

## SOULS PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

Discourse delivered at the General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Friday Morning, April 5, 1901, by

**ELDER RUDGER CLAWSON.**

Salvation of Souls of Greatest Worth to a Servant of the Lord—To Save Others a Man Must Put Himself in the Way of Salvation—The Gospel to Go to the Nations—Necessity for Repentance—Parable of the Ten Virgins.

Brethren and sisters, it is certainly a very inspiring sight to see so many Latter-day Saints assembled this morning from all parts of Zion to worship the Lord and to receive His word as it may be given by His Spirit through the Elders of Israel. I greatly rejoice in being present, and I appreciate the opportunity of expressing to you briefly some of my views and feelings in regard to this great latter-day work. I rejoice in the testimony of President Snow, in the strength of voice which he exhibited, and in the glorious views he presented before us. I have had pleasure also in the testimony of my brother who preceded me.

A few words were spoken in relation to missionary work, first by President Snow, and then by Brother Smoot, and their remarks will harmonize with what I would like to read to you this morning from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. In a short revelation given to John Whitmer, in June, 1829, the Lord said unto him:

"Hearken, my servant John, and listen to the words of Jesus Christ, your Lord and your Redeemer.

"For behold, I speak unto you with sharpness and with power, for mine aim is over all the earth.

"And I will tell you that which no man knoweth save me and the Father alone. For many times you have desired of me to know that which would be of the most worth unto you.

"Behold, blessed are you for this thing, and for speaking my words which I have given you according to my commandments.

"Now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you, will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you may reach into the kingdom of my Father."—Section 15.

**PRECIOUS VALUE OF SOULS.**

In another revelation given shortly after, these words occur:

"And now, Oliver Cowdery, I speak unto you, and also unto David Whitmer, by the way of commandment; for behold, I command all men everywhere to repent, and I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine Apostle, for you are called with that same calling with which he was called.

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.

"For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer, suffered death in the flesh; wherefore He suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto Him.

"And He hath risen again from the dead, that He might bring all men unto Him, on condition of repentance; and how great is His joy in the soul that repenteth.

"Wherefore, you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor all day in crying repentance unto this people, and bring souls to be counted unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of My Father!

"And now, if your joy will be great with an soul that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!"—Sec. xviii, 9-16.

Again:

"And you must preach unto the world, saying, you must repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and not only men, but women and children who have arrived to the years of accountability."—Sec. xviii, 41-42.

Brethren and sisters, the matters that are brought to our attention in these words of revelation are most glorious for contemplation. Cast your minds back to the early days of this Church, and there stood this man John Whitmer, recently come into the Church of Christ. Various occupations in which he might engage were before him. He had the opportunity to labor upon the farm, to engage in merchandising, to follow mining, to study the profession of medicine or law, or to adopt one of the many other occupations in which men employ themselves. The question he asked himself at that time was, "What would be of the most worth to him? By his industry and thrift he might acquire the wealth of a Vanderbilt; he might obtain a beautiful home, well furnished in every detail, and most desirable for the comfort and convenience of himself and family; he might obtain worldly renown in one of the professions, and by study and reflection become a skillful practitioner in medicine or a wise and able lawyer. I say, these opportunities were before him, because the country was before him, and this country is full of opportunities, which are within the reach of all.

We live in a free country, and the way is open to you and to me, as it was to this man. He stood there in this situation, not having been long in the Gospel of Christ, and I say to you, for it is on record here—that a voice came to that man from the eternal world, and that voice set at rest in him every doubt, every doubt, every fearful anticipation. At a critical time in his life, when he must choose which way to go, that voice said unto him that which would be of most worth unto him was to declare repentance unto the people and bring souls unto Christ. The message was of such importance that it came to him with sharpness and with power." It was the voice of Jesus Christ. It was a revelation, given in this day and generation, when it was supposed by the people of the world that revelation is done away with, that there is no longer communion between the heavens and the earth, that the heavens are sealed, and the voice of God is silent.

The voice of revelation comes from heaven and enters into the soul of this man and declares unto him the right way. Glorious thought! And how are we to determine the value of souls? This matter has been determined for us also by revelation. The souls of men are so precious in the sight of God that He gave to the world His Only Begotten Son, that by the shedding of His blood He might draw great sinners unto Him. That is why the great Prophet of this dispensation, Joseph Smith, and these others, John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and the rest, were called to bring souls unto Christ. And if one of these should labor all his days, and bring save it but one soul unto Christ, and that one soul be his wife, what great joy he would have with his wife in heaven. And he should labor all his days and bring unto Christ the souls of his wife and his children, and none

else perchance, how great would be his joy in heaven with his wife and children.

**THE BEGINNING OF SALVATION.**

So the matter is clear in my mind that in this kingdom a man must first begin at home. He must start with himself. He must place himself in the way of salvation, and obtain the Priesthood. Then he must set in order his own household, and labor for the salvation of his family. He must not ignore his own home, and forget those who are near and dear to him. A man who cannot save himself through the power of God; a man who cannot save his wife and children, cannot bring to Christ the souls of men in the world. I rejoice in this power and authority which has been conferred upon man. A man must have it before he can go out into the world and bring souls unto Christ. It is with the Church. The Prophet, Seer and Revelator holds the keys of this authority, and from him it comes to the Elders of Israel. This great missionary work that is to be accomplished must first begin at home. It must be found in the families of the Saints, and in the quorums of the Priesthood. Then it must be carried by the Priesthood, to the nations of the earth. It is now being carried to most of the countries of Europe, and will be to all of them, and it is about to be taken to the great nation of Japan; for I want to say to you that Japan is getting to be a great nation. Its people are progressive, and no doubt the Gospel will find a foothold in that land. But our missions are to be opened up, that then is a time when we must feel humble before God. We know not what is in store for this Church in the Empire of Japan. If the Gospel is to find a place in their hearts, and they shall give heed to his voice of revelation from eternity, then the angel of God must go before our brother, who is charged with this responsibility, and the Lord must prepare a people to receive the word, as his preaching and ministry in that land will be fruitful. Therefore, as we look upon this question, we see how utterly helpless is the man who relies upon his own strength, his own experience and learning. This is the work of God. He goes before His servants, and is their rearward. He speaks through them to the world; and we unto that people, we unto that nation, and we unto that family that rejects the testimony of Jesus!

**THE PRINCIPLE OF REPENTANCE.**

Brethren and sisters, in speaking upon this subject we have taken but one view of it. There is another view, and that is, that no soul can come unto the Father and be accepted of Him, except upon the principle of repentance. I fancy I hear some of the Saints saying, "Yes, the principle of repentance is very good, but it is mostly intended for the nations of the earth that sit in darkness and are without knowledge of the Gospel. Yes, take this principle of repentance to them. Let the Elders of the Church declare unto them that they must repent, that they must forsake their sins, and turn unto the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and He will bless and exalt them. But let me tell you brethren and sisters, that we must not stop here. The principle of repentance is not only intended for the world, but it belongs to the Latter-day Saints. It is a principle that should come into our lives and be before us continually. Have we not need of repentance? Cast your eye over this Church; go into the wards and Stakes of the Church; visit among this people. They are without doubt the best of the earth, but go among them, and then ask yourself if this people have not need of repentance. We have need of it. You must admit it when you learn that 50 per cent of those who bear the Priesthood of God fail to attend their quorum meetings. One half of the bearers of the Priesthood attend to this duty, and when called upon will arise and bear testimony; but the other half, fail. Oh! you will say, perhaps, that is not so bad; it is only a quorum meeting you mean. But I wish to remind you, brethren and sisters, (for the sisters should take an interest in this matter with their husbands) that the quorum of the Priesthood have been established by the authority of God, and their times and seasons and bounds have been set. The duties pertaining to the Priesthood are set forth in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants with great force and clearness. And I say, if the meetings of these quorums are of no consequence in the church, let them be done away with. If they are not worth the sacrifice needed in coming together for an hour or so once or twice a month, let us dispense with them. God will not be mocked. If He says such organizations in the Church are necessary, if He inspires the organization of a quorum, then we must give heed to His word. When we make sacred covenants before the Lord, as many of our young men do, in order to obtain the Priesthood, and secure blessings through the Priesthood, and we ignore those covenants, then we are in a bad way. We will be upon us, and He will hold us to a strict accountability. I believe that there is need for the application of this great principle of repentance to the men of the Priesthood. Yet we have many faithful ones among us. There are various associations in the Church all instituted by the authority of God for the benefit and blessing of the Latter-day Saints, and this same condition prevails more or less throughout all of them—about fifty per cent do not respond.

**PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.**

While I speak thus I am reminded of the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. A time came when the five foolish virgins needed some oil, and needed it badly. Oh, if they could only have gone to the store and got a little oil for their lamps. But there was not sufficient time. The bridegroom was coming suddenly, and they must respond at once to the call and meet him with oil in their lamps. The five wise were ready, the five foolish were not ready, and they could not go in to the marriage supper with the bridegroom, their Lord and Master. If the Master were to come to this Church today, there would be great consternation among the people. Men of the Priesthood would not doubt be rushing about looking up their record, going to the quorum meetings and seeing if they did not have sufficient credit on the books to go and meet the Master; and the clerk would have to say to them that they had not been to a meeting for two years, or for one year, or for six

months, as the case might be. They could not be given any credit; and if they met the Master at all, they would have to meet him without oil. Oh, how sorrowful it would be! What a troubled expression would be seen on the countenances of such men! It would be the same with the sisters and others who have not been faithful to duty in the organizations of this Church. And it is the same in other directions.

**HOW TITHING SHOULD BE OBSERVED.**

I grant you, my brethren and sisters, there has been a marvelous improvement in the payment of tithes. A wonderful step in advance has been taken by the Latter-day Saints in this glorious principle, which has come to us from President Snow almost as a new revelation.

A special word of warning it was to these Latter-day Saints—these ten virgins. The word came, "Do you pay your tithing? Have you oil in your lamps? Do you observe this law which will sanctify the land of Zion? I say, great progress has been made in this kind of the full observance of the law of tithing, and with respect to the law of tithing, there are many who come short of paying that which Bishop Preston calls a tithing—ten per cent. The Lord has defined the percentage that should be paid. I am not preaching to you anything that men have devised. No man in this Church instituted the principle of tithing. It is as old as the Gospel. It was paid in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It was paid in the days of Solomon. It was paid in the days of Christ. It was paid upon this continent in the days of the Nephites. Yet there are hundreds of Latter-day Saints who come short of observing it. Many will perhaps pay a tenth, a fifth of a tenth, or an eighth of a tenth, or a seventh of a tenth. They fail to meet the requirement fully, where shall we place them? What shall we say of the man who is highly blessed of the Lord in temporal matters, who has been multiplied exceedingly in his substance, and whose name is not large enough to hold that which the Lord has blessed him with? Is he a tithing man? Well, he thinks he is. How much does he pay? Shall he pay one-half of one-tenth per cent. Shall we say that he is a foolish virgin? I think we might be justified in taking that view, because I do not understand that the Lord is going to be satisfied with anything short of the full observance of the law. If the Lord intended that it should only be one-half of ten per cent, or one-fourth of ten per cent,

He would have said so. When we fail to meet the law exactly, then I apprehend that we are appropriating to ourselves something that belongs to the Lord, and I do not know what right I have to use property or means that belongs to Him. I have no way of borrowing from Him personally. If I am going to use any part of the ten per cent, I must go to His Prophet and see whether or not he will be acceptable to the Lord; and if the Prophet says, No, it is the Lord's means, and must come into His storehouse, then I have no choice left. But you see, brethren and sisters, how, because the Lord has blessed us with ability to gather means and we have it in our hands, we infringe upon His rights by taking some part of that which belongs to Him and using it for our own purposes.

I speak of this because, while there are a number in this Church who do not pay any tithing, there are many who make an effort in this direction, and who perhaps imagine they are accomplishing the thing required because they do not entirely reject the law of tithing. They pay something, they get a credit on the books, and then they say to themselves, Soul, sit thou here in ease and be satisfied. Let it not be so with us, my brethren and sisters. Let no man who has the privilege of paying tithing be satisfied with the payment of less than that which is required. If we are going to strive for a blessing, let us be sure that we shall obtain it. Let us not occupy a position of uncertainty, doing something, but not knowing whether or not we are doing sufficient to secure the blessing.

Brethren and sisters, there are many other things that need to be repented of by the people of God. One is that God will be sought after, and we do not seek after Him as we should. We neglect our family prayers; we neglect our secret prayers, and God is not pleased with it. We should come to Him in mighty faith, ask for His Spirit and blessing, and acknowledge His hand in our behalf. That we may have His Spirit to be with us constantly. Now that I am about to sit down, I do not know of any theme in the Gospel that opens up such a wide field for contemplation and thought as this great and glorious principle of repentance. Let us daily, hourly, improve, grow and progress. God bless you, Amen.

Wednesday morning by Miss Lillian Stanner, Mrs. John Reed and little Miss Janet Millison of this city. Mrs. Stanner and Mrs. Reed each gave several recitations while Miss Millison sang two songs. All were well received.

**BRANCH NORMAL.**

Cedar City—The third year class has just perfected its class organization. Mr. W. E. Corry has been elected president and Miss Vio Reed vice president. At a recent meeting a class color was chosen—purple. The class has made an innovation by adopting a class ring instead of a class pin. The rings are expected here soon.

At a meeting of the instructors last week, Mr. John Foster was chosen to represent the third year class at the closing exercises of the school on June 6th.

Since the arrival of Mr. Augustus, formerly physical director of the Y. M. C. A., athletics are going forward with rapid bounds. The boys are working with zeal and constancy. Some good material is being developed. Next Friday there will be field day exercises. The promising material of the school has been divided into two teams, which will contest, and from these two the institution's track team will be made up. The girls are organizing basketball teams and show as much enthusiasm as the boys. Mr. Augustus expresses himself as being very pleased with the outlook and expects to make up a very good team.

The ball given by the ladies last week was most successful, and a nice little sum was realized for the association. It was entirely managed by the ladies.

The second year class holds a meeting this week for the selection of a class color. Colors were chosen at a recent meeting but they were not satisfactory to all members, and a new one is to be selected.

**AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.**

Logan—Committees are busy at work on the courses of study to appear in the next annual catalogue.

The ball given Saturday night by the literary societies was very pleasant, but not so largely attended as some previous ones.

Rev. E. L. Goshen, of Ogden, has accepted the invitation to deliver the baccalaureate sermon June 16, and the Hon. S. R. Thurman has accepted the invitation to deliver the commencement oration June 18.

Messrs. Dryden and Peterson expect to leave for the east a day or two before commencement, the former to study geology during the summer quarter at Chicago University, the latter to visit relatives in Canada.

Professors Faris and Engle, with their families, expect to spend part of the summer with relatives in Indiana.

Mrs. McEwan entertains members of the junior and senior classes at her home on Saturday evening.

The commencement week program will not differ materially from that of former years. Beginning Sunday, June 16, with the baccalaureate exercises, will continue till Tuesday evening, including class day, field day, commencement day, alumni reunion, banquet and ball.

The class day exercises will be conducted entirely by young women, as the "class man" will be away at work at his profession. The exercises will consist of address, history, prophecy, oration.

Photographer Dryden is still at work getting picturesque illustrations for the new catalogue.

Musie, "so-called," resounds about the building and campus almost every evening. Mr. Milton is drilling the college male glee club and choir for special performances during commencement week.

Mr. W. W. Hill, of the English department, will teach English in the summer school for teachers of Cache, Owyhee and Bear Lake counties, to be held in R. Y. college from June 19 to July 21. Mr. Hill is a graduate of the University of California, having made a special study of English.

Last week two very interesting and instructive lectures were given in College hall by Miss Murcutt. The first evening was spent on "Australia and the Australians," the second on the "Paris Exposition." The lectures were illustrated by richly colored stereoscopic views, and were much appreciated by those present.

"The Power of Sympathy in the Household" is being discussed by the pedagogics class. Many gems of thought have been gained, and the students have learned the philosophy of misplaced sympathy and starvation. Great stress has been put on family patriotism, and every member of the class feels that this is the most important lecture that has been given and one that can be profitably put into practice.

Commencement week this year promises to be a very successful one. If we are to judge by the tone of letters received, a great many visitors will be present. They expect a very pleasant time, and their homes will not be disappointed for a very attractive program has been prepared. There will be the usual interesting class exercises, and special features of commencement work. But one of the most attractive features of all will be the opera "Daughter of the Regiment" by the music department. One evening will be given to the literary society, and the other evenings will be taken by other societies. Thursday is reserved for the usual commencement exercises, which will end with a ball. On Friday the Alumni association will hold its session. The week will end one of the most successful school years the academy has known, and the students will separate feeling that hard labors have ended very pleasantly.

**SALT LAKE HIGH SCHOOL.**

The teachers were paid Friday. The representatives of the various railroads are already soliciting business for the teachers' excursion June 11th and 12th.

The interest in baseball is rapidly increasing.

Miss Mabel Jones, classic graduate '98, has entered the commercial department for special work in bookkeeping.

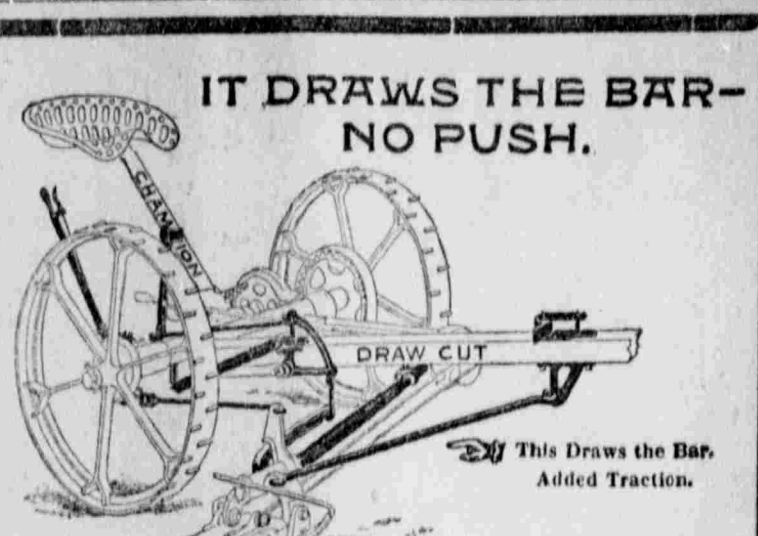
Mr. Hagbart Anderson of Ogden favored the school with several vocal solos during the morning. Among his selections were "Annie on the Deep" and "Lovely Woman." The students expressed their appreciation by vigorous applause.

The following graduates have been selected to furnish the literary part of the commencement program: Edgar Rogers, Burgess Young, Foster Curtis, Kim Zager, Maude Jones and Emma Lewis.

Several papers have been read this week in Miss Corbin's first year English class on themes drawn from "Hillad." The papers have been discussed by the class.

On Monday Mr. Francis' political economy class debated the following question: "Resolved, That trusts should be prohibited by law." Edith Lowther was the leader for the affirmative and Nan Short for the negative.

The school was highly entertained



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