

Saturday, October 3

First Day

I am glad to be identified with this group of men here tonight. I thank you, my brethren, for the joy that has come into my life as a result of this companionship. I have been privileged above many other men in the world. I am thankful for it. I am not inclined to boast about it, but I do feel grateful to my Heavenly Father that all my life I have had the privilege of associating with the best boys and girls and the best men and women that I could find in the world, and it has not been necessary for me to seek my pleasure and my company and my education among those who are evil-minded. Tonight,

with gratitude in my heart, and with thanksgiving I associate with these men, the General Authorities of the Church, these men who preside over the stakes and wards of Zion—these men who are seeking to build the quorums of the Priesthood as they ought to be—thankful that I belong to this group and pray that as the days go on and as the opportunities are presented that I may do my part. That I may be worthy of this fellowship and this membership, not only here but throughout the ages of eternity, and that we may all be so blessed I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

IT was a hundred years ago that Stephen A. Douglas came to Nauvoo to visit the Prophet Joseph. He had previously been employed as counsel in some litigation in which the Prophet was involved, and was a very warm friend of his. As he surveyed that lovely city, Nauvoo (in 1843 it was the largest city in Illinois, with a population upwards of twenty thousand people) he saw the orderliness, the magnetic power that the Prophet seemed to have with his people, and he is said to have remarked that if he could command the leadership that the Prophet Joseph had, he would lead a group of people to the Northwest and give up his political career. He was then in the House of Representatives in Washington.

There is one thing, however, that Douglas seems to have overlooked. We sang today "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief." The Prophet Joseph was in prison. Everything that he possessed, apparently, was in the hands of his enemies, but there was something that was still within his own soul—there was something that he still possessed that Stephen A. Douglas had not recognized. He could, in the face of his enemy, in the face of persecution conscious of martyrdom—he could still sing with Brother Taylor, at least in his heart, that lovely hymn, a hymn of charity, a hymn of kindness, a hymn of

forgiveness, even of his enemy. That was something that Stephen A. Douglas didn't detect. Stephen A. Douglas didn't detect, either, that same attitude of spirit that the Prophet Joseph had. When in Liberty Jail there came to him through the revelation of Almighty God that marvelous prayer in which he instructed the Priesthood, an injunction that stands for you and me today:

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, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (D. & C. 121:41-44)

Then in instruction to his people—and mind you he was in prison, in a dingy, dirty, prison, restrained as far as the physical part of him was concerned; everything taken away from him, in the bigness of his soul he said:

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.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever. (D. & C. 121:45-46)

It was this, my brethren, it was this attribute that was manifest in Carthage Jail that Stephen A. Douglas never felt. He saw only, but he did not feel. That is one reason why today it is recognized by people around us that there is a bigness in the coming together, as we do here on these occasions of the general conference, but those who do not know as we know do not sense the bigness of this thing. They do not know what it

is that impels men to come hundreds of miles in answer to a call such as this. They do not know what it is that impels men in our outlying stakes to give their all, almost, for the benefit of their brethren, to help build up their social life, their physical life, and, above all, their spiritual life. These are the things that men do not realize when they come in our midst. These are the things that men did not realize when they came to Nauvoo, in the days of the Prophet Joseph. They saw merely the external, not the internal; but there is a power here that you and I feel, and we are grateful to God tonight for it, for the testimony that God has given us of the divinity of this work, and I rejoice with you in it with all my heart, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I would give almost anything I have if I could fight away the timidity that comes with this responsibility. However, with that feeling, there is with me the consciousness of the thousands of sympathetic attitudes towards us who have this responsibility in general conference. If we did not enjoy the music and the fine things that are said here on these occasions, if we didn't have those at all, it would be worth while just to grasp the hands of you men and get the white of your eyes and the spirit that you carry with you. I want to take this occasion to express my appreciation of the filial feeling that you extend to us.

As we go about visiting you in the different stakes, so far as some of us are concerned, we wonder just how much good we do. But there is one thing we are sure about, and I have expressed it more than once; we are sure of the fine spirit that we get from you, and it is not your fault if we don't take it elsewhere. I am one of those who believe that inspiration goes up the ladder as well as down the ladder. I mean that we expect and get inspiration and revelation from our file leaders. It must be that way—that's the inspiration going

down the ladder. I am not unmindful, however, of the inspiration that goes up the ladder as you in your communities, your wards, and your stakes develop things and perfect them; then we who visit you get these ideas and partake of those influences. We are like the bee who goes from flower to flower sipping honey as we find it. Unless we are altogether dead on our feet, we cannot help scattering the pollen—the precious gems we find in your particular stakes. Each one of us is made the better by virtue of the attainments and spirit of the rest of us.

I remember seeing, as a boy, a packing company's advertisement that was on the billboards of every city in the United States. I can see that picture now as vividly as if it were yesterday. It was a herd of steers being crowded into one can of beef extract. In other words, in every can were vitamins of the herd. Rather a rough comparison, I agree, but in a sense isn't each one of us a soul of the virtues of all of us?

I am thoroughly convinced that one of the great virtues of the Church is that of visiting about and taking the honey, if you please, from flower to flower. Our visiting with one another keeps the