

May we Seventies come to a deeper realization of what our duties are, and so long as we are pure in heart and humble in spirit, the way will be made clear by our faith in God. I ask the blessings of the Lord upon us all, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay

Elder Harold B. Lee, of the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to us.

If President Heber Meeks, former president of the Southern States Mission, is in the audience, we should like him to come forward, and President Jean Wunderlich of the West German Mission also.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I sincerely pray for the sustaining power of your faith and prayers for the few moments that I shall stand before you this morning.

THE HAND OF DEATH

As we sit this morning with the present reminder of the hand of death, all of us moved with a common impulse of feeling toward our great leader, I have recalled a remark that was made to Elder Lorenzo H. Hatch and myself, as we waited down at Las Vegas, Nevada, a few weeks ago for a late, delayed train. We chanced to be in conversation with a life insurance salesman who is reputed to be one of the outstanding salesmen in America. He expressed a sentiment that has intrigued me, and I want to repeat it to you because of the impression it made upon me. He said, "If you ever want to stir a man into action, you want to back up the hearse and let him smell the flowers prepared for his own service."

At first that seemed to be a terribly gruesome prospect, but as I thought about it the more, it seemed to me that after all it was but a crude way of stating a great eternal truth that has been thundered to us by the prophets from the beginning. All through the scriptures we have had a counsel given us that all that we should do, we should do with an eye single to the glory of God, which glory, the Lord declared to Moses, was to bring to pass immortality and eternal life, that very reminder that death draws nearer each day that we live. It was that same thought expressed by the Apostle Paul when he said:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

. . . For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
(1 Cor. 15:19-22.)

THE TIME TO PREPARE

It was also the great prophet Amulek's testimony in which he declared,

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; . . . [and] to perform their labors.

. . . for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.

For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked. (*Alma 34:32-33, 35.*)

It was this very reminder that the Angel Moroni gave to the Prophet Joseph, which he records in that famous Wentworth letter when he quoted the Angel Moroni as saying that

. . . preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence; that the time was at hand for the gospel in all its fulness to be preached in power, unto all nations, that a people might be prepared for the Millennial reign. (*D. H. C. IV:537.*)

GOSPEL TO BE PREACHED

In making for that preparation, the Lord has defined certain great responsibilities for his Church. He said as one of the signs of his coming that the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached unto all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then should the end come, or the destruction of the wicked. (See Matt. 24:14.) That witness we have understood, was to be a witness of the mission of the Messiah. It was to be a witness of the divinity of his mission. It was to be a witness that the gospel of Jesus Christ had been restored in all its fulness, in this the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

A LIGHT TO THE WORLD

But there was something else that we were supposed to witness which is also spoken of in the revelations. Alma spoke of this to his people who were about to be baptized. As a part of the covenant which they were about to enter, he said that they were to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that they might be in, even until death. (Mosiah 18:9.) In one of the earliest revelations given in this dispensation, the Lord said,

And even so I have sent mine everlasting covenant into the world, to be a light to the world, and to be a standard for my people, and for the Gentiles to seek to it. (*D. & C. 45:9.*)

He again admonished us, on the day when he gave the name by which the Church was to be called. After giving us the name,

. . . thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that they light may be a standard for the nations. (*Ibid.*, 115:4-5.)

As I have thought of those scriptures, I have remembered a statement that was made by an official of the United States Steel Corporation after I had spent an hour or two with him and his company of officials down at Welfare Square. He said to me, "This is a practical demonstration of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in giving aid to the needy and the less fortunate."

WITNESSES BEFORE THE WORLD

That was a new concept to me, that in the welfare program we were standing as witnesses before the world of the divine way by which the Lord's work was to be done.

So, we witness in our missionary work the magnificent spectacle of young men and young women, for the most part, to all the ends of the earth, that by their unselfish services they stand as witnesses at all times and in all places of the divine responsibility upon the Church to teach the gospel.

So, in making sacrifice, in the payment of our tithes, and in fasting and paying our fast offerings, in raising money to pay for meetinghouses and temples, again we are witnessing that the law of sacrifice is required of all true Saints if we would claim kinship to him who gave his life that men might be.

In our social conduct, in our dancing, in our play, we must never forget that in that play we are witnessing also that we are his special witnesses of the divinity of the organizations who sponsor our play.

So, every boy in military service, and every girl in her social conduct, every businessman in his dealings with his neighbor, is a witness as to whether or not this work in which he believes is divine. The Church rises or falls on the tide of these personal witnesses.

A few weeks ago I sat in fast meeting in the South Eighteenth Ward (Salt Lake City) and heard a lovely girl in her mid-twenties stand to bear her testimony. It was a thrilling testimony of a beautiful Latter-day Saint girl. She told in her testimony about a morning out on the farm in a little country district where at four o'clock in the morning she went out with her father to milk the cows. And as the father and she went out towards the barn, her father took her by the hand and said, "My girl, you are the product of this Church of Jesus Christ, and you are also the product of a true Latter-day Saint home. If you fail, so far as you are concerned the Church has failed and your home has failed." That girl from that time has realized that she, as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, was a witness of it to all the world either for good or for bad.

Friday, April 6

First Day

Oh, the majesty of Joseph sold into Egypt, who shamed the beautiful but apparently unloved wife of Potiphar, when she would have tempted him to a serious sin, and he said, "My master trusts me, and thou art his wife. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (See Gen. 39:8.) He, too, felt his great responsibility in being a true witness of the divine truths which he professed to believe.

In one of the revelations the Lord said something else that to me has significance here. He said,

For Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness; her borders must be enlarged; her stakes must be strengthened; yea, verily I say unto you, Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments. (D. & C. 82:14.)

JAPANESE MISSIONARY GIRL

I heard a lovely Japanese missionary girl down at Kamuela on the island of Hawaii a few years ago make what I think was a personal application of that principle as it pertained to her home. There were few missionaries in that day, the war was not yet ended, and this young lady and her companion were two of the only four missionaries on that island. We had in the audience eighty-five United States marines, all Latter-day Saints, who were being trained there supposedly for an invasion off Japan, the homeland of these two lovely missionary girls. Our sister missionary was called to speak before that kind of audience. Tremblingly she stood at the pulpit, and this is what she said: "When my father came to me and told me that they wanted me to go on a mission, I said to him, 'No, Father, I can't go on a mission.'" He pressed her as to why, and she said, "Oh, I just can't." But he urged further, and then she said, "I can't go because if I go out into the mission field I'll be expected to preach certain principles of the gospel, principles which my own father and my own family are not living."

The father asked, "What are we not doing that you'd have to preach?"

"Well," replied his daughter, "I'll be expected to teach the law of sacrifice. You're not even paying your tithing. I'll be asked to teach them about family prayers, and we never have family prayers. I'll be expected to teach the Word of Wisdom; we're using coffee and tea in our home. I'll be expected to teach the importance of giving service in the Church, and you are shunning that service. No, Father, I can't go out and be a hypocrite."

I think that father spent a sleepless night. "The next morning," our Japanese sister said, "Father came to me and said, 'You go, my dear, and your father will try to live as his daughter will preach.'"

Two days later, I met her over at Honolulu at a missionary conference, and she had just been home for the first time in nearly two years. And during the course of the conference I whispered

to her, "How did you find things at home?" She smiled, and tears were in her eyes as she said, "It's all right. Father is, and I'm happy."

Youth that we send out from us rarely ever will be stronger than the kind of homes and environment from which they come. The challenge of this time, what with military service of young men eighteen years, young girls disturbed in their social life, is to see that Zion is increased in holiness. We must increase in beauty. Our homes, our quorums, our wards, and our stakes must be strengthened. Zion must arise and put on her most beautiful garments.

COUNSEL OF SUSANNAH WESLEY

A short while ago I read wise counsel from a lovely mother, Susannah Wesley, mother of John Wesley, famed in religious circles. This was what this lovely mother said to her son, which was a criterion by which he could judge right and wrong, in pleasure, and for that matter in all the affairs of life. These were her words:

Would you judge the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure? Then use this rule: Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sight of God, takes from you your thirst for spiritual things, or increases the authority of your body over your mind, then that thing to you is evil. By this test you may detect evil no matter how subtly or how plausibly temptation may be presented to you.

Oh, I wish that every youth would use that rule and measure everything presented to him in order that he might choose the right. God grant that we may strengthen Zion within ourselves, that we might live nobly and prepare to present ourselves in honor at the close of our lives here, before him whose name we bear as members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I humbly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER HEBER MEEKS

Former President of the Southern States Mission

Our souls have been fed, our lives enriched, our spirits lifted up, by the inspired messages which have come to us from these servants of the Lord. And while there is darkness, confusion, and almost utter despair in the world, what a glorious thing it is that there is a place in the earth, where we may come, as it were, and sit at the feet of the living prophets of God and receive light and truth from the very throne of God. Our pathway is thus made sure, and we can walk among our fellow men in that quiet serenity born of the Holy Spirit of God, that Spirit which brings a peace to the human soul that surpasseth the understanding of men.

I bear witness to you, my brethren and sisters, that this Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the repository of those principles and ordinances and sacraments which will redeem the human soul, that within it is the power to bring the human soul