

ELDER SYLVESTER Q. CANNON

Associate to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

It is a source of joy to me, my brethren and sisters, to be with you in this conference, to participate in the exercises, and to partake of the spirit of the meetings we have held. I endorse the remarks that have been made and the testimonies and instructions that have been given.

I sense the sacredness of the important calling that has come to me in the past six months. You may realize that this call was as unexpected to me as it was to you. It was farthest from my thoughts. A large part of my life has been spent, so far as church work has been concerned, in the practical and temporal affairs of the Church; and it means quite a change to devote myself primarily to spiritual and Gospel advancement, and, more directly, to the preaching of the Gospel.

MISSIONARY EXPERIENCES

I have spent five years of my life in the preaching of the Gospel abroad, and I may say to you that they were among the happiest years of my life. I was sent on my first mission some thirty-nine years ago, and about one and one-half years after my arrival there, when I was presiding over the Netherlands-Belgium Mission, I had the pleasure and privilege of meeting with President Francis M. Lyman of the European Mission, and many of the missionaries of the mission over which I was then called to preside. At that time President Lyman invited us to pledge ourselves anew to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, not only while we were on our mission, but throughout our lives, that we would undertake to be true to the Gospel, and active in its service throughout our lives. That was a very remarkable pledge, in many ways, and I took it seriously. I made the pledge and I have endeavored to live in accordance with that covenant and to give of my best efforts from that time to the present. In the thirty-nine years that have passed from that time to this I have had responsibilities placed upon me in the stake presidency for twenty-one years and in the Presiding Bishopric for thirteen years. During that entire time I have been happy in giving my best efforts to advance the interests of this Church, and to seek to promote the welfare of all the people of the Church.

TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH

I sustain my brethren of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, the First Council of Seventy, the Presiding Bishopric, all the stake presidencies, ward bishoprics, mission presidents, and all the members of the Church. I have great love for all of you. I realize that this work is the greatest cause in the world. It is the truth and it will endure and will accomplish its purpose, which is to bring about righteousness and truth in the earth, and to bring to pass the preparation for the reign of peace which is to come.

I have great joy in these things. My testimony has increased from

day to day and from year to year. I have seen many evidences of the blessings of the Lord upon me and upon the people of this Church. I have had many answers to prayer. I have seen manifestations of the power of the Priesthood. I know that this work is divine. I testify to you that the Gospel has been restored through the revelation of our Eternal Father and his beloved Son Jesus Christ to Joseph Smith, followed by other divine revelations, and the restoration of the Holy Priesthood to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. I know that this divine authority to direct all the work of the Church, to perform all the ordinances of the Gospel, and to lead the Church in righteousness, has been given to men upon the earth, and that the men who have been called to preside over this Church from the beginning have been and are the Lord's anointed.

I have had the pleasure of knowing five of the seven men who have presided over the Church. As a very young boy, I knew President Taylor. I had the pleasure of knowing him and seeing him in my father's home, of having him bless me because I was not very strong and vigorous. I have known every one of them to be inspired, to be filled with the power and ability that comes through the ordination of men to leadership in this Church. I sustain President Grant with all my heart, as I do all my brethren. I desire to be one with them in advancing every interest of this work. My heart is in it and I desire to be active and faithful and to qualify in largest measure for the responsibility that has come to me.

EUROPEAN VISIT TO EXAMINE INTO BUILDING PROBLEMS

As you realize, I have just returned, with Sister Cannon, after a trip of some nine weeks abroad in visiting the ten missions in Europe. I was called, under instructions of the First Presidency, to examine into the condition of the buildings in the various missions, and building problems, and so I spent the time largely in doing that work. There are some difficult but important building problems that need prompt solution. I found that there are some thirty-three branch buildings owned by the Church in Europe. They are in varying conditions as to repair and suitability. None of them, I may say, has been designed or built in accordance with the standardized procedure we have adopted in the past few years in the work of the Presiding Bishopric's office in the wards and stakes. Half of the branch buildings in Europe are in Great Britain. In addition to the branch buildings in Europe there are four Church-owned buildings occupied as mission offices and homes in various missions.

UNIFORM BUILDING POLICY NEEDED

There are requests being made for additional buildings. In order to save unnecessary expense, and to secure the best results at minimum cost, there needs to be a uniform, definite, supervised policy established for the erection of buildings in the mission fields, which may be somewhat different from that in the wards and stakes, and yet will require great

care and planning and proper budgeting in order that such construction as may be undertaken will provide the most effective results and be within the available funds of the Church for that purpose.

EFFICIENT EXPENDITURES OF TITHES

I realize, as you do, that a large proportion of the funds of the Church comes from the tithes. The faithful membership of the Church, who are paying their tithing, realize that not only are they observing the commandment of the Lord in this respect, and enjoying the blessings that come through this commandment, which is a commandment with a promise, but they realize that in all the divisions and departments of the Church, the expenditures made from the tithes are being accurately, economically and efficiently handled. They appreciate the fact that well designed, appropriate buildings are being erected in the various wards at minimum costs and a maximum of economy, consistent with the conditions required. Naturally, in order to care for all the demands made upon the Church, in every department, in its steady growth, there must be the greatest efficiency and economy possible to promote the greatest welfare. There should always be an attitude and feeling on the part of those who preside in the various wards and stakes and missions that they are willing to accept the advice, the suggestions and plans of those who have the responsibility therefor, in carrying out the work that needs to be done in all of these various divisions, and to avoid any extravagant or unnecessary costs.

I am sure that there can be considerable work done in the various missions in Europe, in addition to the missions in the United States and other parts of the world, that will enable us through proper planning and supervision, to obtain better results than we have had heretofore, and to maintain all buildings in such a way that they will be a credit and a pride to the Church.

MISSIONARIES, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS FAITHFUL

We had the pleasure of meeting with the mission presidents and with some of the missionaries in all the various missions. I attended some twenty public meetings while abroad, and also had the opportunity of counseling with the mission presidents and some of the missionaries in some of the missions. I wish to say to you that they are happy, and, with very few exceptions, are in perfect health, full of faith and courage and going forth to perform their duties and responsibilities. In my missionary experience I have found that, in general, the missionaries who spend the least money and accept the simple hospitality of the people, accomplish the most work, develop the greatest faith and obtain the greatest results. This is in harmony with the word of the Lord: "Behold, I send you out to prove the world, and the laborer is worthy of his hire. . . And he who feeds you, or clothes you, or gives you money, shall in nowise lose his reward." (D. & C. 84:79, 90.)

I have been delighted also to find among the membership of the

Church—the local brethren who bear the Priesthood—an appreciation of their responsibility, a willingness to labor in humility, faith and devotion, and to become established in the duties, labors and responsibilities of the Priesthood. That is true in many of the branches in the various missions.

In Berlin I had the pleasure of visiting three branch meetings one Sunday evening, and of partaking of the fine spirit. There were men there who were called as a district presidency—local men who have become established in the Church—and they are an upstanding, fine quality of men.

In Belgium, about which President Ursenbach has spoken, where my first missionary labors were begun thirty-nine years ago in 1899, to-day they have three pleasant, suitable meeting houses; and they have a district presidency and the presidency of each branch composed of local men, all of whom are measuring up in a fine way. I was greatly delighted to see the caliber and quality of these men who are doing the work. They are fulfilling the responsibility splendidly.

GENERAL CONDITIONS IN EUROPE

The conditions, of course, as you realize, in Europe are variable. In some of the nations there is perfect peace. The people are going about their business contentedly. Generally speaking, the agricultural, industrial and economic conditions are rather favorable. While, of course, there is considerable unemployment in most of the nations, still they are providing ways and means for those who are unemployed. Relief is generally handled entirely through Government sources.

Holland and Denmark are exporting extensively food and dairy products. Czechoslovakia has a variety of manufactures. The Czechs are called the "Yankees of Europe." Belgium has probably the greatest variety and extent of manufactures of any country in Europe. Switzerland has made remarkable hydro-electrical developments.

In Sweden, particularly, I may say that conditions look very satisfactory and prosperous, from an economic standpoint. The country of Sweden is being largely developed hydro-electrically from the extensive facilities available there. All of the railroads are operated electrically. They have a great resource in the fine quality of iron that is to be found in that country. Stainless steel is being manufactured in large quantities. They have developed, with very great success, both producer and consumer cooperatives, which are beneficial to the people generally. Their managed currency system has helped to stabilize prices.

In Germany the people are actively engaged, under the direction of the German government, in various activities. Of course, a great deal of work is done in the service camps. All are occupied and busy.

TWO MAJOR INFLUENCES AT WORK

In visiting Europe and reflecting upon conditions there and elsewhere, I am reminded of the fact that there are two major influences at

work in the world of men. They are the influences of Good and Evil. They are diametrically opposite in character. The one is characterized in the highest degree by righteousness, justice, unselfishness, kindness, love and peace. The other is evidenced by greed, selfishness, hatred, strife and lust of power. The first is personified by the Lord Jesus Christ, the second by the adversary of mankind. Under present conditions among mankind, the latter influence is more in evidence. As the Lord declared by revelation: "Satan is abroad in the land, and he goeth forth deceiving the nations." (D. & C. 52:14.) When Jesus was finishing his earthly ministry, he said: "Hereafter I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30.) Those two influences are manifest in the conditions which prevail in government, in industry, in business and in religion.

TEMPTATIONS OF THE SAVIOR

You remember the temptations which the Savior encountered at the hands of the adversary, after He had been baptized and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, after he had fasted in the wilderness.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

And when the tempter came to him, he said: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

And then the last, and I think probably the greatest temptation, that which comes to mankind in large measure today and throughout the ages, as it came to the Savior:

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them:

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

TEMPTATIONS OF MANKIND

It appears to me that these same temptations are being placed before mankind today; and to many they are too alluring to resist. Essentially, they are the temptations of the appetities, of pride and vanity, and of the lust of power. When men and women give themselves over to be

influenced by their carnal desires, they can scarcely overcome the influence of evil. Yet, every human being has within himself the power to walk in righteousness, if he will only give heed to the upright influence within him. All mankind have within them a spark of divinity. We are told that "the spirit of Christ giveth light to every man that cometh into the world." Again, "by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God." It is important to be able to discern between right and wrong, and between good and evil. The observance of Gospel principles enables the Latter-day Saints to enjoy the Spirit of truth, which serves as a guide to righteousness.

HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS

Now, it has been remarked here that one-third of the hosts of heaven rebelled against the Lord and stood with the adversary, in the pre-existent state; but the two-thirds remaining were either valiant in the cause of truth, in those pre-existent times, or they were neutral. At least they did not rebel, and so, all are heirs to this earthly existence. Every one of us inherits something of the characteristics of our earthly parents. At the same time we inherit something of the divine attributes. We have within us the opportunity to choose which we will do, which qualities we will develop—the positive, splendid, fine qualities of righteousness, justice, love and kindness, or the negative, degrading qualities of greed and lust of power. We should learn to be able to discern and select these finer qualities. As Latter-day Saints, it is our opportunity to exemplify these high principles, through obedience to the Gospel. So we should overcome greed or selfishness or the spirit of domination, and thus set the example to our fellowmen. Then we can put forth every endeavor to promote these same principles throughout the world, and thereby strive for peace and unity among men and nations.

WHICH INFLUENCE WILL PREVAIL

Which of these influences will triumph in the earth? Shall it be the spirit of justice and persuasion, or the spirit of domination and force? Well, for the present the latter, but eventually, the former will prevail. We are told, in a revelation given by the Lord in 1831: "The hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion. . . . And also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst." So that war is constantly in the air. While there are millions of people in Europe and in the United States and elsewhere throughout the world, who have in their hearts a desire for peace, and who exemplify, in some measure, at least, the qualities of righteousness and justice, yet there are those who dominate and bring about dictatorships such as we see in Europe today in some of the nations.

While the German people, as a whole, are a very fine people, and love peace, yet there are influences there which are stirring them up to

promote war and strife. The people of Czechoslovakia, so far as I have been able to observe them, are people who love peace; but they are full of courage and they have a certain pride of race which in their situation leads them on to be prepared to defend themselves, if necessary, even in case of war.

OUR PRIVILEGE AS LATTER-DAY SAINTS

What is our privilege as Latter-day Saints? First, to exemplify in our lives righteousness, justice, love and consideration for all men. Then to practice that instruction which the Savior gave to his Apostles: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Further, to encourage our fellowmen everywhere to live in conformity with these principles, and thereby promote peace, good will and prosperity. Finally, to seek constantly the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, which leads to perfect unity.

Now, as men bearing the Holy Priesthood, it is our responsibility to harmonize our lives and actions with these instructions, referred to by President Grant yesterday morning, that "no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, by love unfeigned; by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile. . . . Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven."

May the Lord help us to walk humbly, to deal justly, and to love mercy, I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

ELDER PRESTON NIBLEY

President of the Northwestern States Mission

Brother Merrill remarked that each one who comes up here to speak has something thought out and prepared. I have been thinking pretty hard for two days, and I will have to confess that when I stand here before you, whatever I have thought of leaves me.

In the last April conference that the Prophet Joseph Smith ever attended, April, 1844, he made this significant remark:

"I have received instructions from the Lord that from henceforth, wherever the elders of Israel shall build up branches and churches unto the Lord in the states, there shall be a stake of Zion."

These words have been my inspiration since I have been in the mission field. When I went out to succeed Brother Joseph Quinney, Jr., twenty months ago, I found a great many branches in the Northwestern States, and I found that about ninety per cent of the people out there had moved into that section from Utah and Idaho, and that they were prepared to govern themselves.