

latter days. I tell you, brothers and sisters, it was well said when Jesus said:

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matt. 5:6.)

Adam received an answer to his inquiry from the Lord, and the woman from the South, through finding "Mormonism," was able to say that she now had hope of finding an answer to her own life's problems.

When you see these glorious temples, when you see this great assembly of the Saints of God, when you see the priesthood of God, when you see apostles and prophets such as the primitive church had, which God placed in the Church,

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. (Ephesians 4:14.)

I ask, is there anything more we could want to know? If we understood all these things, then we could understand why Isaiah, when he saw the temple of God builded in the tops of the mountains in the latter days, saw people all over the world, and heard them say:

. . . Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. . . . (Isaiah 2:3.)

And may God help us to do it, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I feel the need of your faith and prayers, my brethren and sisters, as I stand before you this afternoon. I desire to add my testimony to the many forceful testimonies of this conference.

History of Nauvoo Period

Recently I was reading a biography published during the year, covering the war years of Abraham Lincoln. This biography was written by J. G. Randall, professor of history at the University of Illinois, and in laying a background for the war period of Lincoln's life, he goes back into the Illinois period of the early forties, a period that was known to the Latter-day Saints of that time, and in it he makes one or two pointed observations:

In 1840 few towns of Illinois had more than two thousand people. It is a curious fact that the largest Illinois settlement by far in the middle forties was the Mormon city of Nauvoo, beautifully situated on the broad Mississippi about a hundred miles northwest of Springfield. Here in the 1840's, when Chicago was a stripling village of less than five thousand,

and Springfield a muddy little town recently planted on the prairie, stood the largest City in Illinois, a community of more than twenty thousand. . . . Center of Mormonism. Nauvoo possessed thousands of dwellings, and a great temple into the construction of which had been poured a million dollars. (*Lincoln the President*, J. G. Randall.)

He further describes some of the conditions that existed at that period, and says, quoting one of the historians of Illinois, that this was a lawless period in the history of our nation, and that Illinois partook of that lawlessness. Governor Ford in his *History of Illinois* (written in the forties) deals at length with the "mobocratic spirit" in Illinois, and Lincoln speaks of it and warns of its dangers in these words: "Let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his fathers and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty." (Randall, page 22.) As I read this I thought, surely our people knew what that meant. They, too, suffered because of these conditions.

Beveridge in his biography of Lincoln describes some other things that are interesting, showing that at that time the standards were not as they are today. He writes:

Quantities of whiskey were consumed, everybody, women and preachers included, indulging. Men were quick to fight, and combats were brutal. Profanity was general and emphatic; yet an innate love of justice and truthfulness and fair-dealing permeated many of the communities, and generous and ready hospitality was of the highest order. Notwithstanding these things, religion, too, was a vital part of their lives. Churches were organized as soon as there were settlers enough to form small congregations. Preaching was crude, direct and vociferous, but it was an effective force for good. Schools, although crude, were started almost as soon as churches. In fact church and school were companion influences for decency, knowledge, and morality in pioneer life. Many times, social relations were loose and undisciplined.

And then he goes on and speaks of the dialects of the time which were extremely crude. Beveridge makes reference to a charge that was made against Lincoln, as Lincoln carried on his debates on states' rights with Stephen A. Douglas, in which Lincoln was charged that he was advocating the marriage of whites with negroes. Lincoln, of course, resented this and in his reply said that because he sought the freedom of these people and advocated that they might eat the bread that they earned was no reason why his motives should be questioned.

Motives of Joseph Smith Misunderstood

As I read this, my brethren and sisters, my mind went back to the Prophet Joseph. He, too, was the victim of motive questioning. It was a time when people questioned people's motives, when many times they were vicious in their imputations, and the Prophet and our people became the victims of that very thing; and as we look back today, it is no wonder that people misunderstood the Prophet Joseph. They failed to interpret truly his motives; they failed to

feel the impulse of his righteous living, and when he advocated practices and doctrines that were in contravention to the then known times, men questioned that which he advocated and particularly the motive back of it. And thus the Prophet Joseph became the victim of this impugning of motives, and much of this was a contributing factor to his martyrdom. Men did not know him then, and men and women have failed, in our day, to try to know him. That is unfortunate.

True Appraisal by Early Converts

If I may be a bit personal, my grandfather with his four brothers and their father joined the Church in 1832. My great-grandfather was then nearly seventy. All of these five brothers, with the exception of Lorenzo Young, were older than Joseph Smith, and yet when they came into Kirtland they recognized in him a Prophet of the living God. They were men of intelligence; they were men capable of analyzing the Prophet Joseph Smith and appraising the things for which he stood. They believed implicitly in him, and when they accepted the truth as it had been taught to them by the early missionaries, to the day of their deaths they never wavered. All of them were true to the faith. That was typical of many. John Taylor stands out as a beacon light. He had come from England as a young man. It is true that he was younger than the Prophet for he was born in 1808. He had come from England in 1832 and settled in Canada. And in 1836, Parley P. Pratt found him and preached the gospel to him, and he subsequently embraced it. Later he came to Kirtland to visit the Prophet. It was a time of apostacy; it was a time of persecution, but he never wavered, because the Lord had borne witness to him that here was a Prophet of the Living God.

After this visit John Taylor returned to Canada and subsequently in company of others Joseph Smith visited him. Later in 1837, in the fall, John Taylor was asked and instructed to wind up his affairs and join with the body of the Saints. Coming to Kirtland he found the Prophet was in Far West and so continued his journey down into Missouri. You can well imagine what it would mean in that day, slow travel and no roads, under crude and primitive conditions, similar to the ones to which I referred in the beginning as described by Professor Randall. And yet, coming into Far West, where also there was apostacy, it made no difference with John Taylor. He knew, and that was all that was necessary, and from then on he consecrated his life to a life of devotion and service that is almost unequaled in this new dispensation. He was with the Prophet at his martyrdom and never wavered. His life reads like a romance, and yet it rings true because of his loyalty and his faith.

And so, my brethren and sisters, as I read of these primitive conditions, I thought how easy it was to question motives; how easy it is today when men do not know and feel the human soul to fail to respond to that soul as it breathes testimony of the divinity of this great work.

Oliver Cowdery's Return to the Church

Two more things I would like to mention before I close. I have always been impressed, as you have, in reading of Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer. It was through the instrumentality of Phineas Young that Oliver Cowdery came back into the Church. They were brothers-in-law, Phineas having married Oliver's sister. Oliver Cowdery left the Church in 1838 and was cut off with David Whitmer. He drifted around and finally came back to Richmond, Missouri. Phineas Young wrote to Oliver pleading with him to come back to the Church. Oliver replied feelingly, that he had been wronged, that the brethren had misjudged his motives. Our people in Missouri had suffered persecution. They had lost their lands and in many instances their homes. One marvels as one reads about it that there was not more of a falling away, because that part of the Church was so far removed from the leaders of the Church, and it was easy for men to get off the track.

Well, Oliver Cowdery felt that his motives had been questioned, and so he wrote to Phineas Young that he felt that the Saints would not receive him. Phineas replied that Oliver should come back into the Church, that he knew it was true and that this was where he belonged. In 1848, while a conference was being held in Council Bluffs, Oliver came to the conference, and in the course of one of the meetings he asked to speak, and you know the story. He proclaimed again his witness of the Book of Mormon and his faith in the Prophet Joseph.

After the conference he appeared before the high council. "I do not ask to be restored to my former position," he said. He had been the second elder in the Church. "All I ask is that I may come back into the Church, because I know it is true." A vote was taken by the high council which had excommunicated him, and that was in the proper order, and it voted to receive him into the Church and he was subsequently baptized and ordained an elder. Preparations were made for him to come out to Utah, but before this could be accomplished he was taken seriously ill and passed away. But he passed away, as David Whitmer afterwards said, the happiest man he ever saw, because he was back in the Church where he belonged.

David Whitmer True to His Testimony

And so with David Whitmer. Among the announcements of deaths read here yesterday was that of the passing of James H. Moyle, the father of Henry Moyle, the chairman of the welfare committee. It was my good fortune as a boy to come under the influence of Brother Moyle, working in Mutual with him, and I have since that time had a love in my heart for him and an appreciation for his devotion to the Church. I recall his telling of his interview with David Whitmer, how he, just out of college, wanted to know—he was a young man and the challenge was before him—he wanted to know. His parents

had joined the Church in England and emigrated to Zion, but he, himself, wanted to know whether or not there was anything in this thing called "Mormonism." Learning that David Whitmer was still alive, he went down to Richmond to interview him, and Brother Moyle writes that he never in his life cross-examined anyone so vigorously as he did David Whitmer.

As Brother Moyle related it, it strengthened my faith, and as I have contemplated it since, I have thought how easy it would have been for David Whitmer to say: "My boy, that was fifty-two years ago. We were mistaken; we were young. Joseph Smith had an influence over us, and we were mistaken." But he did not say that. He could have said it because he had previously been quoted by the Encyclopedia Britannica as having denied his testimony. He did not say that, but he did say: "I want to say to you once and for all that the testimony that I bore then is as true today as it was the day we uttered it." That was in the eighties, over fifty years since the testimony of the three witnesses had been inscribed on the flyleaf of the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith a True Prophet

My brethren and sisters, my time is up. The Prophet Joseph lives as real a living Prophet today as he ever did. His motives were misunderstood then; they are misunderstood now, but there is no question about his integrity or his divine calling. When men like John Taylor and the Youngs and the Kimballs and others came to him and associated with him, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, who were cut off from the Church, who knew him and associated with him intimately—I repeat—when men such as these associated with him and recognized in him a Prophet of the Living God, then we may say that critics of the Prophet today need also to take cognizance of these testimonies as well as of men who questioned his motives and who vilified him and maligned him as did apostates of his time and as is done in our day by those who do not have the spirit of the gospel.

God bless us and help us to appreciate that he was a Prophet of the Living God, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The congregation and the Choirs joined in singing the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel," Hymn Book page 194, L. D. S. Hymns No. 231.

ELDER MARVIN O. ASHTON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

Some of you will never know what volumes of humility encompass some of us about twice a year. I sincerely trust that whatever I say will be in keeping with this conference and the spirit that is here. Someone has said something about "goose flesh". I have been so thrilled in this conference, that I think the above expression is a good