

Monday, April 6

Third Day

to grow in a physical way to take care of the membership of the Church.

Possibly it may not be considered inappropriate to say a word about the building department of the Church under the direction of Elder Howard J. McKean and his associates. They have caused these monuments to spirituality and faith to be erected with good designs, excellent materials, and fine workmanship. Because they are practical builders, they have been able to effect substantial savings to the Church and to the wards and stakes. Great faith has been manifested by the bishops, stake presidents, and local building committees in undertaking the construction of these lovely buildings. A faith-promoting volume could be written about the rich experiences that have come to them. The blessings of the Lord have known no bounds. It would seem that the spirit of the pioneer builders had returned, for they built by faith. As an outstanding example, may I mention about this Tabernacle in which we are now worshiping. It is 150 feet wide by 250 feet long and 70 feet high. It was built between 1863 and 1867 when no finished materials or bolts or steel nails or modern tools were available. They had only the timbers of the nearby canyons and very crude tools and machinery. Under these conditions, it took strong faith to undertake the erection of this unusual elliptical roof. The lattice trusses fitted together with wooden pegs and cowhide must span 150 feet. The least spreading of the trusses would kick out the stone piers below. A prominent engineer of the east, after examining this roof on the inside, stated that it constituted the greatest demonstration

of faith that he had seen in any construction.

Now, my brethren and sisters, and especially you bishops and stake and mission presidents, we now rejoice in and are grateful for these beautiful buildings. May I make just a few suggestions to you? In the first place, let us keep them all clean and in order and maintain them in good condition. Then let's encourage all of our people to show respect and reverence to them as houses of the Lord. Above everything else, let us follow the advice just given by Elder Moyle: Let us serve as leaders in the wards, and stakes, and missions in these buildings, in the spirit of love and kindness. Let us carry on our work as the Master says, "Serve each other in love," in such a way that no offenses can be taken by anyone. Finally, though it may not be possible to have neon signs at the top of all of these spires as I would like to see, with these words: "Jesus is the Christ," let us hope that the testimonies of the leaders and members alike bear witness of this great truth and this work is of God, and that the gospel as established in the last days is for the salvation of all honest people throughout the world. And then again, let us invite all visitors to come to these places and assure them that they will never be embarrassed by having a collection plate passed before them. Freely we have received, and freely we give unto the world. God bless you all, my brethren and sisters, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President Richard L. Evans of the First Council of the Seventy will be our next speaker.

ELDER RICHARD L. EVANS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

FIRST OF ALL, I should like to thank Brother Marion G. Romney for his thoughtfulness for some great men, for whom I have deep affection, some

present here, and some absent. At the risk of some seeming repetition, I do not feel that I can proceed without acknowledging how much I miss Dr.

John A. Widtsoe, scientist, educator, author, public-servant, personal counselor, friend, and man of God. May his memory be blessed, his family be blessed and comforted, and the purposes and principles for which he gave his life be prospered.

And to President Richards, and to Brother Bowen likewise, my sincere affection and appreciation and blessing. Likewise to President McKay, and President Clark, and President Smith, and these other brethren with whom we have the privilege of associating among the General Authorities. It is a choice and rich friendship and fellowship.

And to Dr. Adam S. Bennion, a word of welcome from me: presumptuous though it may be, I feel that I must speak it. I have been privileged to have many satisfying associations with him. I recall when he was Church commissioner of education, and I was a student in high school: How wise and mature and old he looked to me when I was sixteen, and how able and mature and young he appears to me now that I am somewhat past sixteen. I am sure that I have changed much more than he has.

I am convinced that thoughts are contagious. The evidence of it is that many if not most of those subjects that any of us might have spoken on at this conference have already been so wonderfully well covered, and we have been the beneficiaries of a marvelous outpouring of the Spirit of our Father in heaven. But I could not help thinking as I heard the opening report and message of President McKay, and the statistical data concerning the progress of the Church at the same session, of some of the experiences and hardships and contrasts of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his associates. I went to the office following that session and sought out some things that I had read some time ago, including two comments concerning the Prophet and the dire circumstances in which he found himself during the difficult Kirtland days. One is from April 17, 1834:

I attended a meeting agreeable to appointment, at which time the important subjects of the deliverance of Zion and the building of the Lord's House in Kirtland were discussed by Elder Rigdon. After the lecture, I requested the brethren and sisters to contribute all the money they could for the deliverance of Zion and received twenty-nine dollars and sixty-eight cents. (*D.H.C.* II:50.)

About a year and a half later, approaching the Christmas season, December 9, 1835, the Prophet Joseph Smith writes again:

At home. Wind south, strong, and chilly. Elder Packard came in this morning, and made me a present of twelve dollars, which he held in a note against me. May God bless him for his liberality. Also, James Aldrich sent me my note by hand of Jesse Hitchcock, on which there was twelve dollars due, and may God bless him for his kindness to me. Also the brethren whose names are written below opened their hearts in great liberality, and paid me at the committee's store, the sums set opposite their respective names. (*Ibid.*, II:326-27.)

There follow twenty names with contributions ranging from fifty cents to \$5.25, totaling \$40.50, for which the Prophet says,

My heart swells with gratitude inexpressible, when I realize the great condescension of my Heavenly Father, in opening the hearts of these my beloved brethren to administer so liberally to my wants. (*Ibid.*, II:327.)

May God help us to do as well with what we have as they did with what they had.

I think we shall go from here today with an awareness in our hearts that we have been taught well. I hope that we shall go from here with an awareness that we must be doers of the word and not hearers only, that we must not stand by and listen only. I think it was Emerson who said, "'Tis man's perdition to be safe, when for the truth he ought to die." I should like to paraphrase this sentence and say, "'Tis man's perdition to be complacent and inactive, when for the truth he ought to

Monday, April 6

Third Day

live, when he ought to be doing what he knows he ought to be doing." I return to a favorite theme of mine: As we stand before the Great Judge of all of us, I think it shall not be what we don't know that will get us into trouble or that will cause penalties to come upon us. I think we know enough for our salvation and exaltation in the highest that the Father can give us. I think our difficulties will come rather from what we do know and ignore and fail to live up to; and merciful as our Father may be, kind and indulgent and gracious as he may be, there are some things he cannot give to us, as there are some things we cannot give to our own children, except as they earn them and live them and are deserving of them and make them a part of themselves.

I recall from the tenth chapter of Mark the request of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, that they be permitted to sit on the right hand and the left hand of the Savior, and how he said unto them, "Ye know not what ye ask: . . . to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give. . . ." (Mark 10:38, 40.) No matter how much he may love us, there are some things the Father cannot give us except as we learn them, except as we live as well as we know how to live, except as we keep his commandments, and do what we know we should be doing.

Now, I should like to close with a thought that I take from our new associate, Dr. Adam S. Bennion, whom you have sustained this day. I have never heard a finer baccalaureate address than he delivered at the University of Utah a year or two ago called "The Candle of the Lord," in which he told, in his extemporaneous remarks (and I think perhaps it is not in the printed address as he gave it) how puzzled he was in his youth upon having heard or having read in Sunday School the passage of scripture in II Samuel in which it recounts that "it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house. . . ." (II Samuel 11:2.)

I was much impressed when I heard Dr. Bennion say how that passage puzzled him because all the roofs that he had known in his youth in the area in which he lived were so steeply constructed that the king could not well have walked upon them. And Brother Bennion told how he inquired of his teacher and received no satisfactory answer, but as soon as he later learned that there were places in the world in which there were not only flat roofs but where people also made a practice of living a part of their lives upon them, walking upon them and resting upon them, the question was cleared for him.

I am sure that many of the unanswered questions that confront us will be answered as easily as this one was for him, when he couldn't understand how the king could walk on a roof in the evening because he had only known steep, sharply constructed roofs that were made to shed the snow.

To our young people: Go forth and search for truth, without fear, but with faith. Where you find discrepancies, or seeming discrepancies, reserve judgment. There is time ahead of us, and eternity also. Theories are changing; textbooks are constantly becoming outdated; new discoveries are being made; and when all the pieces are put in place and everything is added up, and the picture is complete, the answers will seem as simple and satisfying as the answer to this lad, who was puzzled by a king walking on the roof.

Keep to a life well-balanced. Keep some of your time and means for the service of the Lord. Study the things of God as well as the other things that you must study to qualify yourselves for certain activities, and go forth with faith, with trust. I think the world is going on for some time. There is great work to be done. Our building program, our temple in Europe, and other things seem to me to be the evidence that this Church believes in the future, and I say to you young people, go forth and live your lives with faith, without fear, reserving judgment where

you need to, and trusting to the Lord God to lead you into all truth.

May I leave with you my testimony. I was not one of those who had to decide to leave father and mother and family and friends and other things to become identified with this Church. My grandparents did that for me, and in one instance my great-grandparents. My sons represent the fifth generation in the Church. I congratulate those of you who did face this decision and who did come into the kingdom. But I have faced some other decisions. I have earnestly considered the alternatives, and I should not know where to go to find the answers to the ever ageless questions of life if I could not find them here. I leave you the witness of my conviction of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the divine calling

of the Prophet Joseph, and after him, of the like calling of all those who have succeeded him. May God bless us, every one, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Brother J. Spencer Cornwall will now lead the congregation and combined choruses in singing "How Firm a Foundation." We have just listened to Elder Richard L. Evans of the First Council of the Seventy. After singing we shall hear Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve.

The congregation and the Combined Choruses of the Brigham Young University joined in singing the hymn, "How Firm A Foundation."

ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

How Firm a Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord."—

I am sure I gained strength from the last verse of that song. I have prayed for each one who has occupied this position during the last three days, and in return I know I shall receive of their faith and prayers in my behalf as I stand here for a few moments this afternoon. This was manifest when my associate, Elder Christiansen, placed his hand on my arm a few moments ago and said, "Hold on, we're with you."

I, too, am happy to sustain Brother Bennion who was chosen here this morning as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I recall along with Sister Longden, how about twenty-four years ago he brought into our hearts and our souls the words of the Savior to help comfort us. We were called to undergo a serious tragedy in having our three-year-old daughter, our first-born child, taken beyond the veil. His words at that time have rung true through the years. I know he will contribute much with his talents and his

leadership to stir the membership of this Church as he visits throughout the stakes.

As I returned to this building just a while ago with President Ivins and his good wife, it was beginning to rain. I heard the strains from the organ playing "God Moves in a Mysterious Way His Wonders to Perform." The words to one of the verses come to me:

"Ye fearful Saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread are big
with mercy
And shall break in blessing on your
head."

I realize that we have had great blessings here in the past three days in the sessions of this conference; one in particular—that we have been brought out of the darkness of the world and into the light of the glories of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I cannot help reflecting upon the words of Peter, that great Apostle, when he said in his day to that generation,

Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people;