

Love," after which Elder Alma Sonne, one of the Assistants to the Twelve will address us.

Singing by the choir "Jesus, Name of Wondrous Love."

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, I have been full of anxiety during all the sessions of this conference. It has been said that everything comes to him who waits. I have been waiting and waiting, and here I stand well-nigh exhausted. It reminds me of a young man who stood before his fellow missionaries over in Norway to bear his testimony for the first time. He said, "I am told when you are weak, you are strong; but when I am weak, I'm just weak."

EXPANSION OF CHURCH

I rejoice with you in the growth and expansion of the Church, in the marvelous progress which it has made since it was organized in the year 1830. I am proud of the achievements of the men and women who first planted their feet in these Rocky Mountains and laid the foundation for all we have and are. I am also proud of the men and women who built the great city of Nauvoo and erected there a temple of the Lord. I am equally proud of those who built the Kirtland Temple in times of great hardship and adversity. I rejoice in the success which has attended the Latter-day Saints in this dispensation, and particularly in the success of the great missionary enterprise which is going forward in the world. I tell you the opposition is crumbling, and the Lord's work is going forward. Never before have we had the friendly reception which we are receiving today in all the nations of Europe. Our message is being listened to by people everywhere, and the Lord is preparing the hearts of men and women for the gospel message; and so I view the situation throughout with optimism and delight, so far as the Church is concerned.

WORLD ATTITUDE CHANGING

Just before leaving London, I purchased a book. Its author is Dr. Ernest William Barnes, the famous Bishop of Birmingham, England. I did not get time to read the book as thoroughly and carefully as I should have done, but I noticed as I scanned through its pages the learned man called attention to this one thing, namely that infant baptism was unknown in the days of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. In another place, he quoted the words of Paul, the Apostle:

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead? (1 Cor. 15:29.)

He then concluded that there can be no question but that the early Christians were baptized for their dead relatives and friends. Why is the attitude of the world changing respecting these doctrines? Because, brethren and sisters, the endeavors of the humble men and women who have gone forth as missionaries have been eminently successful, and people in all the walks of life are reading our literature. About a year ago I rode on the train from northern England to London. When we came to the city of Darlington, the door to our compartment opened, and a minister of the Church of England entered. He looked us over rather carefully and finally said, "I am curious to know why you Americans should come from a land of plenty to a land of scarcity."

My companion, a young missionary, who was always eager for a gospel conversation, turned to him and replied, "We are missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," and then with characteristic bluntness, "commonly called Mormons."

ARTICLES OF FAITH

The minister was not shocked, I think perhaps he had surmised who we were. The young missionary, true to form in all respects, reached into his pocket and produced a little card on which were printed the Articles of Faith. The minister read the articles very carefully and handed them back to the missionary with the remark, "I can believe most of these fine declarations of faith." And then good naturedly, "Of course, I am not prepared to believe that Zion is to be built upon the American continent." But he went on to talk about these thirteen Articles of Faith and referred to them as "a great religious document."

I have always said, and I now repeat it, there is something more than man's genius back of these thirteen Articles of Faith. How could anyone devise a better introduction to a gospel conversation for our missionaries? These articles are not antagonistic. One follows the other in proper sequence. They are sound and scriptural and have a strong appeal to those who are familiar with the Holy Bible. They are neither dogmatic nor unfriendly. The Prophet showed great wisdom, it seems to me, and a rare insight into human nature, when he used the words, "we believe," in presenting this powerful message to the world. Is it any wonder that they have been translated into so many languages? They are not only well-stated, but they are also well-selected from all the beliefs of the Latter-day Saints. They have stood the test of one hundred years, during which time they have been analyzed and scrutinized by thousands of investigators. Not a single alteration has been necessary. These declarations are an important part of the Prophet's literary and scriptural productions. They are neither threadbare nor obsolete.

REACTION TO TRACTS

When our minister had finally finished reading them, my mis-

sionary companion handed him another of our tracts. It was the one entitled "What Is Mormonism?" written years ago by Elder John A. Widtsoe. He read it from beginning to end. It was much longer. It took him an hour to read it. He was equally complimentary when he returned it to us. "It is one of the best religious papers I have read," he said. Then my companion did a bold thing. He reached into his brief case and took from it another tract called *Joseph Smith Tells His Own Story*. Our friend read it, but the expression on his face changed. His attitude was different. His friendliness disappeared. He handed it back without comment except to say, "The answer to that gospel tract is either 'yes' or 'no.'" And I believe he was right. There is no middle ground upon which you can consider the claims of Joseph Smith. He was either prophet or fraud, for he did his work like one called of God.

EXPLANATION OF JOSEPH SMITH

I also picked up in England another book, written by Dr. James Black of Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a prominent clergyman in the Church of England in Edinburgh. He wrote numerous articles against the Latter-day Saints over a period of fifteen or twenty years. These articles were bitter and were directed primarily against the leaders of the Church and against the missionaries who were then in England. One chapter in his book is devoted to the Mormons in Utah, and in it the reverend gentleman made a confession that he has failed after years of study to understand Joseph Smith. Said he in his statement:

The real problem in Mormonism is how an ill-educated man like Joseph Smith could have invented an elaborate system of rules and ideas with many historical references, ingenious speculations and imaginative flights, and moreover, how he could have expounded them in a style of writing apparently foreign to his ordinary speech and range of culture.

He goes on:

On the other hand, the charge of his enemies that the whole system is merely an invention and a fraud does not touch the problem, for this charge does not explain and cannot explain how such an ill-educated man could produce such an elaborate system. This is a bigger problem than most people imagine. It requires an exceedingly able scholar to foist a highly wrought-out fraud to last for over a century upon the public.

Who will explain Joseph Smith? Is there any explanation of this great prophet of the latter days? Only one, brethren and sisters, and that is the one which he himself gave. No one will explain this prophet of the nineteenth century except those who accept him as a prophet of God.

May the Lord bless this great work which has been established upon the earth in the last days. May he bless his servants and handmaidens who are going forth in the world to present this gospel of salvation, and may we live so that our lives may shine like a beacon

light to lead the world towards the truth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President George Albert Smith:

We have just heard from Elder Alma Sonne, of the Assistants to the Twelve. President Richard L. Evans of the First Council of Seventy, will now address us, and following him Elder Ezra Taft Benson, of the Council of the Twelve. President Evans is a man whose voice is heard more than that of any other man in the country.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the First Council of Seventy

I am sure that no one knows as well as I know how much I need help as I face this congregation here and those who may be listening and looking on the air, and I earnestly hope that I may have it.

I have jotted down from time to time mentally or actually, these past three days, things that I think it might have been well for me to have said at this conference, and I have repeatedly scratched them out as others have said them. They make a rather long list.

I heard some weeks ago a set of figures presented by Brother A. Z. Richards, which I felt deserved wider circulation as a point of historical perspective. I should like to extract a few of these figures from a longer list:

FIGURES QUOTED

When Joseph Smith was born, the population of the United States was about one-half the present population of California.

In 1820, the population of the entire United States was about the population of New York City today.

In 1830, when the Church was organized, New York City was about one-third larger than Salt Lake City is today.

In 1837, when our missionaries first went to Great Britain, New York City was smaller than Denver is today.

In 1847, there were only two United States cities larger than Salt Lake City today; they were New York and Manhattan, both of which are now part of the present greater New York.

When Martin Harris went to New York with the Book of Mormon characters, New York City was only slightly larger than Salt Lake City is today.

Before Nauvoo was abandoned by our people, Washington, D. C., was about the same size as Nauvoo, but Nauvoo had been only three or four years in the making while Washington, D. C. had been designated as the seat of national government more than a half-century before that time.