

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY BRETHREN AND SISTERS, I feel deeply sensible of the responsibility which rests upon me at this moment. It has occurred to me during the day that all of the brethren who have stood before you have been outstanding leaders in the Church, even before they were called to their present positions of responsibility. Many of them have been leaders in the stakes of Zion. Some of them have been leaders in the mission field, and all of them have been leaders in the Church and kingdom of God.

On May 30, 1835 Elder George A. Smith was called on a mission to the east. Before leaving, he called on the Prophet Joseph Smith, his cousin, who gave him this advice: "Preach short sermons. Make short prayers, and deliver your sermons with a prayerful heart." I believe all the sermons to which we have listened today and yesterday have been short sermons, and I believe many prayers have been offered to our Father, especially by those who have been called upon to speak.

A year ago I visited an old house in Hiram, Ohio, and stood in the very bedroom in that house from which the Prophet Joseph Smith had been taken by an angry mob, tied to a tree, and covered with a coat of tar and feathers. I know the Prophet must have been bruised during the ordeal. I know also that he must have been greatly humiliated, but his zeal and determination for the truth were not lessened. He was not dismayed nor discouraged, neither was he vindictive nor bitter. The Prophet expected opposition and persecution. It was his lot, as it had been with all the prophets who had preceded him in their respective responsibilities. They were challenged on every turn. He, like his predecessors, faced it with the utmost courage, knowing that sometime, somewhere, he would be fully vindicated, as have all the others who paved the way for spiritual enlightenment.

We marvel at his powers of endurance, his steadfastness of purpose, and

his unquenchable fire and spirit. To those who would not and could not understand he said: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work of God from progressing." Mobs, persecution, defamation, were powerless against it.

Governor Ford of Illinois must have sensed the spirit and stamina back of what he called Mormonism. There was something there which even he could not comprehend. He feared its growth because he felt it was bound to go forward, regardless of its opponents, however ruthless and godless they might be. It could not be stifled nor frustrated by the enemy. Governor Ford wrote in his history of Illinois:

"It is feared that within the course of a century some man gifted like Paul, some splendid orator, will make the name of the martyred prophet ring as loud and stir the souls of men as much as the mighty name of Christ itself." He refers to places like Sharon, Palmyra, Manchester, Kirtland, Far West, Adam-ondi-Ahman, Ramus, Nauvoo, and the Carthage Jail. "They," said he, "may become holy and venerable places of classic interest in another age like Jerusalem, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and the Mount of Calvary to the Christian, or Mecca and Medina to the Turk."

What did he fear, this governor of a sovereign state? What had he to fear? He feared that Mormonism would survive to tell the world what happened at Carthage and other places. He feared that his name would go down in history coupled with that of Herod and Pontius Pilate, who were connected with and in a measure responsible for the crucifixion of the Lord.

Joseph Smith's name is secure in the books of history. He has brought to the religious world more truth, bringing it nearer to God, than has anyone else in modern times. But Joseph Smith's leadership was tested in other ways.

I hold before me a list of the Twelve Apostles, the first Quorum of the Twelve, organized in the year 1835. As

I read it from an historical record prepared by the late Andrew Jenson, I note beneath the names of these men these statements:

"In 1837 and in 1838 four of the Twelve apostatized," and then he names them: "John F. Boynton, Lyman E. Johnson, Luke S. Johnson, William E. McLellan." Four out of twelve had left the faith.

Later he wrote, "William Smith and John E. Page denied the faith. On October 25, 1838, David W. Patten was killed." Already six of these twelve, you will see, had fallen by the way.

Brother Jenson remarked: "These brethren were labored with and urged to repent." History has proved that the real setback was not to the Church, but to the men individually.

I bear testimony, brethren and sisters,

that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I bear testimony that the gospel of Jesus Christ was restored through his instrumentality. I bear testimony, also, that Jesus is the Christ; that he submitted to the world the plan of life and salvation. It is the only plan by which we can come back to our Father in heaven, and I bear testimony, that plan has been restored again to the earth through Joseph Smith, the Prophet. Hesitate, my friends, ere you doubt this great modern miracle, for the gospel is upon the earth, and the Holy Priesthood has been restored, by which men can officiate in the name of God.

May we be blessed in our endeavors to serve him and given strength to keep his commandments, everyone, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MARION G. ROMNEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

MY BELOVED brethren and sisters: I would like you to give me a special interest in your faith and prayers as I attempt to edify this mighty congregation, those present in this building and those beyond. I need your faith and prayers because I desire to say a few words about "the royal law according to the scriptures," if you observe which, the Apostle James says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (James 2:8.) This matter is very important to me, it lies next to my heart, and it should be important to you.

Without attempting to catalog the many things which the keeping of this "royal law" entails, it may, from its use in the scriptures, be said with certainty that chief among them is caring for the poor. In the very first chapter in which the phrase, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" appears, the Lord commanded ancient Israel to provide for their poor.

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard; neither shalt thou gather every grape of

thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God. (Lev. 19:9-10.)

During the last few weeks it has been my pleasure to meet with stake and ward welfare workers in 136 stakes. During the next few weeks I hope to meet the rest of you. In passing I might say that of the 136 stake presidents in these stakes, only three "fled the realm" when they saw us coming. All the rest of you stood and took it. Your courage and strength are admirable and very much appreciated.

Your performance in the fulfilment of this "royal law" gives me great joy and inspires in me a hope for an early redemption of Zion. With all my heart I salute you.

As evidence of your love for your neighbors, you carry on in your numerous welfare activities. At the coal mine, in the mills and factories, in canneries, you toil. In orchards, fields, and on the ranches, you endure the heat and the cold. On construction jobs and in sewing rooms, you labor. You battle floods and disease. You sit in council late into the nights, wrestling with problems of policy and procedure incident to your divine service. You find