

body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

And think of the words of the Presidency of this great Church to all the youth of the land, "Better dead clean, than alive unclean."

God help us to help them, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Vocal solo, "The Lord Is My Light" (Allitson) was sung by Albert Eccles.

ELDER SAMUEL O. BENNION *Of the First Council of the Seventy*

At the beginning of my remarks I acknowledge the hand of the Lord in permitting me to be here today. I pray the Lord that I may be sustained.

It was forty years ago now, at this particular time of the year that I was preparing to go on my mission. I called on President Joseph F. Smith, according to appointment, and told him I was ready to go. He said to me, "Brother Bennion, you stay here and help elect Theodore Roosevelt, and then go." And I did.

I am delighted to be here and to see this great congregation. I enjoy the companionship of my brethren; I would not want to live in mortality without it.

A TESTIMONY OF THE TRUTH HELPS UNDER DIFFICULTIES

Seventy-seven years ago my progenitors came down Emigration Canyon into this valley, and they found here a desert—nothing that was inviting enough for them to want to stay. They came from the green fields of England, into this desolate place; almost all they had in the world was in a wagon box. And many others were in the same condition. But there was one thing in their hearts, one thing that brought them from the shores of England: they had a testimony of Jesus. They knew that the Redeemer lives; they knew that this is the work of God, and they believed the prophet of God when he said, "This is the place," and, "Here we will build a temple unto our God; here will be our home; this is where we are going to reside."

The Indians could scarcely live. My parents knew them, and these Indians were living on the rodents of the earth, and anything they could get. The same soil that is here now was here then, but it was barren.

But the Lord had said through His prophet, Isaiah, centuries before:

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: . . . they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. (Isaiah 35:1 and 2.)

Isaiah knew the Lord. He was a prophet of the living God, and it was given him to look down through the stream of time. The Lord put those words into his mouth, and he delivered that scripture, and this has become now one of the greatest gardens of the earth. The Lord had planned for His people. Men could not live in this country who did not have a testimony of the promises concerning it. All who are here today and those who hear my voice can see that this great country has been made to blossom as a rose; it is lovely, as Isaiah predicted it would be.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED

Go where you may, I care not where—I have not been abroad, but I have seen all the states of the United States and Canada and Mexico, and it is all this country—and there are no more fruitful fields than in this land where the Lord led the people, this once barren and forbidding country.

Land that I positively know has been tilled for sixty years—I have seen it—has produced a better crop this year than at any time in its history, because it has been fertilized and cared for. Water used in the right way, with crop rotation, and fertilization, have made it what it is.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH BLESSED

And as it has been with the land, so it has been with the membership of this Church. There never was greater strength in the land than at the present time. It does not make any difference to me, brethren, what people think about the Mormon Church, or its doctrines, I cannot help thinking of the words of the Lord to Job the prophet: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (Job 38:2.) Who is it? Who dares to question? The plan of God is here. He further said to Job:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. . . . Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof . . . and all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:4, 6, 7.)

The great program of God for his children was planned from the beginning and when He came to Joseph Smith, He revealed unto him this plan of salvation. And this plan came to you and to me, and will come to all men who make an investigation of it. Joseph Smith bore that testimony to the children of men. He also brought to our attention the words of Paul the apostle: "Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Corinthians 12:3) Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Nay, more, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:5; 3:3.)

I have listened to hundreds of men and women who have come out of the world, so-called, into this Church, who have been baptized and who have had the witness and power of God given to them by the Holy Ghost, say that they could no more go back into their old way of thinking than they could go back to yesterday—they have been born again into a new world.

The faith of the Latter-day Saints is an established fact, and men and women of honor and integrity, by the thousands, from all parts of the world, are located in these valleys where the Lord led them. Here there is power such as the world has never seen; truly out of Zion goes forth the law.

I call the attention of all to the words of the President of this Church, that were read yesterday; they came from the Prophet of God. And to the testimony that David O. McKay bore, and to the sermon that was delivered by President Clark. They are all readable. They set forth the issues of the present day. How many of us will follow them when we go back into our homes; how many will say to the children of men among whom we labor: "The word of God came to us again." Call their attention to these commandments:

Thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor, thou shalt honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy, thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, and thou shalt not commit adultery.

The plan of God is here to fertilize the spiritual fields of the Church. As the land has produced more since the membership of the Church began to till it, as it has grown richer under careful supervision, so will the strength of the children of men grow through the powerful influence of God, and our people will carry off victoriously the plan of God, for this is His work. It will never fail. It does not make any difference to me what men think about Mormonism, or what they think about this Church. I mingle among them; I have done so for many years—many of them are fine men, good men. There are good men in the Church and out of the Church, and when we find out what they are good for, they should be put to use. But even though they may not recognize it, there is a Power guiding this people to high destiny and even now they have become, as the Prophet Joseph said they would, a "mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains."

A CLOSING TESTIMONY

I pray the Lord to bless us. I am thankful for the privilege I have of being here. I know this is the work of God and that he lives, that he came to Joseph Smith and that Joseph Smith brought to the world again the plan by which all men may know their Redeemer and give praise to him.

I do not believe this is the end of "Sweet hour of prayer," I believe it is just a beginning. The hour of prayer will go on into time beyond our power of conception and will be a part of the great story of the Latter-day Saints. Last December I heard in one of our stake conferences a lovely chorus of about a hundred and fifteen or twenty

young women. Their music was most inspiring. I said to myself then and I say it now, I expect to hear the voices of millions of such beautiful singers and participate in countless hours of prayer.

The Lord bless you. Amen.

ELDER THOMAS E. MCKAY

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

President Grant and brethren: It is a great privilege to be engaged in a work that can bring together so many hundreds of fine men—all officers in the Church, having a definite responsibility. I am thankful for my membership in such a Church—a Church where everybody has an opportunity to *work*.

MISSION PRESIDENTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

I am happy that the mission presidents are with us again. I think the calling of mission presidents one of the most responsible in the Church—it is a real job under normal conditions, but at present when all the young elders are released and in the service of our country, the responsibility is much greater than ever. I congratulate you mission presidents upon the splendid way in which you continue to carry on.

Since returning last week from a most delightful and instructive tour of the Canadian Mission, and after listening to the very interesting reports and testimonies of our mission presidents in their meeting with the general authorities, in the temple last Wednesday, I feel like paying tribute to the mission presidents' wives and the young lady missionaries, and the Relief Societies of the missions. To repeat what President Reeder stated in his very excellent report: "The sisters are following the injunction of the Prophet Joseph, viz., *"to provoke the brethren to good works."*

A SUGGESTION FOR THE SEVENTIES

But while listening to the mission presidents tell of the fine work of their wives with the Relief Societies and Primaries, and especially while listening to the fine group of young lady missionaries in the Canadian Mission give their reports and testimonies, my mind kept reverting to a splendid group of over five hundred seventies with whom I was very closely associated while president of the Ogden Stake. We had nine quorums, and since the division of the stake recently there are now eleven in the two stakes. I thought if President Ursenbach, his talented wife, two charming daughters, and thirteen-year-old son, Gerry, a natural missionary, who are doing such splendid work in the Canadian Mission, had only three or four pairs of missionaries specially picked from those eleven quorums, what a relief it would be, and what a help to the