

life itself. And understanding life, we become acquainted with God, our eternal Father, and his great creation. Aside from family prayer, I think we should advocate more strongly the necessity of communicating with God when we are alone, and convey to him with a perfect confidence the things that are in our hearts, making him feel and know our gratitude for the blessings of life and the opportunities that have come to us in knowing more about these precious truths. It is during moments of this kind, the solemn hours of life, if you please, where we are permitted to gather up all life and place it in the unit of spiritual power, and with that power grow strong in faith and have constantly the light of God's Spirit with us. And so, my brethren and sisters, let us pray alone to God, take him into our confidence, ask him for his protecting care, to give us light and power, to enable us to understand more perfectly the great truths that have been revealed for the perpetuation of his glorious work.

I desire to bear to you my humble testimony that I know that God lives. Indeed, I know as I know that I breathe the breath of life, that he does answer prayers, and the blessings in signs are following those who have faith in him. The prayer of faith is healing the sick, and they stand as great manifestations and as witnesses to the divinity of this great work. I have been near death's door more than once, and I sometimes marvel how it is that he has preserved my life. I am thankful beyond measure for the privilege that has come to me to bear this testimony in the presence of this great throng of people, and with the help of my heavenly Father I desire, with all the power I have, to continue to bear witness of God's mercy to me and the great testimony I have of the divinity of this great and mighty work. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it has been restored in this day and time. God bless every one of us, that we may appreciate to the fullest, what we have in this glorious gospel of our Lord and Master, that we might be found worthy of all his blessings. I ask this in his name. Amen.

## ELDER JOHN WELLS

*Of the Presiding Bishopric*

It is a pleasure and a privilege to attend the conference gatherings of the Latter-day Saints, and at every gathering of this character we receive inspiration and encouragement. We get a deeper sympathy with the world and all its problems. It is a great privilege to be a Latter-day Saint. One of the old prophets said that in the latter days there would be a great distinction. Men and women would say they were "born in Zion," and happy are those to whom this blessing has come.

Yesterday, when I heard the statement made by President Grant, showing the progress of this Church, the receipts and disbursements of

its funds, converts to the gospel at home and abroad, the number of children baptized into the Church, etc., I thought to myself "What hath God wrought!" Then my thoughts went back to the first prayer of the Prophet Joseph Smith, when he went into a wooded enclosure to inquire of the Lord as to which Church he should join, his family having already become affiliated with some of the sects whose members were proselyting in that neighborhood. I have walked up the little roadway leading from the farm-house, and have tried to visualize and picture the feelings of that boy as he went into that small enclosure to pray. And from that momentous event I again said to myself: "What hath God wrought!"

The time had come when our Father and his Son Jesus Christ should again manifest themselves unto mankind, and the boy prophet became a new witness for God and was able to testify that God lives, that he saw him, that he heard his voice and that he was directed by his Son as to what his future conduct should be.

When we think of the tremendous work the boy prophet did in the few short years of his life, we must conclude that it was no easy task. He reestablished the gospel of Jesus Christ. By the power and gift of God he translated and brought forth the Book of Mormon. Under the direction of the Lord a gathering place was established around Kirtland, and a few devoted men and women erected their house to the Lord—a house which is still holy to the Latter-day Saints.

I wonder if many of us have tried to visualize what it meant to those few people in the way of sacrifice to erect that house and how the Lord blessed them for their efforts. However, there was no rest in Kirtland. Persecution became so severe that the prophet and the leading brethren moved to the land of Zion, the Lord having revealed that this should be the gathering place of the Latter-day Saints. There they met the inevitable conflict between the North and the South and suffered the consequence, being compelled to move from Missouri to Nauvoo, where they settled and developed a community, building a magnificent temple. Here the prophet received more doctrine and principles of government from the Lord, and the city of Nauvoo grew so rapidly that it bade fair to rival Chicago.

But the great conflict between the force of evil and the work of the Lord again developed. The Latter-day Saints were burdened, murdered and compelled to leave their wonderful city and its marvelous temple, and journey yet further westward across the wastes of Iowa, Nebraska and Wyoming.

I have often thought of what a weeding-out process this great movement proved to be, for if there were any weak-kneed people, if there were any whose hearts were not filled with a testimony, they could not help but be thinned from the ranks of the Latter-day Saints. Many followed former leaders of the Church and strayed away into various groups. These have gone into oblivion; however, many held on to the gospel with what we might call a "bull-dog grip," coming

to these valleys under the masterful leadership of the Prophet Brigham Young. Here they occupied these valleys of the mountains and established a new and higher civilization, based upon the gospel of Jesus Christ. The world has seen many civilizations rise and fall, most of which have been founded upon the lust for power, wealth and dominion over others. We have noticed this in the old civilization of Europe. Such was the condition in other parts of the world, whereas the Constitution of our great country was established by men who were inspired of the Lord, and this land of America was redeemed by the shedding of blood; and upon this continent, this land of Zion, there is being established a better and a higher type of civilization, based upon human liberty and freedom.

In these valleys the Latter-day Saints are building a higher type of civilization, under the guidance and direction of the prophets of old, and in obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The civilization of the Latter-day Saints is based upon the statement made by our Lord and Master to the man who inquired what he should do to inherit eternal life. Our Master said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Among the Latter-day Saints there is a spirit of mutual helpfulness, sympathy, brotherly love and kindness, a desire to cooperate in all temporal movements. There is also the spirit of homemaking and the love of home and its surroundings; and the people have a desire to own the home in which they live or the land from which they derive their living.

I don't believe in the idea that we should be completely and entirely satisfied with the progress we are making. Neither do I believe in being dissatisfied. All ambitious persons and those who are trying for higher ideals should be unsatisfied with their present condition, for this alone can bring about efforts to reach greater heights.

In the 7th chapter of the gospel of Matthew, there is recorded some wonderful statements made by Jesus Christ. He warned his disciples to

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

We Latter-day Saints are willing to accept this standard. With all the weaknesses and frailties of human nature, both inherited and acquired, we are willing to be judged by this standard.

A few years ago an eminent man from the East called at the Presiding Bishop's office. He was interested in the great charity movement that has been developed in the United States. He said to me: "I hear you have a very low death rate." I answered that this was so. He asked if he might see the details of the death report for the last ten years and it was handed to him. He then asked permission to examine it alone, and upon being told that he might do so, he studied the large sheets giving numerous details of the causes of deaths. After a time he said: "I am through. I am astounded at the lack of causes of deaths from sex diseases. I notice very few, if any, deaths from alcoholism;" and he then commented on a number of other causes of death, and finally said: "Deaths are the results of the general habits and conduct of life." He drew his conclusions from figures.

While there is room for improvement among our people, we have reason to be proud of the results that are being brought about through obedience to the gospel. The birth rate among the Latter-day Saints is 7.3 to the thousand. Then, the child born to the average Latter-day Saint home is welcome. This is indicated by the fact that out of each thousand children in the United States, 76 die before they have reached one year of age. Among the Latter-day Saints, out of each thousand children born, only 41 die before they become one year of age.

My brethren and sisters, let us go home not satisfied, but determined to do better than we have in the past to make our home life sweet, to gather our families around us and keep them fond of home. Let us develop a love of our fellow men, sympathy with their misfortunes. Let us teach our children to observe the law of tithing, to observe the Lord's day and keep it holy and reserve that day for worship and rest, as the Lord desires. These are fundamental duties of the Latter-day Saints.

May his blessings be with us in every honest endeavor to maintain the high standard of Latter-day Saints is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The choir sang the anthem: "Ye shall dwell in the land."

## ELDER JOHN H. TAYLOR

*President of the Northern States Mission*

I am very grateful, my brethren and sisters, to have the opportunity of being with you in the conference meetings.

I am sure that we all recognize the fact that the teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith have modified the religious views of the world. It is interesting to meet people and see how they have changed their views in regard to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sometimes our missionaries, as they go from door to door and find so little encouragement go back to their rooms with a thought that perhaps they are