and keep faithfully the covenant they have made, they would observe the laws of their husbands, and teach their children to honor every law of God, and to love, honor, and obey their earthly father. If I keep my covenants, I shall be saved in the presence of God; if I violate them, I shall be damned; and so it will be with my family; and what applies to me in this respect will apply to all.

Let us carry out the great purposes of God, and be separate from the ungodly. "Wo unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state!" "And wo unto the deaf that will not hear; for they shall perish. Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also. Wo unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell. Wo unto the murderer who deliberately killeth, for he shall die. Wo unto them who commit whoredoms, for they shall be thrust down to hell. And wo unto them who die in their sins; for they shall go to their place, and suffer the wrath of God."

May God bless the righteous; but the men or women who raise their voices or use their influence against that holy order of plural marriage will be cursed, and they will wither away, for they have undertaken to fight against God. "For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch."