

Saints have found it. It is to accept the truth; and we have accepted it in the waters of baptism by covenant, a covenant that we will keep the commandments of God. The remaining step is to endure to the end, in righteousness and in faithfulness. Nephi said that repentance and baptism are the gate to salvation, and that having entered in by the gate, men are then in the straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life. We Latter-day Saints have entered in by the gate. We are now on the path. It remains for us to press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. It remains for us to press forward, feasting upon the words of Christ, and endure to the end, which if we do, we will gain eternal life.

LOVE LIGHTENS OUR COURSE

I do not know that there is anyone among us, unless he has sinned away the opportunity of repentance, who is not capable of starting from this point and going forward in righteousness and truth and gaining the celestial kingdom of heaven. The gospel course is either hard or easy, depending upon whether we love the Lord. If we do not love the Lord it may seem hard and the course may seem rugged. If we love the Lord and desire to keep his commandments, then his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. We can have peace and joy and satisfaction and solace and rest here and now in this life. We can have the guidance of the Holy Ghost, we can make our calling and election sure for eternity on the one premise of keeping the commandments of God.

Now

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecc. 12:13.)

In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Today as always, on these occasions, I seek interest in your silent prayers and for the sustaining power of my Heavenly Father.

PIONEER HERITAGE

Several weeks ago there appeared in our local newspaper, an account of an interview with an elderly statesman who seems to wield great influence today in American politics. This elderly statesman, in explaining the reason for his determination and zeal told of an interview, or rather a statement his own father—now long since dead—had made to his four sons just before he died. This is what the father said:

America, with its government and constitution, is the greatest institution invented by the mind of man. If you let them touch a stick or stone of it, I will come back and haunt you.

As I thought of that statement, my mind went back to our ancestors who pioneered in this dispensation even a greater constitution than that of this American nation, even the constitution of the kingdom of God, which might be said to be another definition of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

During the centennial year, the year just passed, we were reminded in pageant, in sermon, and in song, of our pioneers who came here and settled in these western valleys. We were reminded of their virtues, their accomplishments, and of the underlying principles that made them willing to leave all that they possessed, and even willing to sacrifice their lives, if need be to uphold and to maintain. As I remembered that and thought of the statement of this aged American patriot, I wondered if we might not say:

The Lord help us to keep in memory our ancestors that we might be willing to uphold and sustain by our lives and all that we possess, that for which they gave so much.

THE PRINCIPLE OF GATHERING

If we thought deeply about the events of the centennial year, perhaps we were stirred by the realization that we were but commemorating the operation of a principle that is as old as the human family, a principle which has been invoked by the command of the Lord in every gospel dispensation. I refer to the principle of gathering.

The first reference we have, in the revelations, to gatherings of the Lord's faithful people was that spoken of when Adam gathered together his seven righteous sons, from Seth to Methuselah and all of their posterity, in the valley of Adam-ondi-ahman, and there he gave them his last blessing and prepared them for the appearance of the Lord which they received at that time.

I have thought it more than mere coincidence that one of the first martyrs in this dispensation, David W. Patten, a member of the Twelve Apostles, lost his life near the valley of Adam-ondi-ahman, that same valley in which Adam had gathered his posterity, which the Lord had revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith was near Wight's Ferry, at a place called Spring Hill, Daviess County, Missouri. To me it has also been significant that this martyrdom resulted directly from the obedience of the Latter-day Saints to the commands that had been given to them to gather in certain places as members of the newly restored Church.

It was the lament of the Master, just before his crucifixion:

O, Jerusalem. Jerusalem thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! (Matt. 23: 37.)

Apparently the Master was referring to the repeated revelations he

had given to the prophets from Adam down to his time, in which he had told of not only the scattering of the children of Israel, but also of a subsequent gathering. To Jeremiah he had promised,

... I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you unto Zion:

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. (Jeremiah 3:14-15.)

To Ezekiel he said:

And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. (Ezek. 20: 34, 35.)

To the prophets Isaiah and Micah, he told of the time when,

... the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. (Isaiah 2:2; see also Micah 4:1.)

An apt description of those who would be gathered thus, by command of the Lord, is given in the parable of the Master, when he said that:

... the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind.

Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (Matthew 13:47-48.)

THE GATHERING IN THIS DISPENSATION

The first command to gather, in this dispensation, was within six months after the Church was organized. The Prophet Joseph Smith, in announcing this revelation, made this significant declaration as recorded in the *History of the Church*:

... We soon found that Satan had been lying in wait to deceive, and seeking whom he might devour. (D.H.C. 1:109.)

The meaning of that revelation and the purpose of it all was explained in these words:

and ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts;

Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and to be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.

For the hour is nigh and the day soon at hand when the earth is ripe; and all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up saith the Lord of Hosts, that wickedness shall not be upon the earth. (D. & C. 29:7-9.)

Three years later the Lord again spoke upon this subject:

... It is my will, that all they who call on my name, and wor-

ship me according to mine everlasting gospel, should gather together, and stand in holy places. (*Ibid.*, 101:22.)

Thus, the Lord has said plainly to his Saints that the gathering was to prepare their hearts "according to the everlasting gospel," and to be prepared in all things "by standing in holy places."

Six years after the Church was organized, the keys of gathering were committed to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple. The record of that marvelous restoration is given in these words:

After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened unto us; and Moses appeared before us, and committed unto us the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north. (*Ibid.*, 110:11.)

The spirit of gathering has been with the Church from the days of that restoration. Those who are of the blood of Israel, have a righteous desire after they are baptized, to gather together with the body of the Saints at the designated place. This, we have come to recognize, is but the breath of God upon those who are converted turning them to the promises made to their fathers.

PLACES OF GATHERING

But the designation of gathering places is qualified in another revelation by the Lord to which I would desire to call your attention. After designating certain places in that day where the Saints were to gather, the Lord said this:

Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them. (*Ibid.*, 101:21.)

Thus, clearly, the Lord has placed the responsibility for directing the work of gathering in the hands of the leaders of the Church to whom he will reveal his will where and when such gatherings would take place in the future. It would be well—before the frightening events concerning the fulfillment of all God's promises and predictions are upon us, that the Saints in every land prepare themselves and look forward to the instruction that shall come to them from the First Presidency of this Church as to where they shall be gathered and not be disturbed in their feelings until such instruction is given to them as it is revealed by the Lord to the proper authority.

REFUGE FROM THE STORM

Again, in 1838, the Lord gave a further reason for the gathering:

Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations;

And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth. (*Ibid.*, 115:5-6.)

Why was this to be called a "place of refuge" and a "place of safety"?
Said the Lord in another revelation,

... the glory of the Lord shall be there, and the terror of the Lord also shall be there, insomuch that the wicked will not come unto it, and it shall be called Zion. (Ibid., 45:67.)

The time when these things shall be would be as the Lord said when:

... the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man;

And the saints also shall hardly escape; nevertheless, I, the Lord, am with them, and will come down in heaven from the presence of my Father and consume the wicked with unquenchable fire. (Ibid., 63:33-34.)

Another and further reason for the gathering is given us with this revelation:

Wherefore, seeing that I, the Lord, have decreed all these things upon the face of the earth, I will that my saints should be assembled upon the land of Zion;

And that every man should take righteousness in his hands and faithfulness upon his loins, and lift a warning voice unto the inhabitants of the earth; and declare both by word and by flight that desolation shall come upon the wicked. (Ibid., 63: 36-37.)

As we sit here today, we should be mindful of the fact that we are those of whom these revelations have spoken. We are those who have been gathered from out of spiritual Babylon, or perhaps we represent the second or third or even the fourth or fifth generation of those who heeded the call and felt the spirit of gathering. Just as was the case in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith, so in our day the leaders of the Church have told us that "Satan has been lying in wait to deceive, and seeking whom he might devour."

WARNING OF DANGERS

As I have thought about these things, I have been sobered by the realization that during my lifetime three presidents of this Church have spoken upon those dangers which are within the Church which are seeking to destroy us and to defeat the purpose of our gathering. It was President Joseph F. Smith who said:

There are at least three dangers that threaten the Church within, and the authorities need to awaken to the fact that the people should be warned unceasingly against them. As I see these, they are flattery of prominent men in the world, false educational ideas, and sexual impurity.

But the third subject mentioned, personal purity, is perhaps of greater importance than either of the other two. We believe in one standard of morality for men and women. If purity of life is neglected, all other dangers set in upon us like the rivers of waters when the flood gates are opened. (*Gospel Doctrine*, 1939 ed. 312-313.)

It was President Grant during his declining years, who repeatedly—in all our conferences and in all his addresses—urged upon the Latter-day Saints to keep God's commandments, time and again impressing upon us that there was no greater mission for him to perform,

as the President of the Church, than to so warn the Latter-day Saints. By divine inspiration, he directed a movement to build brotherhood in this day, designed to foster the greatest security possible in this material world. Much has been done to bring about the full purposes of the Church welfare program, before it is too late, in order to provide that "defense" and that

. . . refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it will be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth. (D. & C. 115:6.)

President George Albert Smith, who presides over us today, has repeatedly counseled the Authorities of the Church and in his public addresses has spoken of the dangers that are confronting the homes of our people today—the carelessness of marriage out of the Church and out of the temple, the lack of the sanctity of marriage, and a lack of an understanding of the sanctity of the marriage covenant; the increase of divorce among us, the failure to hold sacred the covenants we have made in the House of the Lord. Well might we remember the warning of the Lord to John, the Revelator, when he said:

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. (Rev. 16:15.)

As I think of the counsel of these, our leaders, that has been given us from time to time, I have been reminded of a story told of a president of one of our great universities in Nova Scotia who called his representatives to him and sent them out to teach a great principle to the humble fishermen of that land. His parting counsel to them was:

"If you want to educate a man, you have to let him see a ghost."

DEFENSE AGAINST EVILS

May the Latter-day Saints be haunted, if it need be, by the memory of those who pioneered the work of gathering in this dispensation, and be haunted by the memory of the teachings and work of Adam and Moses; of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young and others of the prophets and the purposes for which the gospel has been restored, which the Lord told us in his preface to the revelations was because he knew the calamities which were about to come forth upon the children of men.

May we, as a people, see the "ghost" of our possibilities and that which we might be able to accomplish by our own strength and ability to stir us up to deeds of righteousness and to build a greater brotherhood to provide that defense against the evils which threaten to destroy our homes today.

May we do all this in preparation for the coming of the Son of Man which, I pray God, may not be long delayed. God speed us in that preparation while it is yet day and increase within us the testimony of the divinity of the work in which we are engaged. And as we may live in the day when the terrors and trials and struggles, all foretold by the prophets, come to pass when "fear shall be upon

every man" and when it shall seem that there is no place safe upon the earth, may the Latter-day Saints who are living the commandments of God be comforted again by those words with which the Master has comforted those who have lived before us in similar times. "Be humble, and the Lord will take you by the hand, as it were, and give you answer to your prayers." "Be still, and know that I am God." For I bear you solemn witness that I know these things told by the prophets are true. I know that those who have counseled us in our day of the dangers that are before us have spoken as the prophets of the Living God and I bear you this testimony humbly, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER THOMAS C. ROMNEY

Former President of the Central States Mission

I have occasion, my brothers and sisters, to be thankful for the radio, and I should make an acknowledgment at the beginning of my talk. I felt somewhat indisposed this morning, and knowing that the building here would be very crowded I felt that I would do well to remain home and listen to the addresses and singing over the radio. While sitting there I heard President Smith call the names of one or two of the mission presidents who had presided, asking them to come to the stand. I thought it was about time I was getting up to the Tabernacle. I appreciate very much the opportunity I had of laboring in the mission field and particularly in the Central States Mission, one of the most historic spots in the world to Latter-day Saints. I had filled a mission in the Southern states for three years and enjoyed my labors there immensely, and had filled another short-term mission. I want to say this last experience was one of the sweetest in my life, notwithstanding there came a sorrow into my life such as I have never before experienced. I would like to pay tribute to my beloved companion who died in the service of her fellow men, and I want to thank these kind brethren who did so much to comfort me in the hour of affliction. Sister Romney was loved by everybody in the mission for her sweetness of character, her humility and her fine administrative ability. She was brought here for burial, and at the depot we were met by President Smith and a number of the Twelve and other leading brethren. We were fortunate to have President Smith, President McKay, Apostle Widtsoe, and other prominent men speak at the funeral service.

My brethren and sisters, I want to say a few words about this mission, the spirit that prevails throughout the Central States, and compare that spirit, the changed conditions there, with what obtained when our people first went there in the early history of the Church. You all know, I am sure, that the Central States Mission comprises the four central states of the Union, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. Soon after the Church was organized, just a few months, four brethren were called by the prophet, by the spirit of revelation,