

EXPANDING THE SOUL

Brethren and sisters, spirituality is the consciousness of victory over self, and of communion with the Infinite. Spirituality impels one to conquer difficulties and acquire more and more strength. To feel one's faculties unfolding and truth expanding the soul is one of life's sublimest experiences.

Being "honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men," are attributes which contribute to spirituality, the highest acquisition of the soul. It is "the divine in man, the supreme, crowning gift that makes him king of all created things, the one final quality that makes him tower above all other animals.

Divine is that admonition and promise given to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"... let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly;"—a wonderful statement—

... then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever. (D. & C. 121:45-46.)

God help us to keep that admonition and to follow the ideals of the Church of Jesus Christ established by direct revelation in this day, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation joined in singing the hymn: "Come, O Thou King of Kings," Elder Richard P. Condie conducting.

ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

Of the First Council of the Seventy

The young men and women in our schools and colleges are confronted with many conflicting ideas concerning religion and life. They become unsettled in their minds as they study our present-day problems. Attacks are made on their religious beliefs which have been held sacred by them ever since they were children in their homes. They often come to wonder about the teachings of the Holy Bible, particularly the belief in God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. They often become indifferent to what is right in their daily living. They have just cause to wonder! The fires of revolution are burning everywhere—I fear even at our very doors. In America, and of course in the whole world, we are in need of a spiritual awakening,

Sunday, April 3

First Day

an awakening that makes men respect old truths, the finer lessons of history, *and the word of God*; a realization that a man owes a lot more to his country, than his country owes him: a return to the old standards of character that makes it easy for a man to become indignant over corruption, and to hate sin and wrong. A study of the word of God, faith, and prayer will bring about a better feeling in the minds of the youth, and it is up to the fathers and mothers to be patient with their children, for they are living in a new age.

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

Every household should keep in mind the two divinely appointed events in modern history around which must be centered our future lives as a people. The discovery of America was for a divine purpose, and the formation of this Republic was an event ordered of God for a glorious new day. The Prophet Nephi some six centuries before the birth of the Savior wrote:

And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.

And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. (1 Nephi 13:12-13.)

How deeply did Christopher Columbus feel that inspired directive purpose of God when he wrote of his discovery of America:

But these great and marvelous results are not to be attributed to any merit of mine, but to the holy Christian faith, for that which the unaided intellect of man could not compass, the Spirit of God has granted to human exertions. For God is wont to hear the prayers of his servants who live his precepts even to the performance of apparent impossibilities. . . . Let Christ rejoice on earth, as he rejoices in heaven in the prospect of the salvation of the souls of so many nations hitherto lost.

With what inspired knowledge did John Winthrop, one of the old Puritan fathers, write:

It will be a service to the Church of great consequence to carry the gospel into those parts of the world to help on the coming of the fulness of the Gentiles.

WASHINGTON'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In his first inaugural address, Washington said:

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that

Almighty Being who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States.

The people whom Columbus found in America, and to whom Washington was the means of bringing a knowledge of an Old World, were a deeply religious people. In a recent visit to the Maricopa Stake, I was impressed with the group of Indians that was present. Noble-looking people, they were. Some of them were Navajos, some Zunis, and a few Apaches. In speaking to them, I recalled a visit, made to Boston many years ago, of some Zunis. We are told that they were taken down the harbor, that they might worship. Landing on an island, the Indians disappeared for a time, and on their return they walked into the sea, and, with deep solemnity, sang their mystic chant. They then threw out upon the air from their uplifted hands the grain they offered to the god of waters, and let it float away as a thanks offering. That was worship of the Great Spirit.

AMBASSADORS OF TRUTH

When Jesus sent forth the Twelve and Seventy as his ambassadors of the divine truths which he was teaching, he charged them to reproduce the miracles of his own personal ministry. Such an extension of his work was a part of his original project of evangelizing the country roundabout Palestine and eventually the world.

After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

And into whatever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. (Luke 10:1-3, 5.)

Some days afterward, we read in the gospel of St. Luke:

And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

And he turned . . . unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see. (*Ibid.*, 10:17, 23.)

To Jesus it was a provocation of purest happiness that God had chosen these men, unlearned and simple men, in preference to intel-

lectual and aristocratic leaders. Throughout his ministry, peasants and fishermen, the unlearned and landless were called and he rejoiced that their mission had been sealed by God: that through the faith of the Twelve and the Seventy they had been invested with mysterious gifts of his Spirit. Jesus lifted up the ideal of life in the kingdom of God to inspire his disciples to heightened aspirations and endeavor. He did not lay down a rigid legalism, but as one English writer, Dr. Church, in his *Essays and Reviews* has written:

He wooed his pupils by persuasive ideals. He transferred the source of happiness and the understanding of the gospel from external circumstances to the *inward life of man*. Goodness, morals, ideals depend upon one's attitude toward God. It was fundamental to the ethic of Jesus. For this reason the Beatitudes are conjoined with purity of heart. It denotes simplicity, a singleness of aim in allegiance to the divine teachings of the Master. The ethical and religious teachings pervading Christ's instructions to these first Christian missionaries has become the foundation of the inner light of the Seventies of today. Their lives exhale the aroma of complete consecration. They are the salt of the earth, the Light of the world.

GOD'S SERVANTS

God's first demands of his servants are pure hearts, upright lives, truthfulness, mercy, and honesty. Good manners were regarded as matters of religion and morality. Boasting, ostentation, conceit, were of old considered the patent evidence of vulgarity. These are condemned by the scriptures. The Seventies must always keep in mind the grandeur of the First Article of Faith, which is the greatest statement of Truth since the days of Christ our Redeemer. They must keep in mind the supreme test of religion, which is *revelation*. No religion can be persuasive unless it relies on the principle of revelation. All true men reveal God, but the completest carrier of revelation can be no other, or less than a chosen personality. This is the Christian conception. The nobler the person, the truer the revelation.

It will be a noble resolution for every Seventy to say to himself: "I shall read more diligently and more deeply the Holy Scriptures than ever before." The Holy Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price are not intended for the few. Their subject-matter constitutes truth, necessary for us all. Every quorum of seventy will from now on become a study group, where vital truths are discussed. It is within such a group that men are stimulated to think and to converse in preparation for the teaching of the gospel. At a time when so much of our world literature is strangely blind to the glory and excellence of human nature at best, we should dedicate ourselves again to the study of the truths and the beauties and holiness of the sacred word of God.

MISSION OF SEVENTIES

The Seventies, because of their calling, have a high mission set before them. They should resolve that they will develop their mental and spiritual powers toward maturity and learn to have communion with great souls through the reading of their messages of truth. The habit of reading must be formed as early in life as possible. A few minutes every day will soon be a great many hours. Do not miss the thoughts of men who have lived in former times. Broaden your understanding, enliven your sympathy for other peoples and their ways of living. Make your own lives richer and deeper by learning other ideas and visions of people. Read good books. Read them again and again until you have drawn the essence of thought and feeling from them. These are some of the reasons why the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote:

... seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith. (D. & C. 88:118.)

Joy will be the characteristic of the quorums of Seventy so long as they are growing, expanding, and creating healthfully. When they cease to grow, they cease to live. God sent us into the world to create and to enrich our own personality in the process. Yet we have to rely on God's help to make anything worth making. If we devote ourselves to God, we must see to it that we have *ourselves* to devote. "Self consecration is not a negative thing: it is a very positive thing," says a noted evangelist. This leads us to the knowledge that what we are is more important than what we do or say. If we are really wise in our concepts of God, then our thoughts lie deeply, though often misunderstood. It takes deep thoughts to understand the depths of the message of divine truth. For this reason the brethren can hear God speak, and those whose hearts God has touched can find their way easily to the hearts of others.

TRUE TO REVEALED WORD

In the difficult times that surround us today, the brethren holding the priesthood of God must, above all things, be true to the word of God as revealed by the Master *and as revealed today*. The words of truth are ever the same. Love, joy, peace, faith, humility; these are the characteristic Christian ideas. How beautiful are the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he said:

... O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind, and strength, that ye may stand blameless before God at the last day.

* * * *

And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work.

Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence. (D. & C. 4:2, 5-6.)

Herein is the Prophet conveying the charm of his teachings and an heroic conception of the good in life. His concept of the Christian virtues and graces is noble and comprehensive. He exalted and glorified the principles of morals as given by the Savior of the world, and aroused the adoration of men for the gospel which is the only road to peace. It is the mission of the Seventies and all who hold the priesthood to stimulate healthy and majestic ideals through self-discipline and the knowledge that in "pure religion and undefiled," is life eternal.

A testimony, my brethren, of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ is a sacred trust. It can come only to one who has opened his heart and mind to hallowed living with earnest prayer and deep faith in the Living God. It is the most divine gift of all. "For it is faith and not wisdom which carrieth the key to the kingdom of heaven," says Sholem Asch.

Sir Francis Drake in admonishing his men, said:

Men pass away, but people abide. See that ye hold fast the heritage we leave you, yea, and teach your children its value, that never in the coming centuries their hearts may fail them, or their hands grow weak. Hitherto we have been too much afraid. Henceforth, we will fear only God.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

As President McKay indicated in his opening remarks, at times these conferences seem to come rather close together, and this is one of those times. I earnestly hope and pray to be given utterance on this occasion. I feel at home within these walls, but the impact of this congregation is something for which I am never quite prepared. It has been my privilege for many years to frequent this building and these grounds, and I have a growing love of them and a growing feeling of peace and appreciation here. They speak of great things of the past and of great things of the future—and I have great faith in the future. I have great faith in the ultimate accomplishment of the purposes of Providence, in spite of the foolishness of men. It is a glorious world in spite of many man-made troubles.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

One of the things that happens in this world every day of which I think we are not too well aware is the going and coming of tens of thousands of people—the arrivals of newcomers and the departures of those who have finished their sojourn here, for a time at least. It is an ever-startling fact to me that about one hundred fifty thousand