

Twenty-first Semi-Annual Conference of the Church. We are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Presiding at this session is President George Albert Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and conducting, at President Smith's request, is David O. McKay, his second counselor.

These services and all general sessions of the Conference will be broadcast in the Assembly Hall and Barratt Hall over a loud speaking system and by television.

The proceedings of this session will be broadcast over station KSL, Salt Lake City, and by arrangement through KSL, over the stations named in the first session of the Conference. This session will also be televised over KSL television station, channel five.

The singing for this session will be furnished by the Deseret Stake Choir, Elder Ladd R. Cropper, director, and Elder Roy M. Darley at the organ.

We shall begin the services by the Deseret Stake Choir singing: "Come, Come Ye Saints," after which the opening prayer will be offered by President Reed H. Beckstead of the East Jordan Stake.

The Choir sang the hymn "Come, Come Ye Saints."

The opening prayer was offered by President Reed H. Beckstead of the East Jordan Stake.

The Choir then sang "Spirit of God."

ELDER ANTOINE R IVINS

Of the First Council of Seventy

My beloved brethren and sisters, as I stand before you this morning to add my testimony to those that have already been given you in this conference, I seek an interest in your faith and prayers. I pray that what I say may be prompted by the Spirit of God, that out of it may possibly come a word of encouragement for some of us; for my sole purpose, in ministering as I am called to do to the seventies and to the Church generally is to be helpful, to stimulate if I can the faith and the courage of the members of the Church.

It has been very wisely said that he who carries a lantern to light the pathway of his brother sees more clearly his own. I must confess that in trying to encourage others, I gain courage, strength, and faith. It is in a spirit of love that I minister and help those that need it, if I can, realizing at the same time that I get joy and satisfaction out of it.

VISIT TO CANADIAN MISSION

Only a week ago Sister Ivins and I returned from a visit to the Canadian Mission, where we had the privilege of listening to

the testimonies of almost 160 of your sons and daughters; where we heard their expressions of faith and their determination to carry on and further the work to which they have been called in the service of God. It was our purpose to encourage and to stimulate them in their faith, to help if we could, to surmount any obstacles that had presented themselves to them. Also, it was our purpose to encourage the members of the Church in that area, to help them.

I was very pleased to discover what I think is an awakening among the people of that area. In some of the meetings we had more investigators than members, after excluding the missionaries. Rather large groups of investigators were present. In some sections we had the privilege of meeting people of Jewish ancestry who have come into the Church. That and other experiences that I have had in other missions of the Church seem to indicate to me that there is an awakening of interest among the people with whom we labor. I hope it is real. I hope it is an indication of an increasing faith on the part of the people and their dependence upon the Lord for his blessings. I hope it doesn't come from fear of the present conditions that prevail in the world but rather from a sincere desire to serve God and enjoy the blessings that come from the companionship of his Holy Spirit.

They expect in the Canadian Mission to baptize more people than they did last year. By a missionary who returned the other day from one of the missions, I was told that in a single month the missionaries had baptized almost as many people as in some previous years in the same territory. As I said, I hope it indicates a true increase in interest and desire on the part of the people to approach God and get nearer to him. And I hope that same spirit exists among us who are here at home. I wish to assure the fathers and mothers of those missionaries in the Canadian Mission that their leadership is good, that the president of that mission has only the welfare of the work and the welfare of the missionaries at heart, that it is my judgment that he enjoys the Spirit of God in his ministry, that his wife is supporting him loyally and well. The missionaries are without exception in the enjoyment of health.

NEED FOR FAITH

This is a time when we need faith, faith of a very definite and positive nature, the faith that will lead us to optimism. I believe that pessimism grows out of a lack of faith, and that if we have the right type of faith, we will be optimistic about the future. It may be true that the immediate future may have difficulties for us, but I feel that out of it all will grow a realization of the purposes of God. And it should be our purpose to develop and maintain in our hearts, if we can, faith in God and in the ultimate consummation of his purposes—a faith that will unite us in a solid, coherent group. We must, of course, in order to do that, develop faith in each other.

Without that faith we are not likely to go far in promoting the work of the Lord. We must have a faith that will encourage our returning missionaries. I find as I interview them, that they are uncertain. They don't know just what is going to happen to them because of present chaotic conditions, but we must try to develop in their hearts faith and reliance on God that will enable them to plan as they would like to plan, and then carry on even though those plans may be temporarily interrupted; the faith that will lead us to the ultimate consummation of the purposes of God, faith that will help us to cooperate, that out of cooperation may come strength. If we could properly unite our efforts, all of our temporal difficulties could be overcome, I am sure. If and when we overcome, it will be only because we unite in our purpose through faith in each other.

RESULTS OF COOPERATION

I want to tell you a very pretty little thing that I once saw that illustrates the result of cooperation. Most of you know that I spent a time in Mexico. One time as I was riding on a cold, frosty morning through the Sierra Madre Mountains, I ran on to a little covey of Messina partridges. It was cold, and they got together for self-protection. I noticed that each one of those birds had spread his wings, and they had so intertwined them that their bodies were completely covered as a shield from the frost and the cold; only their heads stuck up above that covering. And they survived. Without that united effort of self-protection, they might have succumbed to the weather. But with it, they came through in comfort, I am sure.

Now if we could so put out our arms and shield each other, if we could so support each other through the faith that we should have in each other, then all the righteous purposes of God as far as this group of people is concerned, I am sure, could be realized. Can we develop that faith? I think we should; I think it could come as a result of a positive effort on our part.

IMPROVEMENTS NOTED

I have been checking the records of the various stakes that I have visited all this year, and in many respects I notice, as compared with previous years, that there is a better condition indicated in those reports, the condition of greater faith. There are some items that show slipping, but many of them show improvement in the stakes that I have visited. The use of liquor and tobacco seems to be decreasing, if I can trust those statistics. The number of people who hold family prayers seems to be on the increase. The number of people, the percentage of those in the Melchizedek Priesthood who observe the Sabbath seems to be on the increase. I noticed in a stake that I visited recently that the attendance at sacrament meeting has been on a steady increase, showing a rising curve over the

last few years. I hope that these indications are real, that they show a real determination on our part to live closer to God and serve him better.

STRIVE FOR PERFECTION

I love this service; I love the people. I am always encouraged when I see these signs of faith on their part. We're never perfect—we will never be perfect—but we should strive for perfection, and the development of faith is the thing that will bring it. My faith prompts me to believe that God has a design for the world that he expects us to realize. And the best way for us to do that is to pay attention to today. Yesterday has gone. It will never come back. Today is always with us so long as we live. Tomorrow is a hope only, so today we must look to ourselves, to our behavior, look to our faith in ourselves and in God. If we are satisfied with it, all well and good! If we are not, let's increase it. Let's make such changes in our program and in our attitudes that will increase that faith. I have said we should have faith in each other. We should have faith in our leadership, in the ward, in the stake, in the general officers of the Church. I stand here to bear testimony to you that in all my associations with the leadership of the Church above me, I have seen nothing but honest purpose. Let's try and develop that type of faith. Let's develop a loyalty to the organization that will prompt us to live its standards. Overcoming the temptations of the world and living the standards of the Church should be a matter of loyalty to us, a matter of self-discipline. We should take pride in ourselves that we can live the will of the Church, whether we always know the reason for it or not. It is my feeling and my testimony that out of the inspiration of God which comes to these brethren, comes a policy for the Church that is wise and well-designed, that will be for the welfare and the progress of every man and every woman that will follow it.

May God give us this faith in ourselves, faith in those who lead us, faith in our ultimate destiny that will enable us to carry on, without misgivings and without fear, into the future; that will enable us to carve out our destiny; that will ultimately bring us back to the presence of God in exaltation, I pray, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

I have paid particular attention in this conference to the prayers that have been offered. They have been indeed a good example for all of us to follow. I hope that I will receive in turn my full share of prayers asked in behalf of those who take part here in this conference as I am sure those who have preceded me have received.