

ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

*Of the First Council of the Seventy
and President of the New England Mission*

My brethren and sisters, I have traveled a long way to attend this Conference. Boston is about the farthest point East on the Atlantic seaboard, and is a beautiful and historic city, but there is no joy like the joy of coming home.

ASSOCIATE MISSION PRESIDENTS PRAISED

I have the honor of being associated with some fifteen other Mission Presidents, who are fine and capable men. They are fearless and have taken hold of this work with all the power of fine manhood, of truth, and everything that is noble. They sit here before us in this congregation, unassuming, God-fearing men, and I want them to know that I am happy to be counted with them. It is an honor, for they have done me so much good, and my Mission as well, for naturally we call the Missions "Our Missions."

EARLY MISSIONARY WORK IN NEW ENGLAND

The New England Mission is in a sense the oldest Mission of the Church. President Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball were missionaries a hundred years ago and from that time to the present some of the greatest men of the Church have carried the Gospel to that part of the United States. Vermont, as you know, is the "cradle" of Mormonism, for in that State was born the Prophet Joseph Smith and President Brigham Young, and many others who have been the stalwart bearers of truth in this Church.

We have a band of very fine and noble men and women, your boys and girls. It is very hard on them the first winter in New England, as the climate is very severe, but they face their difficulties bravely. Everything is so new, and we have only a few Saints comparatively. We have about 1,180 in the New England States and in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in Canada. This entire section of America is very beautiful.

MISSIONARIES MAKING HEADWAY

In New England the people as never before are respecting this latter-day work. Our missionaries are allowed to speak and lecture upon Mormonism in many of the large churches. One of our brethren recently gave one of the most intelligent talks on the history of the restored Gospel that I have ever heard, and he did it fearlessly and with courage, and with beautiful English. He had studied his work and he bore testimony of the restoration of the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are working together, and the nobility of our work is equal to the demands of the people there. You must remember New England has many colleges and universities. There are twenty-seven universities and colleges in and around Boston alone; and therefore we come in contact

with the students and faculties. Down in New Haven we have a group of fine boys in Yale University. In Cambridge, we have eighty Utah students in Harvard College, and they are all doing fine work. Up at Dartmouth and down at Brown University in Providence, and over in Smith College, not to mention other colleges, we have Utah students. We try to keep track of them and this work alone is very important.

We teach the missionaries to study certain historical facts of New England. For example, December 20th of last year they spoke on the mission of the Pilgrim fathers, and read to hundreds of people the thirteenth chapter of 1 Nephi, which foretells the settlement of the shores of New England. We have held Priesthood meetings at Plymouth Rock and at the little town of Whitingham, Vermont, the birthplace of President Brigham Young. Many meetings have been held at South Royalton, where the Joseph Smith Memorial farm is located. President Heber C. Kimball was born at Sheldon, Vermont, and President Wilford Woodruff's birthplace was at Avon, Connecticut. Apostle Willard Richards was of New England lineage, as were Apostles Orson Hyde, Ezra T. Benson, Erastus Snow, and Franklin D. Richards. Many other historical characters of the Church were born in New England. The Elders have joy in visiting the old homes of our leaders, and some day the people will take pride that so many of the founders of the Latter-day work came out of New England and were of Puritan descent.

ITEMS OF EARLY HISTORY IN NEW ENGLAND

New England has the oldest churches in the United States, and hundreds of church buildings. We respect these church buildings, for whenever anyone with a clean purpose builds a church in honor of God, good is being done. The Elders of our Mission have cooperated with me in making a study of the history of the religions of New England with a view of being able to converse better on the subject of the Gospel. A number of books have moulded the thought of the people since the rise and growth of Puritanism, and as a result of our study, the Elders are able to draw comparisons in an intelligent manner. To illustrate just what I mean: In the year 1536, John Calvin published a noted work on religion that moulded the thought of Protestantism possibly more than any other work. It was his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. It was a clear exposition of Protestant doctrine and a forceful refutation of the opposing Catholic views. It also laid down the laws of Church government, later known by the name of Presbyterianism. An eminent modern Catholic scholar has called Calvin's book "the finest work of Reformation literature." In it Calvin gave his program for reform in religion, and when the book was translated into English, it moulded the thought of the Puritans of England. Copies of it were brought to America, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was used in many of the colleges where religion was taught. We missionaries have made careful study of the religious principles laid down by Calvin.

Another work issued from the press about the same time as the *Institutes* was the work of Ignatius Loyola entitled *Spiritual Exercises*,

which was a manual of religious drill designed to lead the sinner to concentrate all his faculties upon the task of realizing his sinfulness and God's abounding grace.

One hundred years ago, there was a great uncertainty about the Christian faith, and of later years that uncertainty has grown so that to-day thousands, yes, I might say millions of the youth of America have little or no church allegiance, and are without foundation of religious home life or knowledge of the Bible. Even among those who call themselves Christian, there is an uncertainty as to what to believe. The deep discontent with the achievements of Christianity itself in dealing with social, economic, and international relations is weakening the sense of assurance of Christianity's value to the world.

JOSEPH SMITH'S OWN STORY AND ARTICLES OF FAITH OF GREAT WORTH

There are two documents that our missionaries are coming to know, documents that the world will have to reckon with. They are *Joseph Smith's Own Story* and the *Articles of Faith*. Had the Prophet Joseph Smith never issued anything else but his own story and the Articles of Faith, his work would in time have revolutionized religious thought. They refute the tragic mistake of the Calvin and Loyola documents, for they announce to the world the large fundamentals on which the restored Gospel is based. In the Prophet's writings you never find any pretense or bombast, but everything he writes is simple and direct. The reader is always impressed with his truthfulness and honesty. We are using these two documents with fine success in our mission.

We are feeling the effects of the war in New England. Factories have been re-opened and thousands of men and women have found work. People differ on the policies of the administration at Washington. One thing I hope and that is that our country may keep out of this war and free from the terrible hatreds of the world. May we place our hands in His hand and go into the future with larger hopes and greater faith in His holy laws, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

The Choir sang "Come Unto Christ"—N. Lorenzo Mitchell.

BISHOP LeGRAND RICHARDS

Presiding Bishop of the Church

Considerable has been said at this Conference concerning the value of a testimony of the Gospel. Some years ago I had a discussion with an associate of mine in the Church, an educator, who said he believed the day had come when we would have to appeal to the young people of the Church through reason rather than through that which we customarily call a testimony of the Gospel. I answered that if we had reached that stage, then I feared for the future of the Church, as all that we had accomplished as a people had been because of the testimonies that the Lord had given unto us.