

## ELDER LEVI EDGAR YOUNG

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

**P**RESIDENT MCKAY, my brethren and sisters: I pray that the Lord may bless me that what I say may be of some help to everyone in this large audience. It is quite natural that when we are called upon to speak, we give utterance to the thoughts that are on our minds and in our hearts.

I have been thinking this day of the words of the Vermont Historical Society when they wrote concerning the history of Sharon. To quote a sentence or two, the paragraph to which I refer says that: "Sharon was settled in 1765 by Connecticut emigrants and organized in 1768. Sharon entered the Hall of Fame by being the birthplace of one of the immortals of American History, Joseph Smith who founded the Mormon religion." It is a noble tribute written by the state historian concerning the Prophet Joseph Smith.

In the book of Ecclesiasticus, [Apocrypha], chapter 17, we read:

The Lord created man of the earth.

He endued them with strength by themselves and made them according to his image,

And put the fear of man upon all flesh, and gave him dominion over beasts and fowls. . . .

Counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, ears, and a heart, gave he them to understand.

Withal he filled them with the knowledge of understanding, and shewed them good and evil.

He set his eye upon their hearts, that he might shew them the greatness of his works.

He gave them to glory in his marvellous acts for ever, that they might declare his works with understanding. . . .

Besides this he gave them knowledge, and the law of life for an heritage.

He made an everlasting covenant with them, and shewed them his judgments. \* \* \*

Their ways are ever before him, and shall not be hid from his eyes.

These words direct our minds and hearts to the Holy Bible and the first chapter of Genesis, the beauty and truthfulness of which impress every reader with its inherent greatness. We think of the Holy Bible and the other holy books, the Book of Mormon, the Doc-

trine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. This being the anniversary of the founding of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by the Prophet Joseph Smith, it is good to think of them, for they give us the teachings of God, our Father. A few thoughts in reference to the Holy Bible as a whole will be welcome to all. William Lyon Phelps, professor of English literature at Yale University, wrote these words in his, *Human Nature in the Bible*:

Every one who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a proper substitute. Western civilization is founded upon the Bible; our ideas, our wisdom, our philosophy, our literature, our art, our ideals, come more from the Bible than from all other books put together. It is a revelation of divinity and humanity; it contains the loftiest religious aspirations along with a candid representation of all that is earthly. . . .

The Holy Bible was written by many men under different conditions. It is the product of men inspired of God, covering a period of three thousand years. Like John of Patmos, we hear the "voice of many waters," yet unified "as the clear note of a trumpet." Beginning with our first parents and culminating in Jesus Christ and the Church he founded, it is a manifestation of the divine will, and was written by the inspiration of God, our Father in heaven. The book shows that the Hebrew prophets gave their lives to the service of God. They wrote by the power of the Holy Ghost. God directed them.

The Book of Genesis stands indeed at the head of the literature of the world. It is more recent than some of the writings of Chaldea or Egypt which have come down to us and is incomparably the noblest composition of early ages, in its moral and spiritual characteristics. (Geikle, *Hours With the Bible*.)

However highly we may estimate the scientific, philosophic, and religious genius of the narrators of Genesis, more important

to us, and for the religious instruction of youth, is the fact that they were men, who had surrendered themselves wholly to God, and who had derived their knowledge from Him. (Rudolph Kittel of Leipzig University.)

"The first leaf of the Mosaic record," says Jean Paul, "has more weight than all the folios of men of science and philosophers." "And he is right," says Geikie, "for we owe to it the earliest and grandest revelation of that first principle of all religion—the existence, the unity, the personality, and the moral government of God."

The life of Christ, our Savior, as given in the New Testament, is to old and young alike, the most moving and convincing truth that he came from some higher sphere into our earthly history with a mission to reveal God and save man. "He preached the gospel of the kingdom; and forever even until all the aeons have been closed, and the earth itself, with the heavens that now are, have passed away, shall everyone of his true and faithful children find peace and hope and forgiveness in His name, and that name shall be called Emmanuel or God With Us."

In reference to the other Church works, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price stand with the Bible at the head of the religious books of today. Everyone of our four Church works has a genuine and divine truth that God lives and that we are his children and are given the duty to work out our destinies. We cannot study them enough. Just to read the first chapter of the Book of Mormon gives us a lesson in the meaning of education. To think that Nephi was educated in both the learning of the Egyptians and the Jews! Today few people realize what that learning was. Some scholars maintain that the learning of the Egyptians in ancient times has never been equaled.

We are all thinking this day of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Among the many things of his life we will recall his Sermon on the Mount. It is the most beautiful sermon ever given to man, and no one can read a single sentence of it without being built up in spirit and truth.

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

We must remember that there were ancient religions long before the Redeemer of the world was born, and the writers were men of divine knowledge. An ancient Japanese leader of religion writes,

I will halt here today and having purified myself, we will go forth tomorrow and worship in the temple of the Deity.

And a writer of Buddhism says,

Let us cultivate good will towards all the world. This is the mode of living.

In the chronological writings of Padre Claudio Clemente is conserved a form of prayer said to have been used by Columbus on Friday morning, October 12, 1492, as he stepped on the land of the New World. The prayer was used by Cortez, Balboa, and Pizarro later on in their discoveries.

O God, our Father, eternal and omnipotent, Creator of heaven and earth and sea, we glorify Thy Holy name, praise Thy majesty, whom we serve in all humility, we give unto Thy Holy protection this new part of the world.

So many of the fathers of our church were descendants of the early Pilgrims to Massachusetts. For this reason we have always felt the beauty of the story

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of the Pilgrim Fathers and their coming in the *Mayflower* to America in 1620. We have the story of Pastor Robinson uttering a farewell prayer to the Pilgrim Fathers as they left for America. In reading it, we see the prophetic spirit of it when he said:

I charge you before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no farther than you have seen me follow the Lord, Jesus Christ. If God reveal anything to you, by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it, as ever you were to receive truth, by my ministry; for I am fully persuaded, I am very confident that the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of His holy word.

It was Sir Isaac Newton who lived some three hundred years ago who wrote a book on mathematics which is said to be the greatest scientific work of its kind ever written. I speak of Newton for his life has always thrilled me. Born in 1642 in Lincolnshire, England, he was a frail little farm boy who used to wander into the gardens and fields where he lived. He would look up at the sun and stars, for to him they possessed such heavenly qualities unlike anything on earth. The sight of a falling apple one day caused him to wonder about the force that drew the apple to earth. Newton began to work with the laws of motion and universal gravitation. As a result he produced one of the greatest books of all times entitled, *Principia*. It was a scientific work of the highest merit. Just before he died he wrote that the wonders of the universe had been given their shape and motion by the hand of God.

A copy of the *Principia* was given to the Seventies' Library by Orson Pratt who had been called by President Brigham Young to go to Austria on a mis-

sion in 1864. Elder Pratt had already written and published his book called, *Biquadratic Equations*, which was used at the University of Vienna. It was in Vienna that he obtained Newton's *Principia* which he brought home to the Seventies' Library.

After the Quorum of the Seventy had been organized in Kirtland in 1835, the brethren were stirred by certain words of the Prophet Joseph Smith as found in the Doctrine and Covenants:

And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom, seek learning even by study and also by faith; . . . (D & C 109:7.)

The admonition of the Prophet grew in the hearts of the seventies who knew that they must become the missionaries of the Church. It was not long before a library was established which developed into one of the largest collections of history and literature in the early history of America. Books were brought from all over the world, and the collection of the great works of mankind stirred the seventies to a desire to develop the art of reading.

I pray that we may come to a greater appreciation of the truth and beauty of the divine books that teach the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy has just concluded speaking. Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Adam S. Bennion, who will be our concluding speaker.

## ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

### *Patriarch to the Church*

I APPRECIATE the prayers that have been offered in behalf of those who shall take part in this conference, and I pray that I shall receive my share of those blessings which have been asked.

I appreciated the privilege of attending the Los Angeles Temple dedication with

the other General Authorities of the Church, and I also want to express appreciation for the sustaining vote in my behalf of this assembly today, for I feel that is a very personal help and support to me in my work. I also wish to sustain with you the General Authori-