

Friday, October 2

First Day

Following the singing, Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, will speak to us.

The Singing Mothers rendered the sacred selection, "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place."

### ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BRETHREN AND SISTERS: It seems to me that every time I stand in this position I feel less sure of myself. I recognize that as we go out in the stakes, there is a warmth of feeling between the congregation of the Saints and those who visit their conferences from time to time, and there should be no difference in this meeting, because that same spirit of warmth and fellowship is multiplied by the increased numbers that are here, and yet notwithstanding that, this vast congregation, and consciousness of the fact that there are so many listening in on the outside, presents a challenge indeed.

I have undertaken today to write what I would like to say in the interest of time, and I sincerely hope that the Lord will be with all of us, that what I shall say may be of benefit to you and to me, and give us increased faith.

Since our last conference it has been my privilege to visit two of the missions of the Church, one in southern California and one in eastern Canada. I have been thrilled with the splendid work that is being done by our missionaries. It seems to me they are doing more effective work than ever in our history. They do not go out with a spirit of antagonism toward any church or any people, but rather in the spirit of the counsel that was given in the early history of the Church by the Prophet Joseph when he said that we should contend against no church, save it be the church of the evil one, that we should take upon ourselves the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness, and that as many as repented and were baptized in his name, which is Jesus Christ, and endured to the end, should be saved. He also said that we should declare glad tidings, publish

them upon the mountains and upon every high place and among every people that we should be permitted to see. We should do it with all humility, trusting in him, reviling not the revilers, and of tenets we should not talk, but should declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and the remission of sins by baptism and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost. It is in this spirit that our missionaries are counseled to go from house to house, preaching and bearing witness of the restored gospel of Christ. We recognize the fact that the world is full of good people, that they have their religious convictions and traditions, traditions that are deeply rooted from ages past. We do not ask them to give up any truths that they have, but we do ask that they re-appraise their faith and their religion, their church, to see if they harmonize with that which was taught by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our missionaries do not present a message of a new church; it is a message of the restored Church. We do not have a new gospel. It is the gospel that was preached by Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Our position as Latter-day Saints is that we are entrusted with the responsibility of establishing the kingdom of God in the earth, that it may prepare mankind for the kingdom of heaven that is to come. We feel that there is no greater message that can be brought to the children of men than one that will make men conscious of error and turn them to the truth. Repentance is a grand Christian act. It is not only Christian, but it is also divine.

This missionary activity is a great contribution to our missionary's life, whether he be young or old. For two or more years, he is in the field of a

spiritual uplift. He learns to pray as he never did before. He learns to draw near to God, and he finds that God draws near to him. He learns that there is only one way to every human heart, and that is through humility and prayer. He learns to be tolerant with his fellow men. Through study he learns to enrich his mind, enlarge his soul with the thoughts of great men, men of God, prophets of God, and thus he grows in knowledge and wisdom.

In the mission field a missionary is often tempted, but he does not yield. Thus he becomes brave and strong, strong physically, mentally, morally, and above all, spiritually. A missionary often has great decisions to make, decisions that many times are beyond the wisdom of his youth.

I recall an experience that was related by President J. Robert Price, former president of the Central Atlantic States Mission, as he met with us on one occasion in the temple, telling of two young missionaries who had just recently come into the field, neither of whom had had much experience. Brother Price had received a message that one of the families was having some difficulty, marital trouble as I remember, and so these two young, inexperienced missionaries were sent to this home. On entering the home, one of the elders asked if it would be in order with the family that they first kneel in prayer. And so they all knelt down, and the young elder who led asked that the Lord would guide in the proceedings that should follow, that the differences could be composed in that home, and that peace could be established. And he prayed for the home, and in the sincerity of his heart he brought conviction to those who listened. And when they all arose from their knees, the father, who seemingly had been the leader, who had been the source of the trouble, approached the missionary; taking him by the hand, he said, "We do not need you longer. You have touched our hearts, and we will compose our differences, and you can de-

pend upon it that we will not fail." And Brother Price in reporting it said, "Surely, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hath the Lord ordained strength."

And so it is in this spirit that our missionaries go forth, and they have great decisions to make, and they are equal to them.

The missionaries also learn the injunction that was given by Isaiah the prophet, that they should seek the Lord while he may be found:

... call ye upon him while he is near:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:6-7.)

Our missionaries learn to love their contacts, the people whom they meet, although they do not always see alike in matters of religion and do not always agree, yet they recognize that the world is full of good people. Many honest-hearted and upright men and women have not accepted and do not accept Mormonism because they cannot comprehend it. As the Savior said to Nicodemus, "They cannot see." And yet through the fine work that they are doing, our missionaries are gradually breaking down prejudices. They are being invited into homes that are blessed because of the faith and the testimony that they bring to them. There is no greater joy that can come to the human heart than to bring this message of eternal truth to those who do not have it. And so our missionary service becomes a great spiritual factor in the lives of those who have this unusual experience. There is nothing equal to it anywhere. Our boys come home filled with a testimony of the truth, acknowledging the goodness of the Lord to them and conscious of the fact that they have been able to do some good, not only to themselves but also to those with whom they have come in contact.

Thus has been laid a foundation of faith and spirituality and strength of character in our young people that has

Friday, October 2

contributed greatly to the growth and the strength of this Church. It is no wonder the Bishop of York was led to say after his visit to Salt Lake City, on his return to England, as reported, I think, by Brother Sonne on his return from Europe, "The Mormon Church must be a wealthy Church, for it maintains so many missionaries in the world." At that time I think there were five thousand missionaries, and at an average cost of sixty dollars a month for each, you can see that would amount to \$300,000.00 a month, or over \$3,500,000.00 a year, and so the Bishop of York was calculating it in dollars and cents. He did not understand that the wealth that maintains these missionaries is not gold and silver, but faith, sacrifice, devotion on the part of parents, in most cases, parents of limited means, not of wealth, but rich in faith and in a confidence in this great work. It is not gold that has built our temples and our meetinghouses, but the same faith and devotion to the Lord on the part of those who also support the great missionary system of the Church.

In conclusion, my brethren and sisters, may I read an extract from a sermon delivered in this pulpit many years ago by President George Q. Cannon. I think it was in 1871. It was subsequently reported in the Church Section of the *Deseret News*. For some of you who are younger, President Cannon served as counselor in the First Presidency from the time of President John Taylor on to the time of President Snow. I think it was during President Snow's administration that President Cannon passed away. He was one of the great leaders of this Church—a brilliant mind. He knew the Prophet Joseph. His father had come from the Isle of Man with his family. They had become converted to Mormonism, and had settled in Nauvoo, and were there at the time of the martyrdom. I think I may safely say that President Cannon's tribute to the Prophet Joseph in his biography is one of the finest that has ever been written regarding the Prophet Joseph. It was

written from an intimate touch that the Cannon family had with the Prophet, and George Q. Cannon as a lad fourteen years of age remembered the great leadership and the spiritual power that characterized the Prophet of God, to whom the Lord had revealed his great work. And so I quote in conclusion some remarks from President Cannon:

The Latter-day Saints are not so uncharitable as to imagine that they are the only ones with whom God is dealing, or are they the only people over whom and toward whom his providences are being exercised. Such a thought has never entered into the hearts of those who are intelligent and reflecting in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is true that we believe and testify that we have been called to proclaim the everlasting gospel in its ancient purity and simplicity, with the plenitude of its gifts and graces, as enjoyed in ancient days, that we have been called to lay the foundation of that work which is destined to grow and increase and spread until it fills the whole earth from north to south and from east to west. Yet we do not on this account arrogate to ourselves all the kindness, all the mercy, care and goodness which God dispenses to his creatures here on the earth, but we firmly believe in every nation and among every kindred, tongue, and people, and in fact in every creed on the face of the earth, there are those whom God watches with particular care, and to whom his blessings are extended, and we believe that his providences are over all the works of his hands, and that none is so remote, friendless, or isolated that he is not the object of his care, his mercy and his love. This is our belief, and when we see the events which are taking place at the present time [and this sounds almost prophetic], when we hear of revolutions and wars, of nation rising against nation, of the various judgments and calamities, as well as the various kindnesses and mercies, that are bestowed upon and extended to the inhabitants of the earth, and to the various nationalities into which they are divided, we see in all these things the hand of our kind and beneficent Creator. We see his providences. We behold his going forth, and we acknowledge his goodness, and we also think that we can discern his overruling care and providence for the bringing to pass the great events of which he has spoken, which will

eventually result in the emancipation of our race from the thralldom of evil, under which it now groans.

It is in this spirit, my brethren and sisters, that our missionaries go out into the world to proclaim the restored gospel, and I have nothing but commendation for these fine men and women who are sent out, and for the splendid men and women who preside over them. These mission presidents and their wives, outstanding in their faith and in their devotion to the work of the Lord, give these missionaries proper direction, and inspire them in the great work to which they are called. I am grateful as I stand here today for the privileges and blessings that were mine over forty years ago to be called to the mission

field to preach the gospel. I am grateful for the foundation of faith that was established in my soul because of this unusual experience, and I humbly acknowledge on this occasion these blessings, and also the goodness of my parents in making such an experience possible. I express my gratitude to my heavenly Father, and I bear my testimony of the divinity of this great work, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve. We shall now hear from Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve, who will be followed by Bishop Isaacson.

### ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**I**N PRESIDENT MCKAY'S address this morning he told of a picture that hung in the Huntsville meeting-house, a picture of President John Taylor, under which were the words, "Where the kingdom of God is not, there is nothing." That statement encourages me to talk about something about which I have been thinking for a long time. If the Lord is willing and I might have his Spirit, I would like to speak about a subject which I will introduce by quoting a question asked by a missionary, and a statement from a great thinker. The missionary asked, "Since the restored Church claims that it is necessary to have the same organization that existed in the primitive church, particularly Twelve Apostles, how then can we claim that the kingdom of God and the gospel were upon the earth before the time of the Savior when they had no Apostles?"

The statement which I wish to read is from Napoleon I, while he was in exile in 1817. It reads as follows: "I would believe in a religion if it existed from the beginning of time, but when

I consider Socrates, Plato, and Mohammed, I no longer believe."

There are those who believe that the kingdom of God was not established until after the advent of the Savior and that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not upon the earth until the time of his advent.

As I have thought of that question of the missionary about the organization of the Church, and about Napoleon's statement, three questions have formulated themselves in my thinking: The first, How old is the kingdom of God and the gospel upon the earth? The second, What are the essentials of a gospel dispensation in the world? And third, What officers are necessary in an organization to constitute the Church and kingdom of God? I realize that to answer those questions fully would take much more time than is allotted to me, so I shall comment only briefly and make a few observations in answer to these questions.

In the Lord's revelation to Abraham, he spoke of the purpose in sending spirits upon the earth, to ". . . prove