

THE VALUE OF MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

Many other incidents which I could relate if I had the time would illustrate that a missionary in the field is a good investment. Moreover, to the missionary the experience is invaluable: travel is itself educational; the missionary has the opportunity to meet all kinds of people, at times the opportunity presents itself to visit other churches, cathedrals, museums, art galleries, and oftentimes to attend operas and theaters. Add to these broadening influences the educational background found in all "Mormon" communities, we soon learn the reason why two leading educators were able, in a recently published book, to classify Utah as highest in all-around educational performance among all the states. They divided the states into five classifications: highest, high, medium, low, and lowest. Among the ten highest Utah ranked first.

Yes, this is a missionary Church, brothers and sisters. We have always had missionaries. We kept out about two thousand until the war and then, of course, our missionaries were called home. Six hundred ninety-nine of them were evacuated from the European missions alone; but our servicemen and women—God bless them—more than compensated for that return. Nearly all of them have been missionaries, preaching the gospel by their example of clean living, and then since the war, the First Presidency have called on an average of about three hundred a month. Now, as we were told yesterday by Brother Anderson in the statistical report, we have over three thousand two hundred missionaries in the field, a thousand more than the Church has ever had before. And then, too, we have about that same number of stake missionaries, and also hundreds of local missionaries called in the missions themselves. Yes, we are all missionaries. I wish we would adopt the motto that we had in the mission field, "Every member a missionary." We can't all go into the mission field, but oh, brethren and sisters, we can all preach the gospel *by our example*.

May the Lord help us and bless us with faith and sufficient will power that we may live so that it will be said of us, not only that we believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, but also that we are honest, we are true, we are chaste, we are benevolent, we are virtuous, and that we do love our neighbor as ourselves, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Brigham Young University Mixed Chorus and the congregation sang: "Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah," by Phelps; Hymn Book No. 282, L.D.S. Hymns No. 167.

ELDER JOHN A. WIDTSOE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, this vast congregation, crowding and overcrowding the capacity of the Tabernacle, seems to me to be a

sufficient answer to the query of the ancient prophet. There is faith in Israel.

NATURAL ENDOWMENTS OF THE PIONEERS

Almost every speaker during this conference has mentioned the pioneers, the heroic men and women who, a hundred years ago and up to the coming of the railroad, trailed across the plains and made possible, not only Utah but also the arid and semi-arid wastes of the United States, for the use of mankind. It is a great story, beautifully told here this morning.

These pioneers were uncommon people. They were not of the common run. It took more than brawn, muscle, to redeem the desert, and to teach the whole world how the great arid wastes of the world might be reclaimed. The work of these men has been heralded far and wide, and all the world has profited by their labors. They were uncommon people.

I knew David McKay [President David O. McKay's father]. It was a great privilege. He was not a common man. There were notable, fine qualities in him, inborn qualities, such as were characteristic of the great body of pioneers which made possible that which they accomplished. They were not men and women of great education though they had as much education as was ordinarily possessed by the people of that day, both in America and in Europe. There was a good porportion of school-trained men among them, but remember that a school can only polish and develop that which a man possesses. Schools do not create the powers of men. These pioneer people had natural endowments so great as to make it difficult to understand, how so many such capable people could be gathered together in the making of this intermountain empire.

PRESIDENT YOUNG'S DEFINITION OF MORMONISM

I have chosen to try to say something about the qualities and endowments of these men in the words of the foremost of them, their appointed leader, Brigham Young. He was not greater than the others. He was of the same blood, spiritually and physically, and, fortunately, he left behind him nearly four hundred discourses taken down in shorthand and published. I grew up as other young men in Zion, looking upon Brigham Young as a great leader, great colonizer, but only after I undertook to read his discourses did the character of the man really stand out boldly before me. He was a great character. Those who labored with him in their respective fields were equally great.

A stranger came to him one day and said:

President Young, will you define Mormonism for me? I heard you preach in the Tabernacle the other day. I did not quite understand all that you said, and I wish you would be kind enough to analyze what you said and simplify it.

Then this leader of the pioneers, of great endowments, brushed aside all the old opinions, the old methods of defining things, in the realm of religion, all the secondary or derivative doctrines and answered:

Our religion is simply the truth. It is all said in this one expression: It embraces all truth wherever found in all the works of God and man, visible or invisible to mortal eyes.

An ordinary man of lesser mental and spiritual stature would have found refuge in some other kind of definition. This man dug down to the bottom of the thing. Truth is the foundation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He added:

It is more rational for an intelligent being to embrace truth than it is to mix up a little truth with a great deal of error or to embrace all error and undertake to follow a phantom.

THE FAITH OF A GREAT LEADER

But, he understood that truth must have a source, a teacher to human beings. No man in all the world has ever expressed a finer and a greater, more fervent belief in God than did Brigham Young.

Our faith is concentrated in the Son of God and through him in the Father, and the Holy Ghost is a minister to bring truths to our remembrance, to reveal new truths to us and teach, guide, direct the course of every mind. . . . Jesus is our captain and leader, Jesus, Savior of the World, the Christ that we believe in.

Out of that faith came the truth that he held so dear. If we had time, I could read some eloquent statements about his faith in God and Jesus Christ, never surpassed in the writings of mankind.

This man was a symbol of all the pioneers, for when I speak of Brigham Young, I speak of every pioneer. It took and takes strong men, men of capacity, to accept the gospel of the Lord Jesus. In that respect, we of this age who have accepted the gospel are also uncommon.

But Brigham Young warned the people:

Now we have the truth. We know whence it comes, from God himself, and that brings a tremendous responsibility to rest upon every one of us. . . . Our mortal existence is a school of experience. The Lord does not compel any person to embrace the gospel, and I do not think he will compel them to live it after they have embraced it. The volition of the creature is free. This is a law of their existence, and the Lord cannot violate his own law. Were he to do that he would cease to be exalted. He has placed life and death before his children, and it is for them to choose. If they choose life, they receive a blessing of life. If they choose death, they must abide the penalty. This is the law which has always existed from all eternity and will continue to exist throughout all the eternities to come. Every intelligent being must have the power of choice.

Simple words! But what a tremendous burden, if burden it be, they place upon us, the necessity to live in accordance with the eternal law of God.

THE RELIGION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS A PRACTICAL ONE

Having said all of this (I have picked just a few things out of the record), he emphasized the fact that the truth which comes from God, and possessed by us, must be used by us properly. There was no hesitation in that. Truth is not an ornament to be hung on the wall or placed on the shelf to look at. It must be of daily use for he said:

We need a present, everyday religion. My religion must be with me from one Monday morning to the next, the year around or it will not answer me. I am decidedly in favor of a practical religion, of everyday useful life, and if I today attend to what devolves upon me to do, then do that which presents itself tomorrow, and so on, when eternity comes I will be prepared to enter on the things of eternity, but I would not be prepared for that sphere of action unless I could manage the things that are now within my reach. We must all learn to do this. There is no life more precious than the present life which we enjoy. There is no life that is worth any more to us than this life is. It may be said that an eternal life is worth more. We are in eternity, and all that we have to do is to take the road that leads into the eternal lives.

And in his application of truth to useful ends, he said many things. For example, concerning education:

Knowledge is to be sought. It was originally embraced by the Latter-day Saints, if only slightly understood, and they were counseled to search diligently after knowledge. There is no other people in existence more eager to see, to hear, to learn and understand truth. . . . Every accomplishment, every polished grace, every useful attainment in mathematics, music, and all the sciences and arts belong to the Saints, and they should avail themselves as expeditiously as possible of the wealth of knowledge that science has offered to every diligent and persevering scholar.

There is no narrow conception in such a statement, no fence is built around knowledge, no limitation placed upon it. All truth is ours.

BRIGHAM YOUNG'S VIEWS ON CAPITAL AND LABOR

He entered into the field of economics and became known as a great economic leader. He said in what might be written in huge letters for the wise men of the earth to read:

Capital and labor, all the capital there is upon this earth, is the bone and sinew of working men and women. Were it not for that, the gold and the silver and precious stones would remain in the mountains, upon the plains, and in the valleys and never would be gathered or brought into use. The timber would continue to grow, but none of it would be brought into service, and the earth would remain as it is. It is the activity and labor of the inhabitants of the earth that bringeth forth wealth.

This simple definition of wealth, is fit for colleges and all the nations to ponder. Time and the ability to labor are the capital stock of the whole world.

EXPRESSIONS AS TO GOVERNMENT

He spoke of political government:

The Constitution and laws of the United States resemble a theocracy more closely than any government now on earth. We will cling to the Constitution of our country and to the government that reveres that sacred charter of free men's rights and if necessary pour out our best blood for the defense of every good and righteous principle.

He laid down the principle which should be the foundation of every government:

Individual self-government lies at the root of all true and effective government whether in heaven or on earth.

He even spoke of the women and their duties in the world of action—woman suffrage:

Now, sisters, I want you to vote also, because women are the characters that rule the ballot box.

I wish they did rule it today. I am not certain they have lived up to the commendation of the pioneer leader.

HUMILITY A SIGN OF GREATNESS

Great men are humble. No great man takes power and honor unto himself, and so Brigham Young said:

I have never professed to be Brother Joseph, but only Brother Brigham, trying to do good to this people. I am no better nor any more important than any other man who is trying to do good. If I am, I do not know it. If I improve upon what the Lord has given me and continue to improve, I shall become like those who have gone before me.

I shall be exalted in the Celestial Kingdom and be filled to overflowing with all the power I can wield, and all the keys and knowledge I can manage will be committed unto me.

Then he quoted what President Hunter just quoted, the first part being:

I do not wish anyone to understand that I had anything to do with our being moved here. That was the providence of the Almighty.

LOYALTY TO JOSEPH SMITH

Great men are loyal. There is nothing finer in the life of Brigham Young than his loyalty to Joseph Smith. He spoke of him and said:

A Prophet of God! I honor and revere the name of Joseph Smith. I delight to hear it. I love it. I love his doctrine. . . .

What is the nature and beauty of Joseph's mission? When I first heard him preach, he had brought heaven and earth together, and all the

priests of the day could not tell me anything correct about heaven, hell, God, angels, the devils, . . . and there was blindness, . . . darkness. When I saw Joseph Smith, he took heaven, of which he was speaking, and brought it down to earth. Then he took the earth and brought it up and opened up in plainness and simplicity the things of God, and that is the beauty of his mission.

At the last, on his deathbed, the attending physician as he leaned over the bedside heard him whisper:

"Joseph, Joseph!"

Of such timber were our pioneers hewn. Of such timber are we or should be. God bless us and be with us, help us to be like the pioneers we honor, I pray, for the deserts of the world, in other fields, are formidable today as the deserts of the West were yesterday, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

First Counselor in the First Presidency

My brothers and sisters, I trust that the sweet influence of the Spirit of the Lord which has been with us thus far in this conference and in this session will continue with us while I stand before you.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES A. CALLIS AND MARVIN O. ASHTON

We miss this morning from our presence two great men, Apostle Callis, whose greatest love was his fellow men and his desire and purpose to spread among them the truths of the revealed gospel of this last dispensation; the other, Bishop Ashton, who loved men as much as did Apostle Callis, whose troubles, the troubles of men and women, appealed to him, and always he did all that he could do, that lay within his power to do, to alleviate those troubles. They were great men. They have gone to a great reward that will take them to a place in the celestial kingdom of God.

THE SAVIOR'S MOURNING OVER JERUSALEM

When the Savior was just leaving Trans-Jordan to come into Jerusalem to be crucified, the Pharisees came to him and told him that Herod was seeking to kill him. And speaking of Herod as "that fox" the Savior said: Tell him that the sick are healed and that the blind see. Tell him that I must travel today, tomorrow, and the next day, "for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13:33.)

And the mention of Jerusalem seemed to have awakened in his mind all that had gone before since the world was, particularly since Jerusalem was built, and he said:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! (Luke 13:34.)