

ELDER J. GOLDEN KIMBALL

Of the First Council of Seventy

I rejoice with you in all that has transpired and been said during this conference. I have never believed, since I have been active in the Church, that God gives to man fear. I know that God gives to you power and love and a sound mind when you are under the influence of the holy Spirit and have the spirit of your office and calling. I appreciate the fact, perhaps better than some men do, that it is very difficult to be understood. God's declarations to the children of men (it is self-evident from what has been said during this conference) are misunderstood by many of his children, and they misinterpret them. The Savior, the Son of the living God, came upon this earth and went through all his sufferings and did the things he saw his Father do, but he was not understood. He was misinterpreted, and some of his children did it conscientiously, no doubt, and some very wickedly, Joseph Smith, a prophet of God, a man whom I have honored all my life—I was taught it by my father in my childhood—see how he was misinterpreted! In the Southern states, when I was presiding over elders in that mission, I told them, "You want to make friends, but when under the influence of the Spirit of God, you testify that Joseph Smith is a prophet, it will bring you all the trouble you can endure." I found that true, but among God's children we found good people who would be willing to accept the gospel. All great men have been misunderstood. So I conclude that to be misunderstood is greatness; that is, if you speak the truth.

I want to tell you in a few words that there is nothing in the world that the wicked dislike so much as the truth, and if you will tell the truth under the influence of the holy Spirit you will have to have faith in God and realize that you are in his service. I have a paper here—I did not write it for this conference as I never like to read, but sometimes I have to do it in order to make myself clear—it is the impressions of J. G. Kimball. You ought to know who I am by this time:

"It is not difficult, in fact it seems to me natural—it is just as natural as water running down hill, to accept God's own declaration of truth as it has been revealed and to uphold and sustain the prophets as mouthpieces of God. It is not difficult for me, I do not know anything else. I have never been taught anything else. The very foundation of the Church of Jesus Christ is faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ, and one of its chief corner stones is authority. The perfection of righteousness is implicit faith in God, in his revelations, in his disciples, and in their teachings. The very essence of goodness is not to doubt, as doubt is sometimes the very opposite of faith. It could not be otherwise, as it is easy and natural for Latter-day Saints to accept God's declaration, as given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, as the word of God, and to sustain all

those who are mouthpieces for God. We make the further claim that the elder of the Latter-day Saint Church is also called of God, and his commission is from above and his position is eternal."

I set elders apart, assisting the brethren—almost every week. I never hesitate when placing my hands upon those young men, to say, "You have been called by divine authority through the presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." I try to impress them that they were not called by the bishop, or by the presidency of the stake, they were recommended and their names were sent in properly endorsed; but they are all called by revelation, just as I was in 1883, among a body of missionaries. I was the only one in that whole number of men who was not ordained a Seventy, as my first mission in the south was filled as an elder, I enjoyed the same spirit and the same blessings that the Seventies enjoyed because I was called by the same authority, and the spirit of my appointment went with me.

An elder is sent out not to represent his personal views or the views of the people, but to proclaim the truth as it is revealed. He is not chosen as a spokesman for the people, not just as a messenger, but the bearer of a message to the people.

We reach the final conclusion that this is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the gospel of Jesus Christ restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The religion that we advocate is Christ's religion, not "Mormon's religion"; that is, it is the word of God. We do not teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

That is my testimony. I do not think I have to get myself all exercised and all wrought up and tear my lungs all to pieces to impress you, after forty years of labor in the ministry. Notwithstanding all my mistakes and blunders I have had this testimony from the beginning, and the beginning was in the Brigham Young Academy, under the teaching and instruction of Brother Karl G. Maeser. President Grant told us last evening of a spot of ground he will never forget. And it impressed me with a feeling which never can be blotted out—my experience as a pioneer in Bear Lake when I went into that log meeting house and heard Brother Maeser talk, and he was talking about the gospel, I shall never forget, though I have never remembered what he said, but I know how I felt, and my brother Elias and I, and our mother with us, made as great a sacrifice as I have ever made to go on a mission, when we moved from Bear Lake down through Evanston and through the deep snow by team, and not by railroad or auto. It took us three or four days to reach Provo. We went to school. I attended two years and my brother Elias went three. I am telling you this because I have felt, as I have not felt for a long time, the inspiration through the prophets of God when they concluded to send out a thousand missionaries; and it seems that some of our people did not understand President Grant, they got the idea that they were sending them all to South America. It is a mighty good

thing that they did not do so because it would have created persecution. If you ever rush a thousand missionaries into a place I will tell you legions of devils will turn loose and drive them out. You have got to go in by degrees. I know that. That is what happened to Heber C. Kimball and those great missionaries in England, when they fell as if dead, and for one hour they laid there and had a vision and heard the trampling of feet of legions of devils or evil spirits. The devil always kicks up a row. I remember in President Roberts' day, when they began to persecute us and drive us out of the South—I remember when Brother Roberts was coming home with an emigration and I was left in the office. Letters came from all over the mission in 1884, one of the terrible years of the South, "What shall we do?" I wrote to President Taylor and asked him what I should do? He only wrote a few lines, "When they persecute you in one place, flee ye into another." I wrote that hundreds of times, when the mob was after the elders, "Flee to another place, and just as soon as you can, come back." But if they drive you out and tell you never to come back, if you do go back they will kill you just as they did the brethren in Cane Creek. They told them not to go back, but they needed a resting place, and they killed them. I know, I was in the mission.

Brethren, what I want to talk to you about a few minutes is my own experience. I know more about myself than any man living in the flesh. I am getting pretty well acquainted with myself. I am surprised sometimes at the things I do and say, more than you are. I remember after I went to school I came home and went to Bear Lake. I came down here on a little business which I happened to have with William C. Spence, of the President's office; he said, "Brother Kimball, President Taylor sent you a letter calling you on a mission, and he is disturbed because you have not answered." I said, "How could I answer it, when I never got it?" "Well, you'd better go in and see him." I went into the President's office, the first time since I was a young boy with my father, and I met that great and wonderful prophet. I said, "President Taylor, I never received your letter." "Well, Brother Kimball" (he was so kind, he thought so much of Heber C. Kimball and that made him think a lot of me), "you cannot go now." I had been praying for it, I had been asking the Lord why I could not go. My mother had been praying that God would send me out. I said, "President Taylor, give me one hour and I will give you my answer." I went out on the street, and the first man I met was Bishop Thomas Jenkins of the Seventh ward, who had been to Bear Lake and I knew him. I said, "Brother Jenkins, will you sign my note for a hundred dollars?" "You bet, I will." So we went down to the Deseret National Bank and he endorsed my note, and I came back to the office with one hundred dollars in my pocket, and I said, "President Taylor, I am ready." I went on that mission. No greater blessing has ever come into my life.

That is the first time I ever saw Elder B. H. Roberts. No greater favor ever comes to a man than to be called on a mission. I met a nephew last night, one of Heber C. Kimball's grandchildren. He said, "Uncle Golden, when I was a young fellow"—he is now a High Councilor in one of the stakes—"you came to me and said, 'Are you ready for a mission?' I answered you as I should not have done, but the greatest mistake I have ever made in my life was that I did not respond at that time and have you present my name."

There is a little story in connection with this that I want to impress you with.

I remember when we arrived at Chattanooga, Brother Roberts sent me and a son of an apostle into Virginia. When our visit in Chattanooga was over, and we had paid our expenses I had ten dollars. When we got to the end of the railroad I said to my companion: "Let's ride in a carriage, it will be the last time we will ever see one." I did not know that I was a prophet, but it came true. When we reached our field of labor we lay around there for about three weeks. I said to my companion, who was from the Brigham Young Academy, "Let us go up into the woods and see if we can sing," (I couldn't carry a tune, I never tried to sing in the Academy), "and let us go up and learn to pray." We did not have any audience, only those great big trees. And I said "Let us learn to preach." I would advise young elders to do that before they start out and not practice so much on the people; we practiced on the trees. So I prepared myself and occupied the time. My companion was prepared, and we sang. We made an awful mess of it, but after a while—and that is another testimony—God brought the tunes to us, and we could sing the songs that we had listened to in the Academy. Then I preached. God was kind to us and he loosed our tongues and we found we were able to express the things we had studied. I remember my companion was dismissing. We had our eyes shut and our hands up. I thought he would never get through; and when he said, Amen, we looked back, and there were four men standing behind us with guns on their shoulders. I said to my companion, "That is another lesson, from this time on in the South; I shall pray with one eye open."

So, I will conclude my remarks by saying that I filled that mission. Brother Roberts and Brother John Morgan are my witnesses that I completed it, although I was broken down with malaria. But I came home with an honorable release; it was in 1884 that I came home. I worked in the Mutuels, started in Bear Lake with the elders. I wound up as superintendent of the Mutuels. I traveled from Evanston to Soda Springs in snow and cold weather, and suffered. By the way, when I went on my first mission I told President Taylor, "If you will let my brother Elias stay at home, I can fill my mission." That put the idea in his head, and Elias was called right after I was, and we both went, we left our cattle and our horses and everything we had.

Then came my second mission. There was no noise about it, word just came, "You are called to preside over the Southern States mission, and Brother Spry will take you down and turn the mission over to you." He did, and he did it mighty hurriedly, too, and left me to preside. During my first year I came home with an emigration, and while I was trying to comfort my wife who was sick, Brother Roberts wired me to come down and be ordained as one of the First Council of Seventy. They never asked me, they never consulted with me, they just sent for me, and I have been in this Council thirty-three years. I filled my mission. One day Brother Reynolds and I came out of the Council meeting, and when we got to the gate, he said, "Brother Kimball, you are released, and your brother Elias is appointed." The two of us spent ten years in the south and when we came back we didn't have a thing but our families and our lives.

The Lord has been good to me. No man in the Church has been favored more or treated more kindly than I have. I have got all that I have deserved and a good deal more. My brethren and sisters, that is my testimony. I have been among the Seventies for the past year. My health was not very good last year. I have never allowed a Sabbath day to pass me, if I could make an appointment, that I have not been among the Seventies. I am acquainted with the Seventies. If you want Seventies to go on missions I can speak for them. If you call them they will go, but if you want them to stay home they will do so, and so will I. I will go on a mission if called. I am not just talking either, God knows it, and I know it. I would go if I were brought back in a casket, and I do not know but I would be tickled to death to have it come that way.

I have never been more greatly impressed than by Colonel Bryan, a man of the world who died fighting for God and testifying as far as his knowledge went. What more can any man do? That is the way I feel. I shall stay in this work. I uphold it. Inasmuch as you need a thousand missionaries for six months' missions there will be no trouble in getting them. I have asked hundreds of Seventies and had them stand on their feet and asked, "How many of you have filled missions?" (They would stand up). "How many of you have not filled missions?" "How many of you have never been asked to go on missions?" And I am astonished at the hundreds and hundreds of the Seventies who have never been asked to go. They may have been considered by the presidents of stakes and bishops. But if you want a man to go on a mission, call him.

I pray the Lord to bless you, to bless the authorities of the Church, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.