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tree of the garden. This they were free to do. However, he gave commandment that they should not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, or the penalty of death would follow. They could eat of it if they wished, but they must remember that he forbade it. They were at liberty to break the commandment. Their liberty was not restricted, but if they did eat of the tree, they would have to pay the penalty.

As it was with our first parents, so it is with us. We have the divine right and also the individual responsibility to determine whether we will accept or whether we will reject the laws and principles and commandments of God. But my, how grateful we ought to be that these laws are given us to direct us, that we may not lose our way in darkness and misunderstanding, and with the vain philosophies of the world.

How thankful we ought to be for such truths as these:

Men are, that they might have joy. (2 Nephi 2:25.)

I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise. (D & C 82:10.)

There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

And when we obtain any blessing from

God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it [that blessing] is predicated. (*Ibid.*, 130:20-21.)

And, finally, this most beautiful statement of King Benjamin in his address:

And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord hath spoken it. (Mosiah 2:41.)

May we also be grateful for these laws, and use them for the purpose for which they are designed, to sanctify and perfect our lives, that we too may dwell with him in a never-ending state of happiness, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Adam S. Bennion of the Council of the Twelve. Brother Bennion has just recently returned from an assignment to the European Missions.

ELDER ADAM S. BENNION

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

PRESIDENT MCKAY, and my beloved brethren and sisters, there are fathers and mothers sitting in this audience, and I feel sure listening in at their radios, whose sons and daughters I have seen and fellowshipped with in the last five months. I trust that I may enjoy the blessing of our Father in heaven to bring you in some little measure the spirit under which those grand young people are working. You can be proud of them. I have never been so proud of the young people of the Church as I have in these last five months.

Since April we have traveled 31,000 miles. We have addressed 32,000 people and have sat in and discussed with, and

taken a little note on 1,056 missionaries, all of whom we have heard in testimony, and all of whom would like to send to you the new love they have developed since they left home. Home never seems so sweet as when you are away from it, and they know it.

I give you my witness that they have realized the promise that the Lord gave his missionaries of an earlier generation. The occasion for the blessing was in the case of James Covill, who was to go upon a mission, and who had this wonderful promise given by way of revelation through the Prophet Joseph:

Thou shalt preach the fulness of my gos-

pel, which I have sent forth in these last days, the covenant which I have sent forth to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel.

Now, notice this promise:

And it shall come to pass that power shall rest upon thee; thou shalt have great faith, and I will be with thee and go before thy face. (D & C 39:11-12.)

Over and over again those boys in European missions have said, "We never call on a house alone," and then they add, "and we are not talking about our companions."

This has been the most tremendous experience of our lives. So many things could be said. I have to be impersonal. There are ten wonderful mission presidents laboring in the field, all of them doing excellent work. Let me say to you parents by way of assurance, the mission presidents and their wives treat these young men and women as if they were their own children. They could not be more thoughtful and more careful. I just regret that I cannot pay them the tribute they so richly deserve. They, their wives, their staffs, all connected with the missions, are working wonderfully. I give you this little evidence:

By the end of June the European missions had done as much in the matter of conversions, eighty percent as much, as they did in all of 1955; three missions by the end of June had already equaled or surpassed the totals reached in the preceding year. I give you, because you may have a particular interest, the names of the three missions: the Swiss-Austrian—it is evident that the temple is registering its great influence; the Norwegian—which now has doubled last year's record; and the Finnish—and I wish I could bring you the full beauties of Finland; somehow I seemed to think it was going to be the end of the earth, but they are wonderful people. I think patriotism has never been more strongly asserted than in that land of freedom which prays never to be subject to Russia on the east and never to be conquered by Sweden on the west. You who love liberty, I wish you could have listened while they sang *Finlandia*

under the inspiration of the leader of the symphony orchestra in Finland. I refer to it only as typical of the wonderful things we found in Europe.

I have to confess the urge to give a travelog is very great, but I won't do it. I have been asked over and over again which is the most wonderful of all the countries, and I say, "All of them." Every country has its own charm. To me they are all wonderful. They are lovely. It just seemed to me as if we were driving through a perpetual park, and the people are correspondingly wonderful. They opened their hearts to us—kindliness and consideration at every turn.

I have said this a number of times. I think if you could take two hundred people out of each city that we visited and put them down in some faraway corner—if you could not hear them speak—I am sure you would not know where to return them. God's children are his children wherever they live, and when they belong to this Church, after you have been with them ten minutes you feel quite as much at home as if you were in your own land.

While I do not want to indulge in a travelog, I hope you will give me the liberty of saying three things about our impressions. I have mentioned the beauty of Europe. It is lovely country.

The second thing I want to say about Europe is that they are making such an heroic recovery. The cities that once were bombed and blasted—I know there are a few stark and empty buildings standing like scarecrows on the horizon of civilization—but city after city is now being built in a newness, a modernity, a richness that bespeaks the sacrifice of those people.

The third thing I want to say about Europe—I had fun in the British Isles because I said if there's anything the matter with us Americans you have to take part of the responsibility—because we are your grandchildren. It is a wonderful thing to walk where your grandfather once walked, and I had the gracious privilege, thanks to the courtesy of these same wonderful people, to be where my people have been and from which lands they came, Wales on my

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father's side, and Scotland on my mother's. I turn to President McKay because all the time we were in Scotland they honored him with the name of McKay, and they love you. I bring the greetings of all the people we met to these grand folk among whom it is my privilege to labor.

You know, I could not escape the thought all the time I was in Wales and Scotland of what my grandfolks thought when they crossed the plains. I am sure they must have cast one lingering look behind to the green they left in both lands. As a matter of fact, I became aware of another great truth in my life. If they had not listened to some wonderful missionary, and some missionary had not been good enough to go to them, I might never have been born in the Church. As a matter of fact, as I stood in Hawarden, Wales, it just dawned upon me that maybe if they had not so listened, I would not even have been. That is a sobering thought for one who loves life.

I want to add one other note. My first experience was to talk to the servicemen—our servicemen—at Berchtesgaden, under the Eagle's Nest of Hitler, his great hideout. If you have boys who are in the service—I have been stirred a lot of times, but I think I was never stirred more than as I joined with 740 boys of the armed services who took time out to come to a testimony meeting, and to do honor to the Church they represent so beautifully in their lives.

I closed the tour by flying from Glasgow back to Heidelberg to dedicate a chapel, and the reason they wanted to dedicate it while one of us was still in Europe was that we might say thanks to those boys who were to be released from the service in October and November. Do you know that those boys over there in the service of our country, out of their earnings, toward a chapel which they would never remain to enjoy, contributed \$5,000 that it might be dedicated? It has been dedicated, and may I quote the chaplain of the armed forces of the United States in Europe, who at that dedicatory program said: "I just wish, Mr. Bennion, that all of us could live the ideals of your Mormon boys." I say that, out of appreciation to these

fine young men who bear our colors with honor and distinction.

Now just briefly—if I have a theme today—I would pick it out of that one line quoted by our beloved President this morning, ". . . he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10:39.) If there is one group of devoted folk in this Church—of course you fine men and women are all devoted—it's these boys who have taken two or two and a half years out of their lives to proclaim the truths of the gospel. They breathe it; they think it; they eat and drink it; they work day and night in the interest of this great Church.

For five months it has been my privilege to be close to them. I think I caught the pulse of their feeling, and all the time I have been impressed with this thought: "*What the gospel does for people!*" To me it is tremendous. You can argue against a passage, but you cannot argue against a life. There is an argument against a theory, but there is no argument against kindness and goodness.

Now for a brief moment, I wish I could take you with me to those testimony meetings. *What the gospel does for these missionaries!* Young men just out of their teens, taking on the responsibility of manhood, are the representatives of our great institution throughout the world. They are carrying on with all the glory that attaches to mankind at its best. Over and over again brethren have said two things in their meetings: "We suppose we always had a testimony of the gospel, but we somehow took it for granted. We did not know just why we believed, or how much it meant. We looked upon the gospel much as we did upon our parents—a part of the heritage we are born to, but necessarily just part of it. Not any longer!"

Do you want to catch the spirit of them? We have both our own young men and women and those who have been called from Europe. Look in just for a minute as a young German girl stands up to bear her testimony and prefaces what she says with the remark: "You will understand, Brother Bennion, that when I joined the Church I had to give up my family. I get along

fine except on mail day. When the letters come, and the missionaries are so thrilled to get a word from home, it is awfully hard when you never get a letter from home."

I am going to say it before I sit down. We have a phrase in English, but they have a better one in Scandinavian. We say, when we get emotionally disturbed, we get a lump in our throats, and I have one right now. I cannot think of that girl, I cannot see her and know what she is doing for two years in the absence of all parental consideration or even interest. Well, I do get a lump in my throat, but I like the Scandinavian phrase better. They say they get a *clump i halsen*. I love that word "*clump*." I told them I was going to bring it home.

I wish you could sit down with a boy and have him take out the last letter he got from home and Dad, and have him say, "You know, the thing that thrills me most about my mission is that I think I am having a little to do with converting my own folks." Then they will tell you that their father had been disinterested or unconcerned, but now he writes of the thrill he gets out of being a stake missionary. I wish you could see the boys' faces light up as they say, "It's wonderful to know that the mission is converting both of us."

I do not think I remember anything more vividly than I do the story of one boy who broke completely in his testimony. He said, "You know, I did not know what was going on at home, and when I got ready to leave, Mom said she was going to get me a fine suitcase. So we went down and looked over the luggage. I picked the piece that I wanted, and when I picked it out she went into her pocketbook and pulled out six and a half books of S & H stamps that she had been saving through the years for the day when her son would go on a mission." And then as he broke completely, he said, "The thing that troubles me today is that I don't believe I said thanks." But he said thanks in our meeting. That boy will never be the same again, and I just hope that some of his gratitude rubs off through what I say so briefly today upon the heart of that good woman.

Well, it's a wonderful thing to sit

in with a thousand boys and let them bare their souls, open their hearts, and tell you just how they feel, and give the evidence that they are born anew, that the great, new, glorious gospel is in their souls. You can be proud of them. They are willing; they are happy; they are working hard.

If I had the time, I would love to tell you what they are doing in their street meetings. They have developed an ingenuity that is almost unbelievable. Not only are they doing a work of which you can be proud, but I assure you they love you!

I want you to visit just for a few minutes with me with the Saints over there. How I wish you could see what the gospel does for them. They are wonderful. As we held our meetings, I developed the practice of calling a few people up from the audience to come and stand by me. I think maybe it was a defense mechanism. I could not speak their language, and I felt a little more comfortable if I had three or four of them around me.

Through the interpreter I asked a man who had been in the Church fifty-eight years what the gospel meant to him, and he said, "Sir, it's my life. It's everything I cherish."

I asked a young woman who had been married twenty-five years, but still looked wonderfully young, "How can you look so young?" and she said, "It's the gospel that does it—it's the peace and the happiness we have in our home."

A young man of ten years' membership said, "I bless the day when a lovely young woman told me she would not marry me until I joined the Church," and he added, "I bless her for a new life."

I asked a young man of five years' membership what the gospel meant to him, and he said, "Brother Bennion, I think I can say it all if I tell you I am only five years old. I never lived until I got to know this gospel."

And a lad of only three months' membership said, "Nobody ever could have told me that anything could do for me what this gospel has already done."

I wish you could have sat in Berlin the Sunday we had 840 people gathered together. You would have thrilled, too,

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when the Saints from the West sector said to the people of the East, who came from out yonder, "You have been hiding in basements long enough. You go upstairs with the brethren, where you can see and hear them, and this morning we will go downstairs."

Then, before the meeting was over, the Saints from the East had the graciousness to say, "Brother Bennion, we do not feel good about this. Are you too tired to meet with the people who went into the basement if they would come back tonight?"

In the morning session I asked how many of those people had lost loved ones, and half the hands went up. Did you ever talk to an audience when half the hands went up to tell you that part of the family isn't along? You make inquiry of them and discover from fine young people that they do not know where their parents are, then have them come up and shake your hand and tell you, "It's the gospel that took us through." That's what this gospel can do for people!

I must take you into one program in England that stirred me no end. I saw a woman sitting down in the audience, and being impressed that she had something to say, I asked her if she would say a word. She said, "I would love to say a word, if you will let me say it from down here. You may not know it, Brother Bennion, but I am blind, and except for the kindness of two Mormon missionaries I would have nothing to do. They wrote home and got a Book of Mormon in Braille which I am reading." Then she said this wonderful thing: "When I was a little girl, my mother used to tell me I must not be naughty because if I was naughty the Mormons would get me. Now I am past middle age. I am blind. I am not naughty, but I want to tell you and this audience the Mormons have got me, and I am going to be baptized this next week."

Well, it has been wonderful. I have hinted all too briefly what the gospel is doing for the missionaries. I have tried to indicate what it is doing for the Saints, and you can just make up your mind they are wonderful. They are devoted. There is not anything they would not do for this Church.

I want to close with my own witness to you of what this gospel does for me. I have watched it in the lives of those people in Europe, and if I had a little summary to make, I would say these things:

The gospel humbles a man; it mellows him; it gladdens him; it motivates him; it sustains him; it redeems him; and it exalts him.

You cannot go for five months with a *clump i halsen* and center your heart on the work of the Lord, and get the evidences which I do not have the time to give you, without being stirred in your soul. I have been blessed in my ministry, and I would be ungrateful if I did not say so. I have seen the power of the priesthood manifested in behalf of people who needed a blessing and wanted it, and I say it humbly, I know that God lives. I have been blessed in my own life, under the promise of the eighty-fourth section that those of us who give our hearts to this work have the promise of Almighty God that we shall be sanctified of the Spirit unto the renewing of our bodies. I have felt the spirit of this gospel as I never have before, and I give you my witness as I close that I know that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, and that they both came back to declare through the prophet Joseph this wonderful new message for our benediction.

I must not sit down without expressing gratitude that Sister Bennion, the companion of my life through forty-five wonderful years, could go along. Her companionship blessed me, her faith not only sustained me, but with God's help healed me. In our home we shall never be the same again.

Now, don't anybody think that I am so in love with Europe that I want to go back to stay. These lines never meant so much to me:

So, it's home again, and home again
America for me.
I want a ship that's westward bound
To plow the rolling sea,
To the blessed land of room enough
Beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight
And the flag is full of stars.

Van Dyke