if he will continue faithful to his calling" (HC 1:443).

In 1834 Rigdon assisted in recruiting volunteers for Zion’s Camp and, while Joseph was away on that undertaking, had charge of affairs in Kirtland, including the construction of the temple (see KIRTLAND TEMPLE). He was a leading teacher at the Kirtland school and helped arrange the revelations for publication in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (see SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS). Under the Prophet’s direction, Sidney helped compose and deliver many of the doctrinally rich LECTURES ON FAITH. He often preached long, extravagant biblically based sermons, notably one at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. In the persecution that followed the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society, Rigdon, along with Joseph Smith and other Saints, fled for their lives to Far West, Missouri, in 1838. There Rigdon delivered two famous volatile speeches, the Salt Sermon and the Independence Day oration, both of which stirred up fears and controversy in Missouri and contributed to the EXTERMINATION ORDER and the Battle of Far West (see MISSOURI CONFLICT). With Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Rigdon was taken prisoner and locked up in LIBERTY JAIL, but was released early because of severe apoplectic seizures.

Rigdon took an active part in the founding of Nauvoo and in 1839 accompanied Joseph Smith to Washington, D.C., to present the grievances of the Saints to the federal government. He was elected to the Nauvoo City Council and served also as city attorney, postmaster, and professor of Church history in the embryonic university projected for the city. Despite his many appointments, however, he was nearly silent during this time and often sick. He was accused of being associated with John C. Bennett and other enemies of the Church in their seditious plans to displace Joseph Smith, but this he always denied. He did not endorse the principle of plural marriage, although he never came out in open opposition to it. Joseph Smith eventually lost confidence in Rigdon and in 1843 wished to reject him as a counselor, but because of the intercession of Hyrum Smith, retained him in office.

Early in 1844, when Joseph Smith became a candidate for president of the United States, Rigdon was nominated as his running mate and he established residence in Pittsburgh to carry on the campaign. He was there when news arrived of Joseph Smith’s murder. He hastened to Nauvoo to offer himself as a “guardian of the Church,” promising to act as such until Joseph Smith was resurrected from the dead. His claims were duly considered, but at a memorable meeting in Nauvoo on August 8, 1844, Church members rejected him as guardian (see SUCCESSION IN THE PRESIDENCY). The Twelve Apostles (see QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES) were sustained as the head of the Church. When he undertook to establish a rival leadership, Rigdon was excommunicated in September 1844 and left with a few disciples for Pennsylvania, where they organized a Church of Christ. Acting erratically, he lost most of his followers in less than two years. In 1863, he made another effort, founding the Church of Jesus Christ of the Children of Zion, which continued into the 1880s. From 1847 to his death in 1876, Rigdon resided in Friendship, New York, usually in a state of emotional imbalance and unhappiness.

In 1834, in Mormonism Unveiled, Eber D. Howe attacked the authenticity of the Book of Mormon by adopting Philastus Hurlbut’s argument that Sidney Rigdon purloined the “Manuscript Story” of Solomon Spaulding (see SPAULDING MANUSCRIPT), plagiarized it to compose the Book of Mormon, and gave it to Joseph Smith to publish under his name. During his lifetime Rigdon and members of his family consistently denied any connection with Spaulding, and after the discovery in 1885 of one of Spaulding’s manuscripts, the story was discredited.

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BRUCE A. VAN ORDEN

RIGHTeousNESS

Righteousness comprises a broad group of concepts and traits. As with the biblical Hebrew sedek and the Greek dikaiosune, the English word “righteousness” describes the ideal of religious life, with God-like behavior as the norm. Righteousness is right conduct before God and among
mankind in all respects. The scriptures give the following perspectives:

Righteousness is ultimately synonymous with holiness or godliness. Christ himself is known as “the Righteous” (Moses 7:45, 47) and as “the Son of Righteousness” (3 Ne. 25:2). His “ways are righteousness forever” (2 Ne. 1:19).

The state of righteousness is available to mankind through the redemption of Christ as one is born of God: “Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women . . . must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters” (Mormon 27:25).

The terms “righteous” and “righteousness” also apply to mortals who, though beset with weaknesses and frailties, are seeking to come unto Christ. In this sense, righteousness is not synonymous with perfection. It is a condition in which a person is moving toward the Lord, yearning for godliness, continuously repenting of sins, and striving honestly to know and love God and to follow the principles and ordinances of the gospel. Saints of God are urged to do “the works of righteousness” (D&C 59:23) and to “bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27).

Inherent in the meaning of righteousness is the concept of justification. It is impossible for finite mortals to live in perfect obedience to God’s laws or to atone infinitely for their sins. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Christ’s atonement mercifully reconciles the demands of justice (see justice and mercy), making it possible for repentant mortals to become “right” with God—at one with him.

When Saul of Tarsus saw the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus, he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). From that moment on, he sought to know the will of God and live accordingly. But he also lamented over mortal weaknesses: “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing . . . only in Christ” (JST, Rom. 7:19). “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10). Like all apostles and prophets, however, Paul also taught the glorious message that through the grace of Christ mortals can “put off . . . the old man”—their fallen and sinful selves—and “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22, 24).

The scriptures abound in similar exhortations to flee wickedness, accept the Lord’s grace, and come unto Christ in righteousness. “O wretched man that I am!” exclaimed Nephi. “Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul giveth because of mine iniquities.” But recognizing the Savior as “the rock of [his] righteousness,” Nephi cried: “O Lord, wilt thou redeem my soul? . . . Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin? . . . Wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness” (2 Ne. 4:17–35).

Righteousness begins in the heart—the “broken heart.” It begins when individuals see themselves where they really are: in a fallen state, as “unworthy creatures” who are unable to pull themselves out of their own sins. As they confront the monumental gulf between “the greatness of God, and [their] own nothingness,” their hearts break and they “humble [themselves] even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith” (Mormon 4:11).

Righteous souls then seek to become right with the Lord, by asking sincerely for forgiveness. As the Lord blesses such with his grace, they desire to respond with even greater faithfulness, love, and obedience. Although they may not reach perfect righteousness in mortality, their lives are beyond reproach—“as becometh saints” (Eph. 5:3).

Scriptures provide a wealth of insight into the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that form the basis of a righteous life (e.g., 2 Pet. 1:4–8; D&C 4:5–6). Notably, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7; cf. 3 Ne. 12–14), Jesus revealed the meaning of righteousness—a pattern that he exemplified by his own life:

Those who seek righteousness become humble, poor in spirit. They reverence the Lord, acknowledging that “all things which are good cometh of God” (Moroni 7:12).

They mourn for their sins—and their “godly sorrow worketh repentance” (2 Cor. 7:10). They also compassionately “mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9).

The righteous strive to be meek—kind and long-suffering, generous, sacrificing, patient, filled with love for their enemies, not “puffed up,” and “not easily provoked” (1 Cor. 13:4–5).

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness, they continually seek the Lord through sincere
PRAYER, FASTING, SCRIPTURE STUDY, Sabbath worship, and service in the holy TEMPLES.

They seek to be merciful—to forgive as they would be forgiven, to judge as they would be judged, to love as they would be loved, to serve as they would be served (D&C 38:24–25).

They seek to be pure in heart—thinking no evil, envying not, and rejoicing not in iniquity but in the truth (1 Cor. 13:4–6). They are honest in their covenants with God and in their dealings with their fellowmen. They are chaste and also virtuous.

Seekers of righteousness are peacemakers. They avoid contention, anger, and evil-speaking. They promote goodwill, brotherhood, and sisterhood; they seek to establish God’s will and his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

When persecuted for righteousness’ sake or when reviled or maligned for their allegiance to the Lord, they bear all things and endure all things (1 Cor. 13:7).

Such scriptural descriptions of righteousness are not to be reduced to lists that individuals self-righteously check off. They are constant reminders on the journey toward God, who has promised a Comforter—the HOLY GHOST—to give guidance and direction on that path (John 14:26).

The Lord delights “to honor those who serve [him] in righteousness” (D&C 76:5). At the last day, “the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever” (2 Ne. 9:18).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MARVIN K. GARDNER

ROBISON, LOUISE YATES
Louise Yates Robison (1866–1946) succeeded Clarissa Williams to become the seventh general presiden
t of the RELIEF SOCIETY of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in October 1928 and led that society through the difficult years of the Great Depression (1928–1939). She had previously served as second counselor to President Williams in the general presidency. These two women had become friends while they prepared surgical dressings for the Red Cross during World War I. Louise Robison’s name rarely appears on lists of outstanding LDS women, an obscurity that would have pleased this unassuming, down-to-earth woman of plain appearance and quiet ways; nevertheless, she deserves recognition for several unique contributions to the Church and for the important principle of service she exemplified.

Born May 27, 1866, in the small rural town of Scipio, in south-central Utah, Louise grew up in a log house where she learned pioneer values from her parents, Thomas and Elizabeth Yates. Her early marriage to Joseph L. Robison and subse-