

abide by all of the laws basic to happiness. May we make effective in our lives Lehi's statement that "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25.)

And this I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

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

**T**O YOU WHO are listening in over radio and looking in by television, I extend the hand of fellowship. I sincerely pray that while I speak to you a few moments, I may say something which will be beneficial to you and which, perhaps (and this is my greatest desire), will stimulate you to think of things of eternal value and renew in you a determination to live to obtain them.

To you who are assembled together in this historic Tabernacle I extend the same greeting. I marvel at your faithfulness, your willingness to return to this meetinghouse on this mid-week day and listen to more preaching. I think you are the group who would attend the second session in a stake conference.

Seeing you here, and realizing that many of you attended the Primary conference, so that now you have been in meetings constantly for five days, I am reminded of an experience my wife and I had one time as we rode from St. George to Cedar City. The driver of the automobile in which we rode had with him his little boy, who was just tall enough to stand on his feet and look out through the windshield. He wore cowboy chaps and a cowboy hat. His father told us of two things he liked to do—one was to put on his cowboy clothes and ride his pony, and the other was to go to picture shows. It was difficult to persuade him to terminate either experience when he got at it. They would try to get him home after he had seen a show through once, but he continued to stay on.

### President David O. McKay:

Elder Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of Seventy has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve.

One Sunday morning after Sunday School, he went home. His mother had gone to fast meeting, which followed Sunday School. The boy took off his Sunday clothes and put on his cowboy clothes and then looked for something to eat. Not finding what he wanted, he returned to the meetinghouse to find his mother. Spying her as he came down the aisle, he said, in a rather loud voice, "Mother, why don't you come home? Are you going to stay here and see this thing through three times?"

Gathered together here as we are, and remembering the sustaining of a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and an assistant to that Quorum, I cannot help feeling the loss of Brother Cowley. We listened here just six months ago to his golden voice. I want to read to you one paragraph from his final message. I think it is significant for many reasons. One is that in this paragraph he mentioned Brother Morris, who today fills the vacancy left in the Quorum by his passing. We may be able to catch in this excerpt something of his eloquence and of his humility.

We have heard the prayer of the Prophet referred to this morning. Here was a young lad who believed in a promise that if any man lacked wisdom and would ask of God, it would be given to him; and in response to that injunction he took himself out into that grove, away from the superficial structures of men, and he didn't stand looking into heaven; he bowed upon the bended knees of his body, and he offered up his prayer to God his Father to bring clearness of vision to his mind, to divest from his mind the confusion which existed there

Tuesday, April 6

Fourth Day

pertaining to religion. How can people doubt that God heard that prayer? Anyone who would question that God heard the prayer of that boy must believe that the Father in heaven is cruel and shuts himself away from his children when they seek him. But he did hear that prayer, and as Elder Morris has mentioned, the light burst from heaven; down through that channel of light came the Father and the Son. Young people, if you prayed for your father to come in your hour of need, would he hide from you? Of course not. Neither will our Father who is in heaven hide from us who seek him out.

God grant that we may always have the spirit of prayer in our hearts. (THE IMPROVEMENT ERA, December 1953, p. 962.)

I extend to Brother Morris a hearty welcome as he comes into the Council of the Twelve. I have loved him for a long time. I remember some years ago attending a meeting where he addressed a group of Scout leaders. He said there something which still lingers in my mind. He was talking about boys who had been brought into the Church through the activities of that organization, about their conversion, and then he said this, in substance: That not only had boys been converted from out of the Church, but that many boys born in the Church had been converted. Then he emphasized the truth that whether one is born in the Church or out of the Church, he must be converted in order to receive the blessings of heaven.

I welcome Elder Sill into the Councils of the Church. I have known him for nineteen years now. Back in those days he and I were companion bishops serving under President Joseph L. Wirthlin, who was then our stake president. I know of his ability and of his loyalty. I know that he never let his tithing go unpaid. I remember an occasion when he consulted me about it at the end of the year, when some of his calculations had gone wrong, and he did not have the ready cash to pay his tithing in full. We talked it over, and he went to the bank and borrowed the money to make it up. I am sure he will render a great service.

As I sat here in this conference and realized that it was drawing to a close, I thought of what I might say here in these closing moments which would be of worth to the people of the Church, and this statement from the Prophet came to my mind:

It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom. (D. H. C. 5:403.)

That passage from the Prophet's writings has been on my mind a great deal. He gave it at the end of a long sermon, in which he had been urging the people of his day to make their calling and their election sure. He himself had made his calling and election sure.

The Lord said to the Prophet Joseph Smith on one occasion,

For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father. (D. & C. 132:49.)

And then the Lord specifies in the next sentence the conditions that brought that great blessing to the Prophet Joseph.

Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. (*Ibid.*, 132:50.)

He gave that same witness to Heber C. Kimball. I suppose that a man who had that witness would be enjoying the more sure word of prophecy, which the Prophet defines as

... a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood. (*Ibid.*, 131:5.)

In this conference we have been greatly entertained at times with eloquent oratory. We have been taught by great teachers. We have heard enough truth and direction in this conference to bring us into the presence of

God if we would follow it. We have been taken on to the spiritual mountain and shown visions of great glory, but how many of us have heard that voice saying we would have a part therein.

I want to read a text by which we may test ourselves today and always as to where we stand with reference to our faith and belief in God. It is the 25th verse of the 64th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today.

In the two paragraphs which precede it, the Lord makes clear three things: First, the meaning of the word *today* as used in the text; second, certain things which his people should do today; and third, some events which will come to pass tomorrow. Here are his words:

Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming.

For after today cometh the burning . . . for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of Hosts; and I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.

And then follows our text:

Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today. (*Ibid.*, 64:23-25.)

I have in my heart a desire to emphasize the importance of doing the will of God now while today lasts. Perhaps more hangs upon what a man does during the short period of his mortal probation than upon his performance in any other period of equal duration since the spirit hosts took sides in the great war in heaven.

Amulek, Alma's missionary companion, speaks to this subject as follows:

. . . now is the time and the day of your salvation; . . .

For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold, the

day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.

. . . therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; 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. (Alma 34:31-33.)

Nephi taught this same doctrine and went one step farther. He declared that we must not only labor in this life, but that we must also continue that labor until the end of life. He pointed out that the gate by which one enters upon the straight and narrow path is repentance and baptism by water and of fire and the Holy Ghost, and then continued:

And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this straight and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; . . .

. . . ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life. (2 Nephi 31:19-20.)

And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved. (*Ibid.*, 31:16.)

Mormon's performance, along with his counsel to his son Moroni, is an heroic example of one's continuing unto the end under the most trying circumstances. You will recall that it was Mormon who led the degenerate Nephites in their final struggle against the Lamanites. And a discouraging and thankless job it was! As he approached the inevitable end, he wrote to his beloved son Moroni, advising that he had just fought an important battle in which he did not conquer, and in which three of his most valiant leaders and a great number of his choice men had been killed. He continued,

Tuesday, April 6

Fourth Day

And now behold, my son, I fear lest the Lamanites shall destroy this people; for they do not repent, and Satan stirreth them up continually to anger one with another.

Behold, I am laboring with them continually; and when I speak the word of God with sharpness they tremble and anger against me; and when I use no sharpness they harden their hearts against it; wherefore, I fear lest the Spirit of the Lord hath ceased striving with them.

For so exceedingly do they anger that it seemeth me that they have no fear of death; and they have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually. (Moroni 9:3-5.)

Then, notwithstanding these discouraging circumstances, he declares his intention to continue to labor and encourages his son Moroni to do likewise. Listen to his plea and take courage therefrom:

And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God. (*Ibid.*, 9:6.)

In the light of these teachings, it would seem to be most unwise to rely upon the doctrine of the so-called second chance and wait until after death to perform our good works. I am acquainted with the doctrine that those who have had no opportunity to hear and receive the gospel in this life will have that opportunity in the world to come, and I rejoice in it. I rejoice in the vision and the revelation received by the Prophet Joseph Smith on the 21st day of January 1836, which teaches this doctrine. The Prophet reported that vision and that revelation in part as follows:

The heavens were opened upon us, and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof. . . I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the

Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. I saw Fathers Adam and Abraham, and my father and mother, my brother, Alvin, that has long since slept, and marvelled how it was that he had obtained an inheritance in that kingdom, seeing that he had departed this life before the Lord had set His hand to gather Israel the second time, and had not been baptized for the remission of sins.

Thus came the voice of the Lord unto me, saying—

"All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs of the celestial kingdom of God; also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of that kingdom, for I, the Lord, will judge all men according to their works, according to the desire of their hearts." (*D. H. C.* 2:380.)

All this I accept with joy. However, it does not teach, and I have never found anything in the scriptures nor in the teachings of the prophets which encourages me to believe, that those who have the gospel taught to them here will be able to make up their loss if they choose to wait for the next life to obey it. I would not advise anyone to take that chance. As I understand the scriptures, taking such a hazard would be fatal.

Amulek, after speaking of "the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed," added:

Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.

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* 34:34-35.)

On this point of deferring obedience to the gospel, we might with profit consider the Savior's parable of the ten virgins. I do not remember any provision being made in that parable for the five foolish virgins to enter into the marriage at a later time. I do remember, however, that after the door was shut they, having in the meantime filled their lamps with oil, came saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," and that his answer was, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." (See Matt. 25:1-13.)

In 1831 the Lord continued with the lesson he had in mind to teach with this parable. Speaking to the Prophet Joseph, he specified some of the blessings to be received by the five wise virgins. Said he:

And at that day, when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins.

For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived—verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day.

And the earth shall be given unto them for an inheritance; and they shall multiply and wax strong, and their children shall grow up without sin unto salvation.

For the Lord shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver. (D. & C. 45:56-59.)

No mention is made in this revelation of the whereabouts of the foolish virgins. Said the Prophet Joseph,

If men would acquire salvation they have got to be subject, before they leave this world, to certain rules and principles,

which were fixed by an unalterable decree before the world was.

[Otherwise] the disappointment of hopes and expectations at the resurrection would be indescribably dreadful. (D. H. C. 6:50-51.)

In view of these teachings and the many others which carry the message that today is the day for us to perform our labors, it would seem to be wisdom on the part of every soul who has been taught the gospel, to here and now make a daily conscious and sincere effort to live it. And this effort should continue to the end of mortal life. Failing to make such an effort, a person identifies himself as one who does not believe the Lord, for, said he, "... if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today."

That we may, by laboring today, inherit the great blessings we have heard so much about in this conference, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Elder Marion G. Romney of the Council of the Twelve.

The Congregation will now join with the Singing Mothers in singing "Come O Thou Kings of Kings," under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall.

After the singing Elder Delbert L. Stapley will speak to us.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Come, O Thou King of Kings."

## ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

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

**I** ASSURE YOU, my brothers and and sisters, the southern route to this stand is no shorter than the northern route. I find it rather difficult to be in the caboose of conference speakers, particularly because

I am sitting on the last seat, realizing that many of my brethren have already given part of my message to you.

Through this conference my mind has been upon Brother Cowley. I want to say to you, my brothers and sisters, he was a man of God, one who exemplified