

**President David O. McKay:**

The following cablegram came this morning, signed by Harold Rex, President of the Brazilian Mission:

"Brazilian missionaries and Saints send greetings to Saints assembled in conference and wish to report a twenty per cent increase in membership thus far this year."

Singing by the congregation: "Redeemer of Israel."

### ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

I would like to ask each of you to offer a silent prayer on your own behalf that while I speak you may enjoy the spirit of the Holy Ghost and that I, too may enjoy it, that we may thereby all be edified.

Like some of the other brethren, I have just returned from visiting one of the missions, the Canadian Mission. President Eyre, with the able support of his good wife, is doing a good work. While there, I was impressed as I think one might be who was watching a great experiment, an experiment in which it was being determined what the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ can do to the changing of the lives of men and women. The experiences of that visit are still upon my mind.

### EARLY MISSIONARY EFFORTS IN CANADA

I was reminded of some of the events which took place there during the early rise of this kingdom in these latter-days. The Prophet Joseph Smith, with Sidney Rigdon, was in Brantford, Ontario, in 1833. They went there following receipt of the revelation we know as the one hundredth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, in which the Lord had shown unto them great mercy and consideration in advising them that their families were well. They had been separated from their families for some time and were concerned about them.

While in Canada, they experienced the fulfilment of the promise the Lord made in that revelation, that an effectual door would be opened for them in the land roundabout. At Mount Pleasant and Brantford, some sixteen or eighteen people joined the Church. The promise that the Holy Ghost would bear record of the truthfulness of what the brethren said was there fulfilled. Of one meeting the Prophet said:

Elder Rigdon preached to a large congregation . . . and I bore record while the Lord gave his spirit in a remarkable manner.

Toward the people the Prophet evidenced the same kind feelings that the Lord had shown to him and Sidney Rigdon. Of them

he makes entries in his journal, such as, "The people were very tender and inquiring." And again, "O God, seal our testimony to their hearts."

You are all acquainted with the fact that in 1836 Parley P. Pratt went to Canada following a great prophecy uttered by Heber C. Kimball, in which Parley P. Pratt was instructed to go to Toronto. He was told that he would there find people waiting for him who would receive the gospel, and that from there the gospel would spread into England where a great work would be done. You know how he found President John Taylor, the Fieldings, and others, and how from correspondence that went out from that place the ground was laid for the opening of the great British Mission.

In August of the next year, 1837, the Prophet Joseph Smith with Sidney Rigdon and Thomas B. Marsh, then president of the Twelve Apostles, visited Toronto. Riding in a carriage and holding evening meetings by candlelight, they visited the churches. Elder Taylor accompanied them. "This was as great a treat to me as I ever enjoyed," he said. "I had daily opportunity of conversing with them, of listening to their instructions, and in participating in the rich stores of intelligence that flowed continually from the Prophet Joseph."

#### SPIRITUALITY NOTED IN CANADIAN MISSION

As we traveled through the mission, it seemed to me that the spirit which accompanied these early brethren in their missionary labors was still to be found among the people in that goodly land.

We could feel it among the missionaries as we shook hands with them and conversed with them and heard them make their reports. The power of the gospel operating upon them is effecting a marvelous transformation in their lives. In the missionary meetings they bore eloquent testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of its restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith. Their eyes would fill with tears as they expressed their appreciation to their Heavenly Father, to you their parents, and to others of their loved ones, who are making it possible for them to fulfil their missions.

It was inspiring to see these young missionaries—who a few months ago were to a large extent, irresponsible, carefree boys and girls—watching the doors of the meetinghouses as the time for meeting approached. As their contacts arrived, they gathered them together, shepherded them to seats near the front, and proudly and tenderly sat down in the midst of them.

At the conferences there were in attendance in every one of the general meetings from seven to twenty non-member friends of the missionaries who were interested in the gospel. Some of them came as far as three hundred miles to attend the meeting—of course, some of the Saints came much longer distances—and

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they all said it was worth it. As the gospel has affected the lives of the missionaries in this great work, so has it affected the lives of the members and the investigators. When they truly accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, they have a completely new outlook on life.

After the meetings they are loath to leave the premises. They stand around for a long time. Of course that is characteristic of all Latter-day Saint gatherings. Speaking to one of the non-members after he had been there an hour, he said to me: "Well, since the meeting I have shaken hands with that young missionary over there four times. And," he said, "I have enjoyed it every time."

May I say again that the effect that the gospel of Jesus Christ has had upon these missionaries and upon these members and sincere investigators is proof positive of its power to change the interest and the very lives of men and women. It has always been that way.

#### EXPERIENCE OF ENOS

I call to mind the experience of Enos, a grandson of Lehi, who longed in his heart for a knowledge of the truthfulness of the things of which he had heard his father, Jacob, speak, and so while he was hunting beasts in the forest, he kneeled down upon the ground and called upon his Father in heaven in mighty prayer and supplication. And as he was praying, he heard a voice say unto him:

... Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

And he cried out:

Lord, how is it done?

And then the Lord said:

... Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen . . . wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole. (Enos 5, 7-8)

Now the effect upon Enos of that testimony of the truth and the knowledge of the gospel which he had is shown in the following paragraph in which he said:

Now, it came to pass that when I heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them. (*Ibid.*, 9.)

And not only did his heart change that he had a desire for the welfare of the Nephites, who were his brethren, but he had a similar desire for the Lamanites, who were his enemies, and he poured out his soul unto God for them.

## GOSPEL EFFECTS CHANGES

In the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of Alma we have a dramatic account of the power of the gospel changing almost a whole nation from a bloodthirsty, indolent, warlike people into industrious, peace-loving people. Of these people the record says that thousands were brought to a knowledge of the Lord, and that as many as were brought to a knowledge of the truth never did fall away,

For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren. (Alma 23:7.)

And:

... there was not one soul among all the people who had been converted unto the Lord that would take up arms against their brethren; ... they would not even make any preparations for war. (*Ibid.*, 24:6.)

On the contrary, they gave thanks unto God that he had given them a portion of his spirit to soften their hearts.

That is the great message I want to leave here. It is the softening of the hearts that this gospel does to the people who receive it.

The record continues:

... and this they did, vouching and covenanting with God, that rather than shed the blood of their brethren they would give up their own lives; and rather than take away from a brother they would give unto him; and rather than spend their days in idleness they would labor abundantly with their hands. (*Ibid.*, 24:18.)

And:

... they buried the weapons of war, for peace. (*Ibid.*, 24:19)

Now this remarkable transformation wrought in the hearts of these thousands of people was done in a very short period of time under the influence and power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It would do the same thing today for all the peoples of the earth if they would but receive it, for in very deed it is, as Paul said, "the power of God unto salvation," (Romans 1:16) not only spiritually, but also temporally and politically and in every other way.

It is a marvelous light even now shining in the darkness in this benighted world, but, unfortunately, as John said:

... the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not. (John 1:5.)

## RESULTS OF REJECTION

Time and time again during the history of man's sojourn upon this earth, the Lord has sent his gospel, this marvelous light, into the world to change the hearts of men in the time of crisis, that they might be saved from destruction, and time and time again the peoples of this earth have rejected it.

Just as acceptance of it changes the hearts of men and women, bringing righteousness, love, peace, and happiness, so the rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ brings wickedness, hate, war, and suffering. History clearly establishes the fact that the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be rejected with impunity.

On this point I call to mind and ask you to consider with me for a moment the experiences of the Jews in the meridian of time. The Savior presented himself and taught his gospel personally to them, but they rejected it. Near the close of his ministry, knowing that they had rejected both him and the gospel which he taught them, he was moved with profound sorrow and broke forth in that great well-known lamentation:

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!

He said, as a result of this rejection:

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. (Matt. 23:37-39.)

Elder James E. Talmage says he probably uttered these fateful words as he stood on the heights of the temple for the last time overlooking the city of the great king. This thought seemed to continue with him, because a short time thereafter as he was leaving for the final time the temple environs, the Apostles came to him and pointed out to him the beauty of the temple and the buildings on the temple site. His only answer was:

. . . verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down. (*Ibid.*, 24:2.)

He returned again to this subject on his way to Golgotha when he said to certain women who, following him, bewailed the fate to which he was going:

. . . Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. (Luke 23:28.)

And then he detailed to them the terrible events that would accompany the destruction of Jerusalem, which he saw coming as a result of the rejection of his message by the people of that day. He told them that those times and events would be so terrible that they would call upon the mountains to fall upon them and upon the hills to cover them.

You all know the sequel, how the Jews carried through their awful plot and crucified the Son of God, and how thereafter they continued to fight against his gospel. You remember, too, the price they paid, how in 70 A.D. the city fell into the hands of the Romans

as the climax of a siege in which the historian Josephus tells us there were a million one hundred thousand people killed and

. . . tens of thousands were taken captive, to be afterwards sold into slavery, or to be slain by wild beasts, or in gladiatorial combat for the amusement of Roman spectators.

All of this destruction and the dispersion of the Jews would have been avoided had the people accepted the gospel of Jesus Christ and had their hearts changed by it.

#### CHOICE BEFORE WORLD TODAY

Today the peoples of the earth stand at the crossing of the same roads as did the Jews in the days of Jesus. The same choice is before them. They may accept the gospel of Jesus Christ and move on to righteousness, peace, love, and happiness, or they may reject it and suffer wickedness, hate, war, and destruction.

The Lord in his great mercy has seen the events of our time coming, and he has sounded the warning and offered the way of escape. Remember that in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants he said:

. . . I, the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments;

Continuing with this modern revelation, the Lord makes references to that experience of Jerusalem, of which I have told you:

Behold, I tell you these things even as I also told the people of the destruction of Jerusalem; and my word shall be verified at this time as it hath hitherto been verified. (*Ibid.*, 5:19-20.)

Now my beloved brethren and sisters, in conclusion I bear witness to the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ as restored to the earth in these latter-days through the Prophet Joseph Smith is intended to be and it is the key to the solution of the problems which face our world today, both people individually and collectively. May we who have accepted and declared our allegiance to it keep it brightly shining in our own lives and before the nations of the world, and may others of our Father's children in sufficient numbers receive it before it is too late, that the world may be saved from destruction, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

##### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

My brethren and sisters, I humbly pray that the spirit which thus far has guided this conference, of which we have all partaken, may continue while I shall speak to you.

One gets so much in one of these general conferences not only