

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren: I pray for the good spirit spoken about by Elder Romney. It is a great privilege and a blessing, and certainly a great inspiration, to be in attendance at a session of the Conference. This opportunity is becoming increasingly more precious.

I rejoice in the fact that the messages of this Conference have gone out to the nation, and have reached the homes and the firesides of the families in this Intermountain region. The reports given and the remarks made indicate that the Church moves on. It is solid, sound, and progressive. It will continue to move on, and go forward to meet the demands and the requirements made upon it.

The coming forth of Mormonism is the greatest event of modern times, and it will be so regarded in the future by the unprejudiced writers of history. It has survived every storm of opposition; it has never gone backwards; it has never retreated from its high aims and purposes.

We have been urged by previous speakers to adhere to fundamentals. Such admonition, it seems to me, is timely in a day of war and upheaval. It is so easy for a people to side-step fundamentals. This is especially true in times of stress when they become impatient and lose their powers of endurance. What could be more fundamental than the doctrine of the resurrection, discussed with such force and eloquence this morning? What could be more fundamental than the Ten Commandments mentioned by President George Albert Smith, and by Elder Spencer W. Kimball this afternoon? The violation of these commandments has brought destruction and sorrow, not only to men, but nations. What could be more practical and fundamental than the Sermon on the Mount, quoted in part by President McKay the other evening?

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matt. 7:1, 2.)

It is a sound doctrine, brethren; it is fair and just.

What could be more basic to human welfare than Joseph Smith's declaration, in the Articles of Faith, that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression. It places upon men the responsibility for their soul's salvation. Such a teaching is productive of good works, and conducive to right living. The responsibility resting upon the Church has never been greater. It rests heavily upon the ministry of the Church. It calls for a great service, an unswerving devotion, and a supreme faith.

The wayward and the careless must be warned and admonished in the spirit of kindness and brotherly love. Some of them are our neighbors and friends. Our love for them demands that they be brought back into the fold of Christ. Their faith must be revived, nourished and strengthened.

Without that simple, trusting and abiding faith, characteristic of a

true Saint, no one can know God or comprehend the Gospel; and there is no substitute for the Gospel. All the theories, sophistries, and plans of men devised to the contrary have failed, and will continue to fail.

PRESENT CONDITIONS DEPLORED

As a result the world stands today on the brink of despair and destruction. Characteristic of our day and time is the weakening of the moral fiber of men and women, referred to many times by the speakers: a departure from long and well-established standards of conduct, a disregard for the old-fashioned virtues, despite the fact that they are sacred and binding upon humanity, and have been itemized and set up by holy prophets for the guidance of God's children.

There has been a breaking away from Church and religion; skepticism, unbelief, and fidelity have become the boast of the learned and the sophisticated. What does it mean, my brethren? Does it mean that the pillars of civilization are crumbling?

I read recently a book written by Dr. Frank Munk called *The Legacy of Nazism*. In it he makes this statement, which is the concluding paragraph in the book:

A world is adrift—Europe has completely lost its moorings. Economically, socially, spiritually, only the grass-root things remain. We must begin anew. A new civilization is being born in blood and unspeakable suffering. Ultimate and eternal values alone will survive the carnage.

He concludes his book by quoting a verse from the famous speech of Paul to the Athenians when he said:

He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things. And has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the earth.

In his book he also speaks of a chance, with the inference that it is to be a slight chance, that the accumulations of centuries in art, literature, culture, and in human progress can be saved.

"Things are not altogether well with us," said the Archbishop of Canterbury recently, when speaking to the British nation. "The decline in honesty has been very sharp and steep," he said, "and our standard of conduct in matters of sex is very lax. These things," he points out, "will bring terrible consequences, if we will not change our outlook, or in the old phrase, repent." Old England with its culture, with its power and wealth, mighty in achievement, along with an unparalleled history, like other nations, must repent or perish.

A short time ago I read a book written by Beverly Nichols, in which he discussed organized vice, the curse of drink and the widespread outbreak of criminality in England and America. The author said: "The facts as I have stated them are true, and the reason they are true is because the parents in question have failed most criminally to set before their children the picture of Christ." He then calls attention to the fact that once that picture hung on the wall, but the repercussions of war blew it off.

"The time has come," he concluded, "to hang that picture once more on the wall, to see if we can learn any message from the eternal eyes." Surely a great inspiration will come from a picture so beautiful and so stainless. There is nothing left, my brethren, to direct and sustain humanity except the perfect life of Jesus, His Gospel of peace and love, and his matchless and powerful leadership.

I quote in closing the words of scripture from the book of Revelation:

Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

May we do so, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH F. MERRILL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Brethren, and radio listeners: And I am very glad to be able to say "Radio listeners," for of all the Conferences I have attended during my life—and they began when I was ten years of age—I have attended none that I have enjoyed to a greater degree than I have this one, up to the present moment of time.

It is my wish, brethren and sisters, to speak for a few minutes on and call attention, to some of our fundamental principles and their application to our daily lives. In doing this I desire to speak truthfully, wisely, and helpfully.

MAN INHERITS ATTRIBUTES OF GOD HIS FATHER

"We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost"—three separate, distinct persons, who are united as one in purpose and attunement. Since in the world of life, like begets like, it must follow that in bodily form we are like our Father in heaven. Hence, it cannot be true that we are brutes or descendants of beasts; we are of the race of the Gods. It therefore follows that man did not, as the atheist asserts, create God in his own image. As a spirit child of our Father in heaven, man not only inherited His divine form, but also the divine attributes, even though it may be in minute quantities only.

Among these are intelligence, will-power, thinking-power, love, charity, mercy, patience, sense of justice, fairness, and right, etc. We believe in the wonderful doctrine of eternal progression, in accordance with which these inherited attributes and powers may be enlarged through effort and righteous living, until ultimately they may reach, in the hereafter, God-like proportions.

Is such a doctrine true, or is it fanciful, based upon eternal truth? In accordance with this belief, life in mortality has a purpose. We know the doctrine is true.