

ELDER RUFUS K. HARDY

Of the First Council of the Seventy

From the last Conference that I attended, to this Conference, seems but just a moment or two, because most of the time since our last Conference I have been away from home, and in my journey again to the South Seas I learned one or two things that brought to me joy and happiness and a great comfort.

A FOURTH OF JULY INCIDENT

I would like to tell you about one incident. I think you deserve to hear it. Wallowing through the trough of the sea, and then again on the top of the mountains of water, on an old freight boat that is manned by a very splendid captain, one who, I had been told when I left Tahiti, wouldn't speak a pleasant word to us for he was a very austere man, this very pleasant incident occurred. It so happened that we were near the equator and it was the Fourth of July, so on this day each of us, of course, had his own thoughts concerning home and his own beloved land of freedom. Going down to dinner in the dining room, we found stretched across a great mirror placed over a false fireplace, a beautiful American flag. Each of us saluted it, for it was the first we had seen for months, and this austere captain, who by now had become my friend and companion, said:

"Before you sit down, all of you ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say a word or two to you. This is your day. This is your birthday, and so I desire to extend to you my congratulations."

Now, this was a British captain.

"I don't know," said he, "what to do, and I am rather put about and embarrassed. The only thing I know to do is to toast someone. Everything we do in national celebration, we toast the King, so I would like to say to you that I desire greatly, irrespective of your politics, to propose a toast to the President of your great land. I would like to toast President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, not because of him, but because of the great country he represents."

So we all, officers of this vessel and passengers, drank to this toast. Mr. Del Lord, who has charge of the filming of all of the pictures that are released from the Columbia Studios in Hollywood, was aboard with his wife and son, and he said: "Go on, Hardy; answer him." It was a beautiful gesture that Captain Norton had extended to America. I tried earnestly to appropriately thank him.

Arriving home, I took occasion to write my gratitude to Senator King—and by the way, to Brother King—in Washington, to thank him for the many courteous, kindly things which he had done for me. He had gone to the French Ambassador in Washington and asked him for a letter for me to take down to Tahiti, that I might meet the Governor of those Islands, and that Ambassador said: "No. I will cable Paris and have Paris cable Tahiti," and that was done. So I thanked Senator King for this kind office, and the many other things which he had done

for me, and told him of the event which happened on this boat on July 4th.

Back to me came a letter, and in that letter were these words: "Your communication intrigues me, and I have taken it to many of the senators. They are all pleased, and all fired with a desire not to be outdone by any other nation. I have taken it to Cordell Hull, and he is delighted. We have told the officials of the Merchant Marine of America that when occasion presents itself they shall extend like courtesies, not only to Great Britain, but to every other nation, where they know a day is set apart in which that nation may celebrate."

So really and truly, "Hands across the sea," and the clasp that is spoken of, has come just a little closer, and I am thankful indeed that this has come about through one of our own people, the Honorable Senator William H. King.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PREACHING THE TRUTH

Now, being conscious of the great purpose which you have demonstrated in coming to this historic building to again worship God, as did your forefathers,—and they now are gone—I feel that this position is unquestionably one of solemnity and one of great responsibility. Generation after generation has passed on since 1847, when our people first gathered in these valleys, and yet in ever-increasing numbers there has come up, each semi-annual Conference, a greater and a bigger horde of people, to worship God as they desire and are taught by the revealed word of God.

This that I quote is from St. John:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)

We make the same startling declaration. We don't mince words, but we declare that God lives, that he has spoken, that again his Gospel is restored, and the father, who carried the message yesterday, has handed the burden to his son, and he goes on in his way in delivering this great message of truth and salvation.

SUCCESS OF EARLY MISSIONARIES

There is one thing, however, that I have observed. I believe that if we would adhere a little closer to the declarations of this restored Gospel, and the words of God which have come to us, not forgetting the first principles of this Gospel, we would go very much faster and farther. I am thinking of those glorious old missionaries of this Church, Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, President Wilford Woodruff, Heber C. Kimball. Those men walked forward in humility, with nothing in their hands to convince and convert the people but a copy of that book

which miraculously came into the hands of Joseph Smith by an immortal being, and declared its truths fearlessly and boldly, and lo, when their listeners heard the message and read this book, they became, many of them, as ardent in their desire to spread the Gospel as were the ones who brought the message to them.

SUCCESSFUL STAKE MISSIONARY WORK

Now, the Presidency of this Church and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, have in years past, recent years, handed to the First Council of the Seventy a great responsibility, the supervision of the missionary work of the stakes. That work is established in every stake of Zion, and the results which have come from that inspired beginning have been marvelous indeed. Do you know that there were baptized, during the first eight months of this year, 1568 souls into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, who were not in the fold before; and that in one stake and one ward—and that stake not more than a hundred and fifty miles from here—there came in a monthly missionary report to our Council that forty baptisms had occurred? We could hardly believe it, so we wrote back for confirmation. Back to us came the letter: "Yes, forty have been baptized, largely due to the wonderful work of our women missionaries here in this stake, and the help of some splendid bishops."

I want to say that we are grateful, more than I am able to tell you, for the work that the bishops have been doing for us.

Let me read to you what the Apostle Peter said, because I believe we can apply it to ourselves:

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

I think we are doing that as best we can, but I believe we can do better if we try just a little harder.

WORDS OF ADVICE FROM THE LORD

Let me read you just one or two verses from the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 88, and I am finished:

Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege.

See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; cease to find fault one with another; cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated.

And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace.

God bless this work and you, my brethren and sisters, I pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.