

I know this work is true. I pray God always to help me to sustain the work, to uphold the hands of the priesthood, and to overlook my weaknesses and help me to finish and complete my mission here upon the earth. I have no fear of the hereafter. I am not afraid of God. I know God is a God of love, a Father who will look after you, if you will trust him. I sustain this work, and I sustain the brethren. I sustain all those who labor for God and his cause. All of which I humbly pray for, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

Of the First Council of Seventy

When President Grant announced the changes in the missionary field in his opening remarks yesterday. I whispered to Brother McMurrin who sat next to me: "Surely he overlooked the change in the European mission in the appointment of Elder John A. Widtsoe to succeed President James E. Talmage in the presidency of that mission." We were pleased, however, when the announcement was subsequently made, and I have been thinking: "How abundantly has the Lord endowed Brother Widtsoe to become the successor to that other defender of the faith (who is now honorably released to return home) with those qualifications and endowments that will enable him to accomplish a good work in that great mission, which, however, is a mission comprising many missions located in various parts of the eastern hemisphere, where a great many different foreign languages are spoken; and in this particular Brother Widtsoe is especially fitted and equipped, it seems to me, for the great work unto which the Lord has called him.

Not very many years ago I had the pleasure of attending the Canadian quarterly conferences in company with Elder Widtsoe. Previous to our conferences Dr. Widtsoe had been visiting the Northwest delivering addresses on agriculture, irrigation, reclamation, dry-farming and kindred subjects, and there were people including many not of our faith and living in outlying districts who desired to hear him, for his fame as an agriculturist had gone before him. Accordingly a meeting was arranged and some of the visitors at the Alberta conference, including myself, were also in attendance. He gave a most excellent talk. I have never listened to one where I received so much information regarding the principles of agriculture. He stated that there were five essentials to successful farming: first, soil. There must be soil. Second, there must be air. Third, there must be seed. Fourth, there must be water, and fifth, there must be sunshine. He went on explaining how it was necessary to break up the soil, to pulverize it in order that the air might get in, that it might be thoroughly aerated, fairly filled with atmosphere. He went on to show how it was necessary that seed should be planted in the soil, thus prepared. He continued to show that it was necessary that water should be applied if that seed is to grow and that the sun must shine upon it before it can yield a harvest. He made it much more complete than I would be able to do here; but

what surprised me most was that, at the close of his remarks, he said: "Now, before we dismiss this meeting I would like to hear from my companion, Mr. Wells, who is a practical farmer."

Well, I thought that was rather a strange introduction to give to me, as I had never held a plow in my hand in all my life. I had no horny hands of toil and my muscles were soft and had not become hardened to that kind of work, but nevertheless I responded to the invitation, and as I did so it came to me that perhaps after all Dr. Widtsoe was right, and that I was indeed a practical farmer, but the soil that I have been endeavoring to cultivate is the soil of the human heart. It is sometimes an unwieldy soil, and full of hardness. It needs to be broken up and harrowed; it needs to be pulverized and softened before it is prepared to receive the seed. The seed that I have been planting has been the seed of faith. We do not call it farming; we call it sowing the seeds of faith—faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, that men shall believe that he is indeed the Son of God, who was chosen before the foundations of this earth were laid to create it and redeem it. For, let it be remembered, there had been a great council in Heaven, when the great plan of life and salvation had been proclaimed among the children of God before this world was, "When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" and, in order to carry out the Lord's plan, the question arose: "Whom shall I send?" There was one like unto the Son of man who arose and said: "Here am I, send me. Thy will be done and the glory be thine forever." This was the first-born, even Jehovah, who became the Only Begotten of the Father, and was known as Jesus Christ in the flesh. I have been teaching men to have faith in him who came into this world, created and peopled it with the children of God, that they might have life in this world, this natural world where we should have the experience of an earth-life; to have faith in him who not only created the world, but who should redeem the world; who should redeem mankind from the fall which was to ensue, thus giving us the opportunity to prove whether we, with a knowledge of good and evil and in the exercise of our free agency, would do all things whatsoever the Lord our God should command; to have faith in him by whose almighty power mankind should be redeemed from death and the grave.

But there was another who arose in that primeval council who rejected that plan and led many away from God through his deception and insidious sophistries, and he said: "Here am I, send me. I will be thy son, and I will see that not one soul shall be lost and surely I will do it; therefore give me thine honor." And God said, I will send the first; and satan, for he it was who spake thus, became angry and was cast out of heaven and with him fell one-third of the hosts of heaven. The one all important thing, then, is to teach men to have faith in Him whom God sent, and reject the other whom God cast out of heaven. The first was a plan of freedom wherein men should exercise their own volition; the other was one of compulsion and eventual subjection to the power of evil. To teach this fundamental truth has been the good seed which

I have always endeavored to plant in the hearts of men, in this oftimes unwieldy, sour and hardened, but withal most prolific and fertile soil.

But other seeds were constanly being planted in this receptive soil—evil seeds. That war begun in heaven is continued here on earth. The evil hand that led so many away from God in that primeval conflict, with all his evil followers, continues here to lead mankind astray by planting evil seeds, the seeds of hate, of greed, of avarice and lust, and these grow, too, along with the good seed. These are the weeds, the thistles and the thorns, hence the good farmer will pull them out or cut them down, lest they overrun the good and hinder its growth. This we call repentance from sin or casting the devils out.

Then comes the need for water, another essential in successful farming. So we preach not only faith and repentance but also baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, for the extinction of all the evil effects of sin, that the hearts and souls of men may be washed clean in the blood of the Lamb of God, by being buried with him by baptism into his death, and coming forth from that watery grave in the likeness of his glorious resurrection.

Now let in the sunshine of God's Holy Spirit. How can the garden grow in darkness? How can the trees blossom and produce their luscious fruit? Or how can the fields grow and ripen into golden harvests, unless the *sun* shall shine upon them? How can we know or understand the things of God without the light of his Holy Spirit? And yet, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Hence; there is need to obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost which in the gospel of our Lord is bestowed upon repentant and baptized believers by the laying on of hands.

These are the essentials in this practical farming which has engaged so many years of my life. There appear to be two kinds of farming and both are practical. How greatly and grandly do they resemble each other! I think it was Goethe, the great German poet, who said: "*Alles vergaengliche is nur ein Gleichniss,*"—all things temporal are but symbols of things eternal.

And now, Brother Widtsoe, so well informed in the science of agriculture—the reclamation of the waste lands of the desert—has also had a still greater experience as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ in the cultivation of human hearts, in planting the seeds of faith, not only by word of mouth, but also by his convincing pen in this still wider field of human welfare, by applying, in their spiritual form these same essentials of practical and successful farming.

May the Lord bless him in his ministry abroad. And, as he shall travel in the various missions of Europe, may he be able to speak forth the words of eternal life to every nation, kindred, tongue and people wheresoever he shall come, even to the convincing of the honest in heart and in a language which they can understand. This is my humble prayer and sincere wish for Brother Widtsoe, and I ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.