

world will not stop it. He has revealed His will to men. He has established His kingdom upon the earth, and it will grow until it becomes, as Daniel saw, a kingdom that will fill the whole earth.

May the Lord help us to be faithful and true and to have a share in His kingdom forever, is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

ELDER MARRINER W. MERRILL.

An occasion for self-scrutiny—The labor committed to the Saints by the Lord—The Church the most perfect of all organizations—Local officers should be active and discreet—No unworthy person should be recommended to enter the holy Temples—The great work for the dead.

In arising before you, my brethren and sisters, I desire to make you hear the few words I may speak to you this afternoon.

In looking over this congregation, I realize that we all have an object in view in coming to the Conference from distant parts, and as was observed this morning, perhaps a large majority of the congregation here today is from remote parts of the country. We are here to be instructed. We are here to listen to the voice of the Spirit of the Lord. We are here to have a refreshing from the Lord in our assemblings together during the Conference. It is a good time to reflect, it is a good time to look over our history, that is our private history and our private life and the acts thereof. It is a good time to sit in judgment upon ourselves and judge ourselves as to our standing and fellowship with the Lord. The Lord has been very merciful to us, very merciful to the Latter-day Saints. We are constrained to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in His kind dealings with us in this mountain country.

Those who have had a few years experience can see visibly that the elements have been tempered. The earth has been blessed and sanctified for the good of the people, so much so that it produces in abundance to the husbandman; it rewards him for his toil; while but a short time ago it looked as though the country was a barren waste. But we find that the Lord has blessed the earth; has blessed the people; has multiplied them in the good

things of the earth, so much so that all, or seemingly all, have all the bounties of the earth.

The Lord has also given unto us the charge of His work in the earth; given unto us the charge of organizing His people, to teach them the Gospel, and to send the Gospel to the distant parts of the earth, as we have been hearing this afternoon. This charge and labor has been committed to the Latter-day Saints, and we are obligated to the Lord to preach the Gospel in all the world, to every nation and to every people. This is the work that we have in hand; this is the labor that is marked out for us; and we come together from time to time at the conferences of the Church, and we usually hear from the brethren who are posted with regard to the spread of the work in other lands and in our own land, and we are led to exclaim: "Praise the Lord for His goodness and for His mercy and His long-suffering to us as His people."

We have, my brethren and sisters and friends, a beautiful organization, complete in all its details, such as no other people has; such as was not in the wisdom of man to give to the people. I often think about it, think about how we are situated, the circumstances under which we are placed. We are not left to depend upon ourselves, upon our judgment in matters of interest that pertain to ourselves. We have been advised to seek counsel of each other, to seek the counsels of the Lord. In the midst of counsel, it is said, there is safety. I have thought sometimes that we did not appreciate this beautiful system that the Lord has revealed and made known to man under which we may live and have full fellowship with each other. I have thought, my brethren and sisters, that if we were a little more careful, and should give a little more attention to the organization that we have, it would save us a great deal of trouble and also save our brethren trouble.

I have said that I thought it was a good thing, and I say it from experience, for the authorities of a ward, the organizations of the Priesthood in a ward, to have their meetings frequently. The Bishop in a ward should call his

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brethren together, especially his counselors, and talk over the interests of the people there. Counsel together, call in others that have interest in the work of the Lord, and advise together about all matters relating to the interests and welfare of the people that live there. Old wards need this, and new wards also need it—to know the condition of all of the people and to specially know the condition of the young people, in this ward organization; and if it be found that there are matters of interest and problems that they cannot solve, then they may apply to the president of the Stake, and take him into their confidence and apply to him for the counsels of the Lord; and if the problem is such that he can not solve it, then there is another source that he may apply to and get the mind and will of the Lord on all matters relating to the interests, relating to the welfare, relating to the establishing of the people in the faith of the Gospel. We want to encourage faith, as was said this morning; we want to instill that faith into our children and into the young people. I believe faith is increasing in the land, however, but we find it will be through our efforts, through our labors that faith will be increased in the minds of the people.

I have had, in connection with others, some experience with people, young people especially, and middle-aged people, too, sometimes, who procure endorsements or recommends from the Bishop of their ward where they live, and I have been led to question whether the Bishop knew much about the person that he recommended, if he was fully familiar with his life. Now this should not be. We ought to be familiar with the affairs that are under our care and under our jurisdiction, and this can be brought about by holding as I said before, these councils. Why, we have an example of this in the Church, a striking example. The Presidency of the Church hold their council and call in the brethren with them and counsel upon given matters. They hold it every week, and counsel and talk over matters pertaining to the Church, the whole Church. Of course they are not supposed to come down

to the details of a Stake or to the details of a ward; they are looking after the general interests and welfare of the whole Church here and abroad in all the world. Such counsels in a ward capacity and in a Stake capacity would have good results; they certainly would have no bad results. If the Bishop of a ward were to call the Priesthood together they could talk over matters of interest to the ward, of labors that there are to accomplish, and take into consideration the propriety of making their influence felt in all the associations of the organization—in every association in the ward. These organizations and associations in the ward make up the grand total of the Church; they make up the grand total in the greater organization; and they have to be watched over and cared for and looked after with a diligent eye.

Now we are singularly situated; there are a great many things that need to be watched over, and that need to be looked after in order that we may retain the faith, retain our fellowship, retain our favor with the Lord. Somebody has to do it. The Lord has made these appointments, has given us these organizations, and when the Elders go out into the different Stakes of Zion, new wards are to be organized, new Stakes are to be organized, the matter is canvassed and looked over carefully, and good men are sought for, diligent men are sought for, in order that they may have a proper organization, in order that the people may have proper care and proper attention when the ward or the Stake is thus organized.

We might bring this down in detail even in a ward. When we have teachers, to select, when we have Priests to select, when we have brethren to select for various positions and labors, we want to canvas the matter, look it over, and counsel together about these things that the greatest good may be effected by our labors, and that the greatest good may be accomplished through our labors in our various callings in the ministry whereunto we are appointed.

It is desirable that no unworthy people go into the sacred places—go into

the houses of the Lord. They would not want to go there themselves if they understood matters properly. It is not desirable to have unworthy people go. And who is to know? It is not fair to suppose that the President of the Stake in endorsing these people personally knows them all.

President Taylor once said, in speaking on this same subject, and giving counsel and advice, that if they were unacquainted with the doctrines of the Church and had not had experience, they should at least have experience in a ward somewhere, before they sought to go to the Temple. He said they ought to be at least a year in some ward under some bishopric, before they sought to go to the house of the Lord. We find it very desirable to have good people present themselves at the doors of the house of the Lord, who has entrusted us with this work, pertaining to our kindred that are passed away; has entrusted us with the work to have our families and our progenitors labored for and organized under the holy Priesthood; the children sealed to the parents from one generation to another, and to see that the work for the dead, as well as for the living, goes forward, as has been indicated by the erecting of temples to the name of the Most High.

I remember in my early experience in the Church that I never contemplated that there would be more than one temple. I thought that would be all that would be needed for the work of the dead; but as it has rolled on, as we gain experience, we find that the work of the Lord is expanding, and we are also expanding in our views with regard to the work of the Lord. We are more enlightened now than we were before the temples were built. We have greater desires in many respects to hunt up and look after our kindred, to look after the genealogies of our forefathers who have died without a knowledge of the truth. Now this is one of the things in connection with a great many others that we have to do. We must not lose sight of it in our day nor in our lifetime. We must

not have it said when we go to the other side of the veil, when we meet our kindred there and they perhaps ask us what we have done for them—we do not want to have to say we have done nothing for them. It would be much more desirable to say we have done all we could. We have hunted up and down the earth; we have traveled abroad to find records and genealogies of our kindred; we have done all that we could. How many of us can say this today, up to date? We have had four temples going now for some time and the people have been invited to attend to these matters, and how many could say up to date that they have done all they could for their kindred that have passed away? I presume that there are many that can say it and there are a great many that can't say it. It is advisable, therefore, my brethren and sisters, to not lose sight of this important labor, as well as educating and training our sons and our young people to become ministers of the Gospel to be faithful representatives, honorable representatives of our people and of our Church. I repeat that in the midst of these labors we should not lose sight of the importance of attending to these matters in the temples of the Lord, because there is a purpose and a design in these things, and those that enter into the spirit of it can comprehend it and understand it. When they come and make a commencement they want to stay longer, they want to stay a year, some of them, and continue their labors because they enter into the spirit of it. They see the importance of it more and more as they progress in the work.

There are a great many things for our consideration as live, active Latter-day Saints; a great many duties and responsibilities that are upon us, but there is nothing required at our hands but that we may accomplish through our diligence and our faithfulness in observing and keeping the commandments of the Lord.

I would urge upon you, my brethren, the Bishops and presidents of Stakes, who may be here, to try the experiment if you have not tried it, and have your counsel meetings occasionally, once a week or oftener; counsel together with

your brethren, and whatever is done let it be done with common consent from the head of the ward, from the head of the Stake, from the head of the Church, let it all be done by common consent; then everything will be harmonious. We want to work in harmony, we want no friction, we do not want discord, we do not want contention among the Saints; we want peace and the good spirit of the Lord in our homes and in our families. We desire that above all other things. We want that union, that strength that will make us vallant in the work of the Lord, and the way to get it is to seek for it, look after it, and attend to this beautiful organization that the Lord has given us, and work together, counsel together in all matters pertaining to us spiritually, and pertaining to us temporarily. We used to do this, I think, more than we do now. Those of us who went up into Cache valley a good many years ago to open up that country and develop it, had to do this, because we were surrounded by the enemy, the red men, who were on our path. They killed some of our brethren and we were driven together. We had to talk and counsel together, and work unitedly. If we went to the canyon for anything we had to go in force. One man did not start off alone, it was not safe, but we went in force, we worked unitedly in that district of country. And thus it was under the wise counsel of President Young, who would come to us and talk to us like a father, told us what to do to save ourselves. Naturally we wanted to scatter all over the country, but there would not have been a town anywhere. He counseled with us and advised us what to do, and we can see and have seen the good in so doing. It is a good thing to do now, to counsel together and be agreed upon matters pertaining to our interests, and in doing this we learn to love one another. We learn to respect each other. We won't want to pass over the Bishop of our ward and go somewhere else; we won't want to ignore the President of the Stake and go to someone else; nor we won't want to pass over the Apostles when they come around, but we will have the spirit of

humility, that we may take counsel together for our good. I am sure it will result in good to the wards and to the Stakes without doubt. We may know, through this means, everybody in our ward. The Bishop may become acquainted with every young man. If the president of the Elders' quorum, doesn't know him personally, why his brother knows him, his counselors know him, the president of the Elders' quorum knows him, some of the Priesthood there know him, some of the High Council may be there that may know him; what a nice thing it would be for the Bishop to be acquainted with all these affairs. Talk these matters over together, and not hurt anybody, but work for the salvation and unification of the people in the district where we live. We may find, in counseling together, that there are some families that are careless, that are indifferent. We may find also that the teachers are a little indifferent, and that they do not visit everybody, and they only make a visit occasionally. You may find in counseling together many things you might correct. You may find that some family is not living the lives of Latter-day Saints, not paying their tithing unto the Lord, and not doing their duty in helping to support the poor, and so on. They can be kindly looked after, cared for, and watched over, and talked over in a gentle way, that they may be brought back into the fold and into full fellowship with the Church of Christ.

Perhaps I am lengthening out too long in my remarks. But I know, my brethren and sisters, that this work is true; I know it is from the Lord, and I bear record of this. I have had many testimonies from my youth up; testimony upon testimony with regard to the truth of this work, and I bear you this testimony, that this work is true, that the eye of the Lord is upon us, and He has organized His Church according to His mind and will, and according to the dictations of His spirit, and the brethren who stand at our head are inspired men of God. We have reason many times to bear record of this, because we have seen it made manifest so plainly to us. God bless you. Amen.