

# **Endowment Lecture 5**

**Angelic Ministry**

**Sermon - 1966**



*by Evangelist Arthur A. Oakman*

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*A series of six lectures to members of the Melchisedec Priesthood, given at the R.L.D.S. Stone Church, Independence, Missouri from October 3 to 13, 1966.*

In Nineteen hundred and thirty nine, as you know, I was in Europe with my family, a wife and a little baby boy. And in September of that year, of course, England declared war on Germany. I received a letter from President Frederick M. Smith suggesting that some of the brethren had advised him that it would be a good thing if he would recall me to the United States, since there wasn't very much I could do over there during, in a time of war. But, he left the decision up to me and I left the decision up to my wife. And she told me that if I went home she would stay anyway so that settled the matter. And so I wrote President Smith and told him that we had decided to stay.

Then you recall there was a period of some five, maybe nine months of what was called the phony war; when things were all quiet on the western front and Hitler was subduing Poland. And then on the 10th day of May 1940, Hitler invaded Holland and Belgium and proceeded to roll up the armies which, behind the Maginot Line which was considered invincible. And we were lead as a result towards Dunkirk.

I received another letter from President Frederick M. Smith and this time he enclosed two other letters which he had received from brethren urging him, that it was his duty to recall me.

And so he said to me, “you see the pressure I am under to have you to come back to the United States. I’m not disposed to give you orders to come,” he said; “I will leave the decision to you.”

We’d already made the decision, but there was still time to leave. Of course as you will recall, those of you who remember, that Great Britain wasn’t given very much chance for survival and indeed it did look glum and black. And so I wrote President Smith a rather cheeky letter this next time; told him not to send any more petty fogging letters of that kind to me; I would come home when he told me to or when the Lord told me to. I didn’t expect the Lord to tell me to while he had a Prophet on earth and I was under his direction.

I walked down to the depot in Gloucester, which is in the western part of England, and outside there was a mailbox; a pillar box we call them. I got that letter in my hand, I knew that if it ever went through the mouth of that letter box that I’d never see it again and I’d be committed. So I stood outside a moment or two and debated whether or not I would send it, finally pushed it in, pulled it out, then finally pushed it in and said...well I’ll let you guess what I said...but I said it. And I walked through the barrier onto the platform, my boats were burned, my bridges were down, there was no turning back; I was at the point of no return.

They had started bombing London and my folks were in London, so I decided to take the hundred and twenty mile trip to the east to London to be with them in this difficult period. Never shall I forget that morning, it was a beautiful morning. I started walking the length of the platform, we call them in England; the tracks here. Up and down, waiting for the train to come.

The place was deserted, and I was conscious of the fact that on either side of me there were two presences, with which I held a mental and spiritual conversation. Just as intelligible as if the English language was used, which indeed it was. I was told that the Lord was pleased with the decision that I had made to stay with my people, for this purpose had I been brought to this land. I was also told that Great Britain would not be invaded by her present enemies because of her, her...I forget just how it came...but because of her kindness, that was it, because of her kindness to God's ancient covenant people the Jews. But because of her cruelties to God's ancient covenant people the Jews, Germany's power as a nation in the midst of Europe would be ended. I was also told that eventually the United States would come into the war and that no nation henceforth should live to itself, but through the advancement of technological knowledge, that the world would become one world and eventually the Kingdom of God would prevail.

I'll never forget that experience. It came to me when all human aid was past. I want you to remember the atmosphere in which that experience was sustained. Everybody was without hope for Great Britain. Great Britain had two hundred Matilda tanks, 857 Spitfires, and at that time the old 75mm cannons which were used in the First World War, which were made by the French, were being shipped along with some old destroyers, as a gift of President Roosevelt to Winston Churchill. Things looked pretty bleak, pretty bad. And it was in that dark day when all hope seemed gone, when there was no possibility for ministry from those around me that I received ministry from above. And I can bear testimony to you men that angelic ministry is a fact. It is a fact; it's a fact of my experience and I hope perhaps at the end of the lecture to tell you of another

experience I sustained years ago which I believe that you will appreciate.

You know this Church was conceived in the ministry of angels. It was not brought forth by human instrumentality except as Joseph Smith and those who were around him responded to the ministry of those that were from above. It was Moroni, it was Peter, James and John; it was John the Baptist who appeared to him. It was from these brethren that Joseph received his call and ordination to the Priesthood and under the continual guidance of those which were from above the Church moved in the discharge of its responsibility. Brethren, never let us forget that for the hope of the Kingdom does not rest below here with men on the earth outside of the Church, it rest with men that are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Our communion is with them, and as Paul said to the Saints, or the writer of the Hebrews, if there are some biblical scholars here that want to be nice about it, as the writer of the Hebrews said,

*“[But] ye are come [un]to Mount Sion...to an innumerable company of angels” (Hebrews 12:22). [corrected wording] / {added wording}*

And that’s to whom we have come. Overshadowing this world there is an innumerable company of those who have gone on before, men of faith who wrought righteousness, and who under the power of God by the exercise of their faith wrought and subdued every principality and power which stood in the way of the accomplishment of the work of God. This is the heritage of the servants of God. What does it say of the power of the Melchisedec Priesthood; to have the heavens opened unto them, commune with God, with Jesus Christ and have the

communion of the Church of the Firstborn? (Doctrine & Covenants 104:9b).

But I ask you brethren, how many of us do it? How many of us enter in to the fullness of our priesthood opportunities? And such understanding, such vision, such endowment, such unveiling of that which is ultimate; this comes as a result of continual, careful, study, fasting and prayer. A continual unremitting search for the truths which are from above. There are counsels and there is wisdom which is from on high which cannot be discerned on the earth, in fact it is not known among the children of men. And the wisdom which comes from on high is gentle and easy to be entreated, if only we are in sincere earnest concerning these things.

Paul says, I think it's in Colossian letter,

*“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”*  
(Colossians 3:1).

And so forth. Our conversation should be in heaven and not upon the earth, and our continued concern should be always that we find fellowship with those who have gone on before and who await the day of redemption, when heaven and earth shall come together and the sons of God shall be tried so as by fire.

I heard the other day that somebody said that we could do without the first fourteen chapters of the Book of Genesis. I'm not sure whether the man was quoted correctly because you can never tell when it's second or third hand. But let me tell you brethren that the first fourteen chapters of the Book of Genesis in the Inspired Version constitutes the supplying of many plain and precious parts which were taken away by the great and

abominable church and have been hid until they were restored by the grace of God and the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. You turn in those early chapters to the creation and you have outlined there the spiritual and the natural, the temporal creation. Not only this, you have the story of Enoch and the building of his city. You have the story of Melchizedek, King of Salem. Together with the tenth chapter I think it is of the Book of, in the Book of Mormon; 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Book of Alma I think it is, there is an extension of the function of Melchizedek, of whom we have no record of his ancestry or his posterity. And he stands in scripture as a symbol, if you please, of that Priesthood which is without father, without mother, without beginning of days nor end of years. You have a record of the Everlasting Covenant which was made by God to Noah and to his posterity; to Enoch and his posterity and reaffirmed to Noah:

*“...when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, [and all] the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy; And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come.”* (Genesis 9:22-23).

All these plain and precious parts which were taken away from the Bible, which has come to us from the mouth of the Jew, have been restored in these the latter days in the Inspired Version.

And let me, in parentheses, put something in here about the Inspired Version. There are all kinds of versions of the scriptures and I would suppose, although I haven't read all of them, I've read many of them; I would suppose that they contain some insights, but they are of a dubious and questionable

character, gentlemen. And so far as I'm concerned, the Inspired Version of the scriptures is the one which has been given to us in these the latter days.

*"Thou shalt ask..."* Section 42, *"Thou shalt ask..."* Joseph was commanded, *"...and my Scriptures shall be given even as they are in my own bosom..."* (Doctrine & Covenants 34:5b)

*"...hold thy peace concerning them,...until they are given...and then behold they shall be taught unto all nations...."* (Doctrine & Covenants 42:15 a,b)

We neglect the Inspired Version of the Scriptures and our ministry suffers and I commend it to you, not as the only valid version of the scriptures, but as the most important and the most valuable version of the scriptures which we have. We ought to treasure that book, for that is to the Reorganization what the Book of Mormon is to the restoration movement in its inception; the one valid existential existence that proves that there ever was a restoration movement.

I was once talking to the Second Consular Officer in Great Britain during the war; we became very firm friends. He was a Presbyterian Elder, and one day he said to me,

"Oakman, do you know that any version, any account of the origin of the Book of Mormon which is at variance with what Joseph Smith himself said, is fantastic" he said "it couldn't have come any other way than by the hand of God."

"Well," I said, "Mr. Wilkinson, what makes you say that?"

He said, "Do you know that there are seven hundred and seventy new words in the Book of Mormon which never appeared before in the British, in the English language?"

He said, “Even Shakespeare himself could not invent so many new words.”

And it was an angle of vision which I had not thought of previously. But the Book of Mormon attests to the fact that an angel came to the earth and under his ministry truth sprang out of the earth. And the Inspired Version of the scriptures, which was kept by the providence of God in the keeping of Emma Smith’s; delivered to the Reorganization. And now is supposed to be taught abroad; that’s its purpose. And it contains, as I say, the revelation of many plain and precious parts which were taken away, especially the story of the City of Enoch which God before took.

Interestingly enough, I remember when a very, very small boy, my paternal Grandmother, I can remember it to this day, how old I was I don’t know; remember telling the family that the night before she had had a vision and had seen the place on the earth from which the City of Enoch had been taken. In my impressionable mind it stayed with me and is still with me to this day. I can see the old lady sitting there yet, telling with earnestness and sincerity how this vision had come to her. And she bore testimony that she knew the City of Enoch was real and that it had concern about what was transpiring on the earth. This City of Enoch, this innumerable company of angels; are men who have labored upon the earth and into that city has been gathered since that time those who through their faith have found redemption, are waiting to return to the earth to claim their inheritance. And the reason that the world has not been cleansed to be made a fit place for their habitation before this, is because God in his mercy has seen fit to restrain the devouring flood of destruction in order that some few of his children might repent and create upon this earth a fit counterpart; so that heaven

and earth should come together, and the sons of God be tried so as by fire.

And then in the fourteenth, I think it is, chapter of the Book of Genesis is the story of Melchizedek, the King of Salem, the King of Peace. And how Abraham paid tithes to him. And how he obtained the Priesthood because of his faith, and how he wrought righteousness, and obtained peace in Salem, and was called the King of Peace. How he was the keeper of the Lord's storehouse; evidently a High Priest. He was a High Priest, ordained after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, this self-same everlasting covenant. And you will recall I am sure in the Inspired Version, not in any other version, in the Inspired Version there's the story of Moses going into the Mount to receive the tablets of the Ten Commandments. You recall when he came down he saw the idolatry of his people and in his anger he smashed the tablets of stone. And then when the second time he ascended the Mount, the Lord wrote on the tablets the Ten Commandments, and the scripture says save the covenant of the everlasting priesthood which God made with Enoch. And men who come up unto this Order, who are ordained unto this Order; it is decreed should have faith, by faith, should have power to work righteousness, to subdue kingdoms and principalities, to set at defiance the armies of the earth. Can you imagine us doing it? Listen. To break every band and to stand in the presence of God.

When we read of the privileges and the powers which attached to the Melchizedek Priesthood, what lies before us and what is possible of achievement through faith, we cannot but bow our heads and ask, say,

*"...Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."* (Mark 9:21).

This is the power by which the Kingdom of Zion shall be brought to pass. It is the power of God and it centers in that radiant company, the company of the redeemed who wait in their place until the day shall come when God shall say it is enough and when they shall return to the earth and have place until the end come.

You will be reminded also that in one of the eschatological sermons of our Lord in the twenty fourth chapter of Matthew, twenty first chapter of Luke and the thirteenth chapter of Saint Mathew [Mark] we are told that in these the latter days there shall be wars and rumors of wars, there shall be perplexity among nations like the sea and the waves roaring, they shall marry and giving marriage, plans and build; and this and that, eat and drink and be merry; marry and giving in marriage, all the signs of this decadent generation are mentioned by our Lord in these sermons. And these sermons that I have mentioned, in the chapters I have mentioned, are supplemented in Section 45 of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants and these chapters which I have mentioned should be read in connection with Section 45. For Section 45 is the Lord's own commentary on this last sermon which he preached on the Mount of Olives before Jerusalem to his disciples.

His disciples came to him and asked him three questions. First, what, when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world. And chapter 24 and part of chapter 25 in the book of Saint Matthew is our Lord's answer to these queries from his disciples. They were interested in knowing primarily when the Lord should return and we do not hear many sermons, do we, about the second coming of

Christ in our Church? We ought to hear more of them. For unless history is marked by an end, it's meaningless. It's only the end of history which gives meaning to the whole course of history. And if time doesn't end it is a fantasy,

*“Full of sound and fury,”* as the poet says, *“signifying nothing.”* (Macbeth, Act V Scene V, by William Shakespeare)

So we look for a city which hath foundations as did all the ancient prophets of old. And as I said Jesus talking to these men, they were interested in when he should return because they loved him and did not want to be separated from him. And so in Section 45 he says to them,

*“...as ye have looked upon the long absence of your spirits from your bodies to be a bondage, {behold} I will show you how the day of redemption shall come...”* (Doctrine & Covenants 45:21)

And after outlining the signs of the times, the wars and the rumors of wars, etc., etc., he says something else,

*“And again, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness...and then shall the end come...”* (Matthew 24:32)

How can the gospel of the Kingdom be preached in all the world for the witness until there is a visible kingdom to be witnessed to, of which witness can be borne? And then he says, behold

*“...the Son of man shall come, and [he] shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet...”*  
(Matthew 24:40)

So that before the coming of the Son of Man we men in the ministry may expect, continue to expect the visitation of a glorious retinue of those who have gone on before. You turn to your church history and on the third day of April 1836 after the communion was served in Kirtland Temple, you find it on page 27 [page 46 in newer versions] of the second volume of the four volume Church History; Sidney Rigdon [Oliver Cowdery] I believe it was, yes Sidney Rigdon, and Joseph Smith dropped the veils behind the pulpits and knelt down in solemn and earnest prayer. And there appeared to them, the Son of Man, glorious is his description, exactly described as it is in the Book of Revelation. And after he appeared to them, there appeared others. Elijah, whose function was to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the fathers to their children, came and visited Joseph and Sidney Rigdon and ordained them to this power. And that power is in this Church, the power to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers; and who are the fathers? Abram, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; they are our fathers. And what was the promise to them which would be planted in our hearts?

*“...in {thee and} thy seed shall all the {families}[nations] of the earth be blessed;”* (Genesis 22:22).

That was the primary promise. And to implement that promise and make it effective, this land will I give thee,

*“...for an everlasting possession;”* (Genesis 14:40).

Take this land and use this land in harmony with the divine ideal. And as the Lord prospers you on this land, I will take of the riches which you shall gather to yourself, and from the riches of knowledge and skill which you shall gain in living together in harmony with the gospel of Jesus Christ, I will take and feed the famishing nations which are around you. This is still the purpose of God, that in the midst of the nations there shall be revelation of social justice, not alone social justice, a revelation of the Kingdom of God, socially, for Christ is the Savior of society as well as he is the Savior of individuals.

And so it was that Jesus talked to these men and told them that he should come and send his angels before him. And in the Kirtland Temple on the third day of April 1836, as I said a moment ago, not only Elijah appeared to men, to Joseph and Oliver Cowdery; Moses appeared to them and gave them the keys of gathering together the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Not only Moses appeared to them, Elias the Restorer, who is Noah or Gabriel appeared to them and committed to them the keys of the restoration of all things. These men had converse with spiritual powers which are not of this world. And gentlemen I say and say again and again and again, this Church must recapture the genius which made that possible in the early day, or otherwise we will become secularized and we can turn this Church over to the lawyers, and the psychologists, the psychiatrists. That's the alternative that faces us. I'm not opposed to psychiatry and I'm certainly not opposed to lawyers, but when we substitute or tend to substitute secular learning for the wisdom which is from on high we're certainly in error. And so as we look forwards into the future of backwards into the future which ever you like, we

can see the design of our God to lead us forward by means which he has in his own keeping.

Now let me say a little about angels. Years ago I had a very dear friend; he was a Bishop in this Church. I still have some very dear friends who are Bishops and some of them who were Bishops, but have now graduated to the Evangelical Quorum. That's the only place an Apostle can graduate to, you know? The only place he has to go if he goes up, and you can't get any higher than an Evangelist, it's in the Doctrine and Covenants if you want to read it, one of Joseph's revelations. He saw the Evangelists on the highest tier of all in the General Conference, even the Presidency were below them. Well, it was...they were! It's in there! Now I've lost what I was going to say. That's what happens to you when you take a tempting bypath.

I had a friend named Ingham, who was a Bishop in the Church. I was just a young Elder, just starting out in California. I came to know and love this man. And he was a creative fellow; he painted some. I remember in his home he had a little gem of a painting in which it depicted a path up a hill, there were a few trees and as you stood and looked at that picture your feet itched to go up that hill and see what was on the other side. And very, very often I use to sit with him, after we'd had supper in his home. He was a widower. And I remember well, one night we sat for almost forty five minutes and neither of us said a word. We sat watching the flickering shadows of the log fire on the wall, the only light in the place. But don't think nothing was happening, for between Brother Ingham and I there was a bond of affection and fellowship and we felt the intermingling of spirits in a way that I have not experienced since or before. Personalities can interpenetrate one another in wonderful ways; this was an experience we had.

On the next Tuesday night when I went to see him, we began to discuss revelation, we discussed what is called the “Law of Continuity,” what he called the “Law of Continuity.” And he said that when men grow to maturity, gradually, there is a dominate nucleus of habit which hardens in them. It becomes them. Everything else is forgotten and subordinated to this dominate nucleus of habit. He says, and that’s the essential “I.” He says and that never, never dies. He said, when a man dies, he passes over into the other world, and what he wanted most the last day he was here, he still wants most the first day he’s there. It was a new thought to me, but it opened up a whole new world.

And so the next Tuesday we went to lunch with Dr. Bush and on the way Brother Ingham sustained a cerebral accident; he lost the use of his hand and then his leg. And I supported him while we went to a hotel lobby, sat down on a couch while Dr. Bush who was a Dentist went for an M.D. I was sitting next to a dying man, my friend, and I loved him.

“Well,” he said to me “Arthur, this is curtains for me.”

I said, “Bishop, why should it be?”

He says, “I’m having a stroke you know.”

I said, “Many, many men have had strokes and have recovered.”

He said, “I won’t recover.” I tried to comfort him.

Then he said this; “I wonder what the jumping off will be like?” He was busy dying.

Well I said to him, “Bishop, you remember what we talked about last Tuesday night, about the ‘Law of Continuity?’”

He said, “Yes.”

“Well,” I says, “you say you’re facing the inevitable?”

He said, “Yes.”

“Well,” I said, “what’s the thing you really most want to do?”

He thought for a long time, gradually his speech was becoming affected.

He said, “The thing I most want to do as I face eternity is to minister for my Lord.”

Those were the last words he ever spoke. I learned later that he had premonitions of this and had made complete arrangements for his funeral at which he asked me to sing for him. And the hymn he chose was,

*“Triumphant Zion! Lift Thy Head  
From dust, and darkness and the dead:  
Though humbled long, awake at length,  
And gird thee with thy Savior’s strength.”*

(Hymn by Phillip Doddridge, 1755)

That man taught me a lot about death, taught me a lot about the life hereafter. I don’t think there’s anything which convinces one of immortality quicker than the death of a good man. But the thing I want to emphasize is the fact that the essential thing that a man desires to do all his life, he carries with him into the beyond. And this was true of all those who have gone on before. As you think of the ministry of Elijah, his whole life was centered on Mount Carmel. His whole concern was for his people Israel. And you will recall that when faced with a host of apostate priests, at the time of the evening sacrifice after a day of superstitious howling on the part of these priests and incantations, the time of the evening sacrifice draw nigh. He had his sacrifice inundated with water, and then he prayed,

*“Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and [of] Israel”–the fathers you see – “Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and [of] Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant... Hear me, O Lord, hear me...and [thou mayest] turn their heart back again” (I Kings 18:36-37).*

Elijah has appeared to the men of this generation and in their priesthood has been bestowed the longing and the promise of Zion and the power and the capacity to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers and the fathers to their children. This we received from above, it didn't originate upon the earth or amongst men. And if I were to ask you brethren what is the covenant which God has made with us in these the last days, I wonder what the response would be? Do you know what it is? Section 34 paragraph 8; or is it 38:4; I forget which.

*“... {Behold}I {the Lord} hold forth and deign to give [unto] you greater riches, even a land of promise;...upon which there shall be no curse when the Lord cometh;...and this shall be my covenant with you, Ye shall have it for [the land of] your inheritance, and for the inheritance of your children...if you seek it with all your hearts.”(Doctrine & Covenants 38:4d-f)*

Brethren there has to be an economic basis for the demonstration of righteousness in a social way in these the latter days. There has to be means, means of the earth by which the City of Zion is sustained, and not only that, by which the means of the earth themselves, by that fact, are sanctified.

The gathering is just as important today as it was in the days when Joseph was here among us, and when he was directing the movement of the peoples of the Church, from New

York to Ohio, from Ohio to Jackson County. And you know the promise,

*“Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they... shall return {those that are faithful}...with songs of everlasting joy”* (Doctrine &Covenants 98:4g).

There’s a philosophy abroad among some people in the Church that Zion is a “do good business,” diffused among all nations; whose center is nowhere and whose circumference is everywhere. I believe we should do good in every community where we are, and if we have a branch of the Church in that community, then I think that community should be made aware of it, and should be enriched as a result of the branch of that Church. And I believe that every branch of this Church should be a clearing house for the gathering in which people practice the laws of stewardship one with another. So with practicing the laws of stewardship in the places where they are, they shall be prepared to come to the Center Place to make that glorious demonstration of righteousness. The City,

*“...a place which I {have prepared}[shall prepare]...that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming;”* (Genesis 7:70)

Do you believe that? Sure you do, you wouldn’t be here if you didn't believe that. I believe that it is right that the revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ should be seen in the light of their context and should be reinterpreted in every age. But there are certain principles which are eternal, and these you simply

apply to the situation where you are, you do not change them, they do not undergo modification, not these eternal principles.

And one of the eternal principles upon which this Church was founded is the principle of divine revelation centering in the men of the Priesthood. For the revelation of God to the world should be embodied in Priesthood, it should be the embodiment of that revelation and I care not how many words are said my friends, or what theories are spun, actually the revelation of God to this generation so far as the Church of Jesus Christ is concerned centers in the men of the ministry.

And if the law of Christ and the light of Christ and the love of Christ is not radiated from us, from we who are members of this priesthood, then it is not radiated. There may be a reflection of the divine light beautiful, as we said last night, from saintly men who study the life of Christ from a distance, and who try to practice the principles of saintliness, but reflected sunlight isn't sunlight. We're called upon as men of the ministry, as there dwells in us authentically the revelation of Jesus Christ to give that demonstration of righteousness. And from whence shall we draw our sustenance brethren? Again let me quote to you with all the emphasis of my being and hear this,

*"ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach... the things {that} [which] I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit; and ye {shall} [are to] be taught from on high"* (Doctrine & Covenants 43:4b, c).

No man can receive a revelation for somebody else, it's impossible. Revelation is an intensely personal thing between man and his God. He may receive a revelation through someone else, but if there is in him, if there is in you, no answering spirit

to discern the word of God, how shall you know that it is the word of God, and how shall you know that you have been taught from on high? And so God, Section 104, no 108 was it, in the Book of Covenants talks about angels flying in the midst of heaven and somehow men on the earth catching the echoes of their ministry and repeating on earth what they overhear coming from above. Read Section 108. The Elders came to Joseph Smith and wanted to know about preaching; what should they preach? Read section 108, it's the Lord's answer to their query what they should preach; and it's all together unlike what we're doing today, almost as daylight is from dark.

Our Church faces the dilemma, shall we be secularized, shall we abandon the principle of power which comes from above, shall we rely on the wisdom of men or upon the power of God? You know the answer to that. The Apostle Paul states it quite plainly,

*“...your faith should not stand in the wisdom of {man} [men].”* (I Corinthians 2:5)

He might as well as said cannot stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. These powers are yours brethren. When you are committed to the work of God, and when there's no turning back for you, and when there is no way that the Almighty can reach you through his servants which are upon the earth, then you may rest assured you shall be reached by his servants which are in heaven. There's many of you who can testify that that is true I am sure.

When I was a youngster, very young, in our house, we were very poor. We was poor as church mice, and you know how poor church mice are. I'm not so sure about that any more since

we have these modern kitchens in almost every church; I'm not sure the mice are poor, but they use to be when that saying was first invented. I remember going to school in a pair of pants that had been patched so many times, that the only thing left of the original pants was the shape. The shoes I wore had the bottoms out of them. I was lucky in deed sometimes if there was brown paper to go in the bottom of the shoes, to keep my feet from off the ground.

My mother would send to the butcher shop. Let me tell you how poor we were. Father was a journeyman plumber and in those days before World War I there was no such thing as economic relief. You either had to go to the poor house or you sang in the street, or you drew pictures on the sidewalk, put your cap down for people to drop pennies and half-pennies in, or you starved to death; that was the terrible alternative. And times were bad. Many and many and many is the weekend when father would earn two shillings and six pence which was the equivalent of 30 cents; no the equivalent of 60 cents pardon me, in those days. Our rent cost 30 cents a week. Tell you the kind of house we lived in. And with the other 30 cents, I don't know how mother did it; she fed the four of us for a week. I remember going to the butcher shop time after time after time after time,

“Two penny worth of bones and rinds, please.”

And thebutcher, if he had them, pile them out on a big hunk of newspaper. I'd wrap them up and take them home, and mother would put them in the stew pot and bleach the bones. We were poor.

And I said to my dad one day, “Dad, we belong to the true Church don't we?”

He said, “We certainly do son.”

“Well,” I said, “Then why are we so poor?” Logical question for a nine year old boy; “Why are we so poor?”

He said, “I don’t know son why we’re so poor. But two things come to mind.”

He said, “It may be I’m not the kind of man that could be trusted with a lot of money, and I’d sooner be a poor man with my faith than a rich man without it.” An unlettered, uneducated ...no he wasn’t uneducated was he? A journeyman plumber.

He said, “And the other thing I want to say son is that one of these days the Lord’s going to set his hand to bless our house, and when he does we’ll never want in basket or in store.”

So content with that we use to wait, my sister and I; we lived in a cul-de-sac which is a dead end street, a French name for a dead end street, at least I think it’s French. We were thirty nine houses down Garfield Road. Garfield Road I think was named after President Garfield who was assassinated. They surely assassinated that street too; maybe that’s why it got its name. And these houses were built row on row; you see there’s just a nine inch brick wall between you and the neighbors next door, one after the other. And we use to stand at the bottom of the...; there was a black fence which, on the other side of which there was an orchard, which was owned by a rich uncle of mine. But do you think he cared anything about us? I had to be like the rest of the boys; if I wanted an apple or two I had to shin over the fence and get it at the risk, the risk of being caught. No, we were poor.

And my sister and I use to stand with my mother at the bottom of the street as we called it, waiting for father to come around the corner. You know we knew when he had any money in his pocket by the way he walked; it’s funny we could tell at a distance, about a hundred yards I imagine. And if he came

around dragging his feet, mother would turn into the house with a sigh; we'd eat what we had if there was anything.

One day we stood there waiting for father, but instead of father there stepped out into the middle of the street from around the corner on High Street a man who was dressed in a black suit, a long black coat; took his hat off. He had a white beard. Stepped into the middle of the street and started to sing:

*“Be-gone, unbelief, my Savior is near,  
And for my relief will shortly appear.  
By prayer let me wrestle, and he will perform;  
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.”*

He began to walk down the middle of the street singing;

*“Though dark be my way, since he is my guide  
'Tis mine to obey, 'tis his to provide.  
Though cisterns be broken, and creatures all fail,  
The word he has spoken will surely prevail.”*

Nearer and nearer he came;

*“His love in time past forbids me to think  
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink.  
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review  
Confirms his good pleasure to bring me quite through.”*

We heard every word distinctly.

*“Since all that I meet was work for my good,  
The bitter is sweet, The medicine food;*

*Though painful at present, 'Twill cease before long,  
And then, Oh, how pleasant, The conqueror's song!"*

(Hymn by John Newton, 1779)

And by that time he stood facing my mother. What was happening? We didn't know.

Then he turned to her and he said, "Sister, do you have a crust of bread you could spare an old man?"

And she did, she had two slices of bread in the house and that's all.

"Yes," she said, "I think so."

We had a saying among us, it's the poor that help the poor, you know. So she got a sheet of paper, and she wrapped one slice of bread in it, and came out and gave it to him.

Then he turned to her and he said, "Sister, because of the sacrifice you have made this day, the Lord has set His hand to bless your household, and from this day forth you shall never want in basket or in store."

And he bent down and kissed me on the cheek. And he says, "This little lad will grow to manhood and will preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in many lands."

He kissed my sister and told about what would happen to her.

She said, "If you'll wait a minute I'll give you a penny," she had two pennies, "you can buy yourself a cup of tea."

She turned into the house to get the penny from that purse that I can see at this moment; well worn. And when she came out he was gone. Who was he? That remained with us; it was a topic of perpetual conversation. Strangely enough soon after he had vanished, father came around the corner of the street, and we knew by the way he walked that he had money in his pocket.

Came bursting into the house and grabbed a hold of mother and swung her around and says,

“Ada, I just landed a big contract!” He says, “We’ll never want for anything anymore.”

And so at night when mother and father would pack us children off to bed, they would sit around the little kitchen stove in the tiny room and sing together and talk of this mysterious stranger. And my sister and I, who knew the exact spot where every stair creaked, you know, when you’re going up and down stairs they creak, avoiding those places we’d creep downstairs and sit outside their room for hours and listen to what they had to say. He was our guardian angel from that time.

And I well remember when my mother was on her deathbed in 1918. We moved to another part of town, a better home where father could hold cottage meetings; he was a Priest in the Church. Still talking, having in the background the consciousness that there was another member of our family somewhere; we didn’t know who he was. Then when she lay dying, I went to the doctor’s place to get some medicine for her and while I was there one of my boyhood chums came in and told me that his mother had just died and I ran all the way home as fast as I could and burst into mother’s bedroom even though she was gasping for breath and dying; I didn’t know it.

I said, “Mum, Skinny Allen’s mother has died.”

She said, “Son, you don’t need to worry; your mother won’t die.”

And child-like I said, “How do you know?”

She says, “You remember that man that came to see us when we lived on Garfield Road?”

I said, “Yes.”

“He just came to see me,” she said, “and told me that my sickness wasn’t unto death, it was unto life.”

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