

Utah
DECEMBER 21, 1940

Prophet Church Observes Anniver

Lord's People Have Made Real Covenants People In Last, As Earlier, Days Owe Allegiance

By Elder Sylvester Q. Cannon
(Of the Council of The Twelve)

(Following is the full text of the address delivered by Elder Sylvester Q. Cannon of the Council of the Twelve at the One Hundred Eleventh Semi-Annual Conference of the Church, in the Tabernacle, Saturday, Oct. 6, 1940.)

It is a source of great joy to me, my brothers and sisters and friends, to meet with you in the sessions of this Conference and to partake of the spirit of these gatherings. I rejoice greatly in the presence with us today of President Heber J. Grant in the measure of health and strength that he enjoys. I pray with you that he may continue to enjoy vigor and life and accomplish the mission which he has before him in great measure, as long as he desires. I pray for the blessings of the Lord to attend his Counselors. I sustain them fully and wholly, and I sustain all of the General Authorities and all the local authorities; all the Stake Presidencies and Ward Bishoprics and Mission Presidents; and all who have part in this work. I realize how great and responsible this work is, and what a joy there is in the accomplishment of righteous deeds. I pray that the Lord may bless me in the things I may have to say this afternoon.

There have been many important messages presented to us today and yesterday. I sense all that has been said as being of great importance and welfare to us, and I desire that I may sustain in every respect the responsibilities that rest upon me, in common with you, to measure up to every duty and labor to the very fullest extent possible. I have in my heart nothing

but great rejoicing in the work in which I am engaged with you and I desire to qualify in the fullest measure for every undertaking, responsibility, and blessing that the Lord has given me. I realize that the blessings of the Lord are with us. I realize that His desire is for our progress, our salvation, and our exaltation in every respect, to the extent that we will fulfil every commandment that He has given us. And so I say that I am prepared, and desire to measure up to every responsibility that the Lord has given. I have great joy and satisfaction in consideration of the

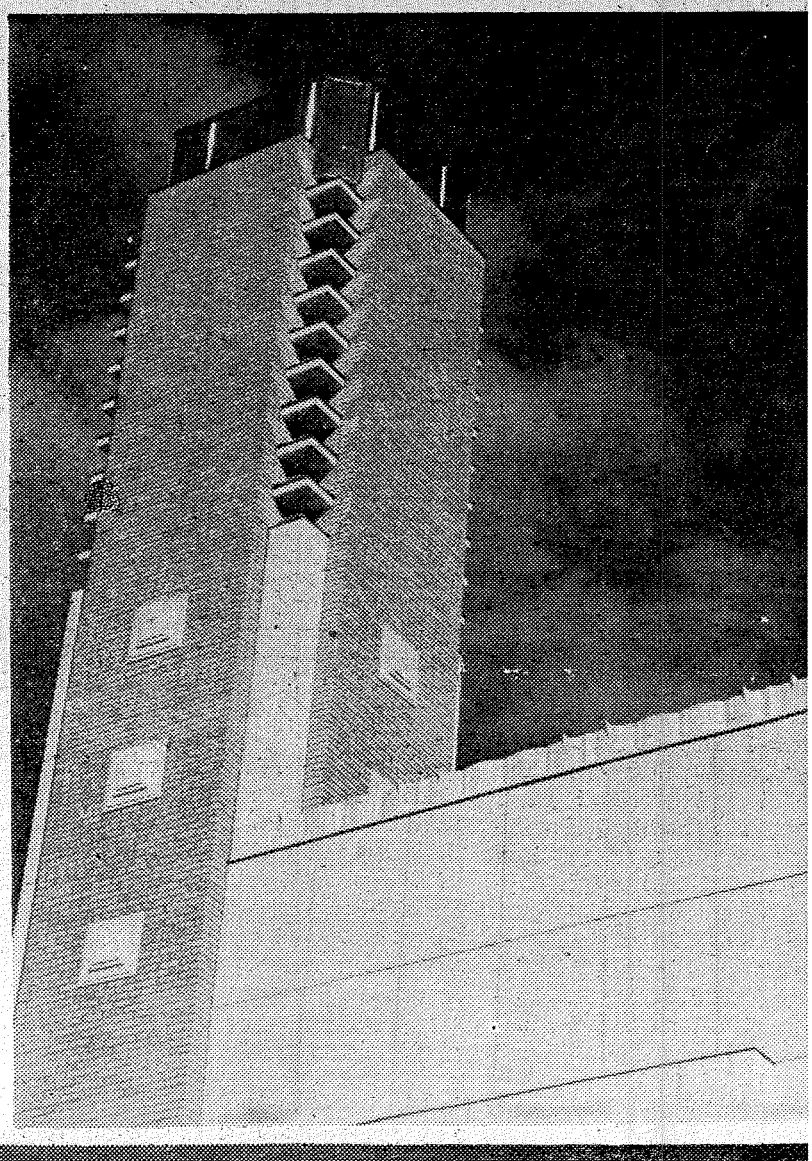
kindness shown to me by my children, and by all of you, my brothers and sisters.

My mind has rested content on the responsibilities of the Priesthood, but this subject touched upon by some of you spoken, so I have decided to say a few words of other things.

HUMAN AND DIVINE MENT

There are many principles and many covenants made with the Lord with His children.

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taken upon them His name to serve Him. There are other agreements or covenants made by men one with another which are to do with civil affairs, and are intended to be honorably complied with. We call these agreements or covenants. The agreements or promises made to mankind by the Lord are in the nature of divine covenants, or divine understandings, and these the Lord has made to His children, through His faithful servants. To the extent that mankind has fulfilled the conditions they have received the blessings and the promises the Lord has made.

I might relate a number of these things. You are familiar with them in the history of the world and the hand-dealings of the Lord with His children. He made promises to Adam that he should have dominion over every living thing. Adam was true to his covenants and he fulfilled his part. And so it has been with Enoch and with Noah. When Noah received the commandment of the Lord he fulfilled that covenant faithfully and received a blessing. So with Moses and other ancient prophets. Coming down through the various dispensations we find that John the Baptist received the authority and followed the instructions of the Lord to preach the Gospel. To him was given authority to perform the ordinance of baptism upon those who manifested repentance; who first had faith in God, and who had grown in the spirit of repentance and the desire to be forgiven of their transgressions or shortcomings. John the Baptist received the keys of that authority and held them in all the centuries from the time of the Savior until the nineteenth century. And the Savior Himself gave to mankind the promise that through faith in God and through repentance they could be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby they should receive the confirmation of the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost.

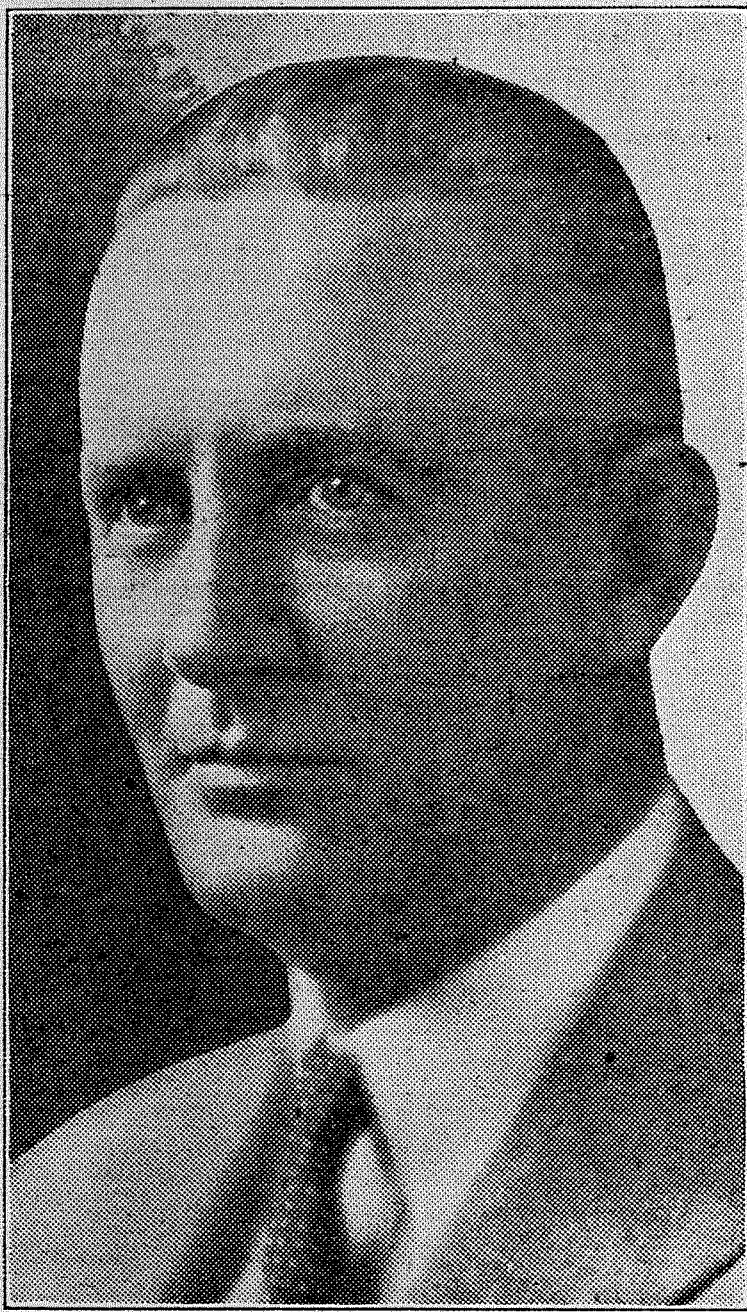
COVENANTS IN THIS DISPENSATION

In this dispensation the Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph many things and gave him instructions, and among other instructions which were given and blessings which he received was the restoration of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper; and in like manner the eternal covenant of marriage,—one of the greatest promises made to men in earlier days which has been restored again in these days.

How sacred and important it is that men and women should qualify—those who have accepted the truths of this Gospel of Jesus Christ, and have received authority of the holy Priesthood by divine restoration—to partake of the spirit of this responsibility and this covenant, and to enter into that promise, and that blessing. We and our children are entitled to receive these blessings if we live for them, and observe them with all our hearts, in love and kindness, in justice and righteousness.

ETERNAL MARRIAGE COVENANT

Now my brethren and sisters, I consider this quite important. I felt I would like to talk briefly about this particular covenant the Lord has



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given. In earlier days, in the early history of mankind, we are told that for this cause should a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they twain should be one flesh. We are intelligent beings. We are eternal beings, and inasmuch as we try to do the will of the Lord and keep His commandments He will bless us and fulfil His promises to us. And so, in this latter day, He has given this covenant through the authority of the holy Priesthood, restored again in these days, whereby His sons and daughters who have observed to do His will and have received the authority and fulfilled the covenants shall be entitled to go forward and be united for time and for eternity, and that that covenant should be binding upon them to the extent that they live for it throughout all time. It is a remarkable thing to think about, to realize what eternity means. It sobers one considerably when one thinks of entering into a covenant of this kind, not only for this life, but for the life to come. It justifies very careful consideration on the part of those who enter into it. The man and the woman should be worthy; they should exemplify in their lives every principle of the Gospel to the very best of their ability, and they should strive to grow in patience and in kindness, in good-will and love towards each other, and especially try to exemplify the finest and highest principles of the Gospel and of the Priesthood they have received.

The Prophet Joseph Smith received many instructions in this last dispensation of the fulness of times, and among them were other commandments and other instructions given of the Lord, one of which was the principle of tithing, which is the Law of the Lord, given to mankind that through their faithful observance of that principle they should grow in righteousness and in truth, and be prospered. It is a principle with a promise, and all Latter-day Saints who

have undertaken to observe that principle are blessed, blessed particularly spiritually, but also prospered temporally, so that they are able to meet their obligations. I testify to the truth of this, because I know the Lord is a loving Father. He has given us great blessings in the observance of this as well as of every other commandment.

With regard to the matter of marriage and divorce, not only in this nation, but in all the nations of the world, I would like to say that scandalous conditions prevail to a large extent. People have neglected eternal marriage; they have done away with the eternal covenant and have substituted therefor civil covenants which endure only until death.

Conditions throughout the nations referred to are far from what they should be. Instead of marriage being recognized as a sacred covenant, as given by the Lord to mankind, it is too often a temporary tie between man and wife, subject to divorce. Such conditions I say are too prevalent in the world. Men and women are too illy situated to sense the seriousness and the vitality, importance and righteousness of the eternal covenant.

CAUSES OF DIVORCE

In going over some of the causes of divorce in this nation I find that there are three main causes: First is cruelty. Generally speaking that is more prevalent in the case of the woman, who feels she is unfairly treated by her husband. Thirty-two per cent of the cases of divorce are for cruelty; twenty-eight per cent are for the cause of desertion; and seven and one-half per cent for adultery, which is a very serious charge. These are some of the causes which bring about divorces and are obtained by women, which would indicate that the women are more badly treated by their husbands than the husbands by the wives.

There are more legal causes for divorce on the part of the wife than

the husband. One-third of the divorces occur after four years or less of marriage. One-third of the divorces are from five to nine years; and one-third of divorces are for over ten years. That indicates something of the conditions with regard to that principle.

The Ladies Home Journal, about a year or two ago, made a survey of the causes of divorce. They found that sixty-nine per cent of the women believe in divorce. Money, they say, is the chief cause of friction. Young people, they find from the conclusions, should be taught more about sex before they are married. Sex instructions, they say, should be given by their parents.

Now, these are some of the conditions which prevail in the world. The Latter-day Saints generally believe wholeheartedly, thoroughly, loyally, truly and eternally, in the principle of eternal marriage—marriage for eternity as well as for time—and yet there are many young people in the Church who are not subscribing to this condition—this eternal covenant. They are missing a great opportunity. Too many hasty marriages are very often the occasion for hasty divorces. But those who enter into the covenant of eternal marriage, in my judgment, are those who carefully consider what they are doing, wisely, prayerfully, and earnestly striving to be led and guided into righteousness, so that they resist hasty marriage and every influence that is not in harmony with the Spirit of the Lord.

As an example of what has been achieved by the Latter-day Saints in overcoming this condition of hasty marriages and divorces, and the tendency to disregard the covenants that are made, I want to call your attention to the records, because the Church has kept a record for years with regard to these statistics which are of concern to us. They have been kept as accurately as they could be obtained.

STATISTICAL COMPARISONS

I should like to refer you to certain results which indicate some of the comparisons of marriage and divorce in the nation of the United States as compared with those of the Latter-day Saints. The last year of which we have records was in 1938. The marriage rate of the United States as a whole was 10.41 per thousand population, as compared with 17.5 per cent per thousand population of the Latter-day Saints, which is 70 per cent greater. The divorce rate was 1.71 per thousand population as against 1.04 for the Latter-day Saints. This was about 40 per cent less. But that result was obtained from the record of civil marriages, and not from those performed in the temples of the Lord. In the Latter-day Saint Temples where such ordinances are performed the result was, for those who entered into marriage for eternity .28 per thousand population, or about 83 per cent less. That indicates something of the difference where people observe this covenant that the Lord has given for our eternal welfare.

It is a matter of great importance to every Latter-day Saint. Worthy parents sense the importance of teaching their children this eternal principle. Stake Presidencies, Bishoprics, and all the officers throughout the Church realize that in teaching this divine principle they are instructing worthy young people in the proper observance of an eternal principle of great promise and blessing to all who righteously observe it.

This is one of the great things to think about, that the covenants they make in this life will endure for eternity, if they live in harmony therewith. The blessings of God will attend those bonds if worthily observed. The conclusions are that those

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Saints Must Hold Covenants Sacred, Says Elder Cannon

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who do these things through their willingness and righteous desires to observe these commandments, grow in virute and regard the sacredness of the covenants, and generally are more faithful and dependable and worthy than those who marry for time only.

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT US

Now I would like to say another word. Some time ago I noticed a newspaper article coming from the Coast with regard to eugenics, and marital conditions among the Christian peoples of this nation. This briefly states that Dr. Paul Popenoe, social expert and director of the Institute of Family Relations, addressing the California division of the American Eugenics Society, referred to an investigation made by Dr. Ellsworth Huntington of Yale University in the following words: "Dr. Ellsworth Huntington at Yale University has calculated the number of great-grandchildren likely to represent the present day leaders in the United States. This is based on a study of persons listed in 'Who's Who,' and therefore represents the fertility only of eminent persons, not of the rank and file. He finds the Mormons have a prospective advantage of more than 400 per cent over their nearest competitors. Jews are almost at the bottom of the list.

"From the sample in 'Who's Who,' 1000 leading adherents of the Mormon faith at the present day will be represented by 10,200 great-grandchildren.

"A thousand Lutherans will have only 1950 great-grandchildren; Baptists 1560; Methodists 1458; Roman Catholics 1310; Congregationalists 1125; Unitarians 1025; Episcopalians 910; Jews 755; and Universalists 500.

"The low birthrate of the modern Jew is almost world-wide."

Now, that is a challenge to mankind as to what the Latter-day Saints, who are faithful in the observance of this eternal covenant, represent in

comparison with mankind generally. Prominent people in other churches, because they have not observed to do these things which make for greater stability, greater love, greater patience, greater consideration, and every other quality, are not able to measure up to the same standards as the Latter-day Saints have achieved.

May the Lord bless us and help every one of us to strive to harmonize our desires with our families to these fine standards that we have referred to that the Lord has established. He is blessing mankind to the extent that we live and keep His commandments, and I testify to you that these principles are true. The Lord is kindly towards His people. May His blessings continually attend us. I testify to you that this is His work, the restoration of the Gospel in these days. These brethren who preside over us are men who are guided by the inspiration and power of the Lord. I pray that we may desire to live in such a way that we may be worthy of the trust vested in us, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

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schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ.

But when the Savior came and ministered among men He established His Church and Kingdom anew, under the higher law. In the former dispensation it was the law of carnal commandments, they not being prepared for that higher law. Moses was complaining to the Lord that he was slow of speech and felt himself incompetent to lead the people, and he asked the Lord that He would give him someone in his stead. The Lord was not pleased altogether with his request, but finally it was granted and He said unto Moses: "Take thy brother Aaron and his sons to act in the office of the priest." Then He conferred upon Aaron a part of the glory that was upon Moses—not a part of the glory which was upon Moses but the glory of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The part that was given to Aaron is known to us as the Aaron Priesthood. That was the beginning of this order of the Priesthood, and yet it is to endure forever. The

Brigham Young University Names Building 'Joseph Smith'

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ed by Fred L. Markham, architect, and is being built under the direction of the General Church Welfare Committee. The building itself is L-shaped, and is constructed of light colored brick and white caststone.

Founded by Brigham Young, the second president of the Church, Brigham Young University is built upon the spiritual foundation laid by Joseph Smith. It was the Prophet who in 1833 organized the school of the prophets at Kirtland. Later in Nau-

voo Joseph Smith directed the organization of other schools for church leaders, believing in the eternal value of knowledge and understanding. These ideals of knowledge-gaining have ever since been at the core of the widespread educational system of the Church.

Being erected in this, the sixth anniversary year of Brigham Young University, the new Joseph Smith Building will widen the spiritual and intellectual influence of the Church, and will increase the power of the university to serve its youth.



Religion
Is Vital Force