

Securing the Children through the Everlasting Covenant

He shall send Elijah the prophet, and he shall reveal the covenants of the fathers in relation to the children, and the covenants of the children in relation to the fathers.

Four destroying angels holding power over the four quarters of the earth until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads, which signifies sealing the blessing upon their heads, meaning the everlasting covenant, thereby making their calling and election sure. When a seal is put upon the father and mother, it secures their posterity, so that they cannot be lost, but will be saved by virtue of the covenant of their father and mother. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 321; see also The Words of Joseph Smith, p. 241.)

Let the father and mother, who are members of this Church and Kingdom, take a righteous course, and strive with all their might never to do a wrong, but to do good all their lives; if they have one child or one hundred children, if they conduct themselves towards them as they should, binding them to the Lord by their faith and prayers, I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power of earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity; they will return again to the fountain from whence they sprang. (Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses, 11:215.)

You parents of the willful and the wayward: Don't give them up. Don't cast them off. They are not utterly lost. The shepherd will find his sheep. They were his before they were yours-long before he entrusted them to your care; and you cannot begin to love them as he loves them.... Our Heavenly Father is far more merciful, infinitely more charitable, than even

the best of his servants, and the Everlasting Gospel is mightier in power to save than our narrow finite minds can comprehend.

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared-and he never taught more comforting doctrine-that the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promises made to them for valiant service in the cause of truth, would save not only themselves but likewise their posterity. Though some of the sheep may wander, the eye of the shepherd is upon them, and sooner or later they will feel the tentacles of Divine Providence reaching out after them and drawing them back to the fold. Either in this life or in the life to come, they will return. They will have to pay their debt to justice; they will suffer for their sins; and may tread a thorny path; but if it leads them at last, like the penitent Prodigal, to a loving and forgiving father's heart and home, the painful experience will not have been in vain. Pray for your careless and disobedient children; hold on to them with your faith. Hope on, trust on, till you see the salvation of God.

Who are these straying sheep-these wayward sons and daughters? They are children of the Covenant, heirs to the promises, and have received, if baptized, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which makes manifest the things of God. Could all that go for naught? (Orson F. Whitney, Conference Report, April 1929, p. 110.)

Those born under the covenant, throughout all eternity, are the children of their parents. Nothing except the unpardonable sin, or sin unto death, can break this tie. If children do not sin as John says [I John 5:16-17], "unto death," the parents may still feel after them and eventually bring them back to them again. (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 2:90.)

It is a great challenge to raise a family in the darkening mists of our moral environment. We emphasize that the greatest work you will do will be within the walls of your home, and that no other success can compensate for failure in the home. The measure of our success as parents, however, will not rest solely on how our children turn out. That judgment would be just only if we could raise our families in a perfectly moral environment, and that now is not possible.

It is not uncommon for responsible parents to lose one of their children, for a time, to influences over which they have no control. They agonize over rebellious sons and daughters. They are puzzled over why they are so helpless when they have tried so hard to do what they should. It is my conviction that those wicked influences one day will be overruled....

We cannot overemphasize the value of temple marriage, the binding ties of the sealing ordinance, and the standards of worthiness required of them. When parents keep the covenants they have made at the altar of the temple, their children will be forever bound to them. (Boyd K. Packer, Conference Report, April 1992, pp. 94-95.)

God has fulfilled his promises to us, and our prospects are grand and glorious. Yes, in the next life we will have our wives, and our sons and daughters. If we do not get them all at once, we will have them some time, for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ. You that are mourning about your children straying away will have your sons and your daughters. If you succeed in passing through these trials and afflictions and receive a resurrection, you will, by the power of the Priesthood, work and labor, as the Son of God has, until you get all your sons and daughters in the path of exaltation and glory. This is just as sure as that the sun rose this morning over yonder mountains. Therefore, mourn not because all your sons and daughters do not follow in the path that you have marked out to them, or give heed to your counsels. Inasmuch as we succeed in securing eternal glory, and

stand as saviors, and as kings and priests to our God, we will save our posterity.... God will have His own way in His own time, and He will accomplish His purposes in the salvation of His sons and daughters.... God bless you, brethren and sisters. Do not be discouraged is the word I wish to pass to you; but remember that righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost is what you and I have the privilege of possessing at all times. (Lorenzo Snow, Address delivered on 6 October 1893; in Collected Discourses, 5 vols., Comp. Brian H. Stuy, Burbank, California, 1987-92, 3:364-65.

May you be blessed, each of you. May there be love and peace and gladness in your homes. I leave my blessing upon you. May there be food on your table, clothing on your backs, shelter over your heads and a sense of security and peace and love among your children, precious children every one of them, even those who may have strayed. I hope you don't lose patience with them; I hope you go on praying for them, and I don't hesitate to promise that if you do so, the Lord will touch their hearts and bring them back to you with love and respect and appreciation. (Gordon B. Hinckley, Fireside address at Crawley, reported in Church News. 2 September 1995, p. 4.)

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