

I suppose some might think it presumptuous if I were to plead with the teachers of youth in secular as well as in religious education not to tear down the foundation stones upon which a human soul can build faith necessary to prepare to meet their Redeemer. I would from my humble station invite those who would fight against the truth as taught in the restored Church to think seriously of what a wise counselor said to the enemies of Christ in the day of Peter and his associates. This counselor admonished:

Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God. (Acts 5:38-39.)

Perhaps today is the time for us to hear again the rallying call that was put into words by W. W. Phelps:

Awake! O ye people, the Savior is coming;  
He'll suddenly come to his temple, we hear;  
Repentance is needed of all that are living,  
To gain them a lot of inheritance near.  
Today will soon pass and that unknown  
tomorrow

May leave many souls in a more dreadful  
state

Than came by the flood, or that fell on  
Gomorrhah—

Yea, weeping and wailing when grief is too  
late.

Be ready, O island, the Savior is coming;  
He'll bring again Zion, the prophets declare;  
Repent of your sins, and have faith in redemption,

To gain you a lot of inheritance there.

A voice to the nations in season is given,  
Prepare, oh, prepare for the kingdom's new  
birth,

To call the elect from the four winds of  
heaven;

For Jesus is coming to reign upon earth."

May the Lord bless us as his children to recognize that call, and may we say and be able to say it with power, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, . . . but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, (the God of this land,)" (Josh. 24:15) and prepare for the coming of the Savior, which may not be too long delayed, to cut short for the reign of righteousness the wickedness that well nigh seems to engulf a wicked world; when those who are righteous at his coming will be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet him, and those who are asleep in their graves, who are righteous likewise, will be caught up in the clouds of heaven to meet him.

I bear you my solemn witness that I believe these things to be true with all my soul. This is the day for us to prepare that people ready to receive the coming of the Lord, and I bear that testimony in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve. We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young.

## ELDER STERLING W. SILL

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**A** GREAT AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER ONCE said that we should thank God every day of our lives for the privilege of having been born. And then he went on to speculate on the unique question of how unfortunate it would have been if we had not been born, and he pointed out some of the wonderful things that we would have missed.

Really to understand the tremendous value of life as revealed by the gospel

multiplies by many times the importance of this thought. Life is our most valuable possession. Just to live is a marvelous blessing, especially to live in these days of wonder and enlightenment known as the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times.

In the days of Job it was said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life." (Job 2:4.) For a very wise purpose, God has implanted in every hu-

man heart a great natural desire for continued existence. We cling to life with every ounce of our strength. Even in severe sickness or oppressive trouble, we will still go to almost any length to prolong life even for a week or a month, though the period gained may be one of pain or hopelessness. But we will suffer almost any inconvenience or endure almost any hardship just to live.

Now if mortal life is worth so much, how much is eternal life worth? And what would it mean to us if it were lost? God himself placed a value on eternal life when he said it was his greatest gift to man. It therefore automatically becomes our most important opportunity to give every co-operation to help bring it about. And a good place to start is the place suggested by the philosopher—that is, to live our appreciation every day. What a wonderful way to begin this quest for eternal life, if we could always live the sentiment of the song that says—

I love life, and I want to live,  
To drink of life's fulness, take all it can give;  
I love life, every moment must count,  
To glory in its sunshine and revel in its fount.

Even if we gave "everything" to secure eternal life, we still have made the most wonderful bargain in the world. William James said, "The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." Eternal exaltation lasts forever and is the greatest possible good.

But the benefits of eternal life are not limited to its dimension of length. It has been pointed out that life has four dimensions:

First, there is the length of life—or how *long* we live.

Second, there is the breadth of life—or how *interestingly* we live.

Third, there is the depth of life—or how *much* we live, represented by those great qualities of love, worship, devotion, service, etc.

Then there is a fourth dimension of life, which might be compared to that more or less mysterious fourth dimension of space, the purpose of life—or *why* we live.

In the ordinary situations we multiply the dimensions to get the total volume. Suppose therefore that we could multiply the dimensions of life.

First there is the length of life.

We have made some progress in the last few centuries in increasing life's length. You may be interested to know that if you had lived two thousand years ago in Jerusalem, your life expectancy at birth would have been approximately nineteen years. In George Washington's day in America it was thirty-five years. In the America of our day, it is seventy years. We have not only tripled life's length, but it is also now possible for us to have clearer minds and stronger bodies and live in a world from which physical pain has largely been eliminated.

But no one is satisfied with this accomplishment. The only life we seek is eternal life. It has been wisely said that—"If the death of the body should forever end human life and personality, then the universe would be throwing away with utter heedlessness its most precious possession. A reasonable person does not build a violin with infinite care, gathering the materials and shaping the body of it, so that it can play the composition of the masters, and then by some whim of chance caprice, smash it to bits. Neither does God create in his own image the great masterpiece of a human life, and then when it has just begun to live, throw it utterly away."

God holds firmly in his hands the keys of eternal life.

Now suppose that we could multiply the length by the breadth of life.

Life at its best, even in mortality, is filled with interest and wonders. After the creation, God looked upon the earth and called it good. It is an earth of boundless beauty and endless fascination, where we may continually grow in knowledge and appreciation. When in our pre-mortal existence we beheld the foundations of the earth being laid and knew that we were going to have the privilege of living upon it, we are told that "all the sons of God shouted for joy." (Job 38:7.) And I am sure that if we fully remembered now what we knew for sure then, we would be willing to crawl on our hands and knees through

life for the privilege of being born and having the opportunity of proving ourselves faithful during the experiences of mortality.

Then our first parents were placed upon the earth and were asked to decide whether or not they would eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge, and after they had eaten, God said, "the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." (Gen. 3:22.) And I would like to point out in passing, that the right kind of knowledge still tends to have that effect upon people. It still tends to make them become as gods. And the most important classification of that knowledge is to know God and his plans for our betterment. When at the beginning of that long, awful night of betrayal and trial Jesus offered the great prayer to his Father, he said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

We live in a day when the gospel has been restored to the earth in a fulness never known before. In addition to the things that other dispensations have had, we now have the three great volumes of new scripture, outlining in every detail the simple principles of the gospel. The pathway to eternal life has now been perfectly marked and brilliantly lighted, and no one now needs to get off the straight and narrow way, except by his own choice. We live in a day when we may eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil to our heart's content. There is no flaming sword guarding the tree of knowledge, and some of the greatest joys of life are the joys of understanding, born in our own minds. Edward Dyer said—

My mind to me a kingdom is;  
Such pleasant joys therein I find  
That it excels all other bliss  
That earth affords or grows by kind.

The gift of eternal exaltation includes not only a celestial body, but also a celestial mind. We will have quickened senses, amplified powers of perception, and vastly increased capacity for happiness and understanding.

We know from firsthand experience some of the traits and characteristics of glorified, immortal beings, from those who have visited the earth. In describ-

ing the Angel Moroni, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, "His whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. . . ." Not only was his person glorious, but also the Prophet said his clothing was brilliant "beyond any earthly thing I had ever seen; nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant." (P of G P, Joseph Smith 2:32, 31.)

We are all familiar with the wonderful lift it gives us to be appropriately dressed in beautiful clothing. We adorn our bodies and keep them clean and attractive and in other ways go to great lengths to make them pleasant places to live. If attractive clothing gives us pleasure, what must be the joy of living forever, dressed in a glorified, celestialized body—to live with a celestial family and friends on a celestial earth—but with the great added fascination of having a celestial mind, one that thinks like God!

Then suppose we multiply the total of the length and breadth by the depth of life.

The objective of life is not only to live long, but also to live well. It is not only to acquire but also to become; it is not only to receive benefits but also to render service. Wealth consists not so much in what we have as in what we are and do. I suppose that the eight most important words ever spoken are these: "So God created man in his own image. . . ." (Gen 1:27.) But not only has each of you been created in the image of God, but each has also been endowed with a set of attributes of divinity, the development of which is one of the purposes for which we live. As Jesus admonished us, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) The plan of eternal progression contemplates that the offspring may ultimately become like the parent, and therefore fulfils the scripture which says that "men are that they might have joy," (2 Nephi 2:25) as the greatest joys of life are the joys of being.

Then there is the purpose of life, that which gives life its significance.

For a wise and glorious purpose

Thou [God] hast placed us here on earth  
And withheld the recollection  
Of our former friends and birth.

(Eliza R. Snow.)

Some day that recollection and those friendships will be given back to us, but in the meantime, what a wonderful stimulation to know that life is not an accident or an afterthought or a result of blind chance! The great plan of salvation was designed by God our Father for our benefit. We have been working toward the goal of eternal exaltation through a long period of pre-mortal existence. Then we walked by sight. We knew God. He is our Father. We lived with him. We saw his glorious, resurrected celestial body. We felt the wonder of his celestial mind and the delight of his wonderful personality. We wanted to be like him. We knew we must follow his example. We must learn obedience. We must learn to walk a little way by faith. We must pass the final test of mortality where we are free to choose for ourselves. We must be educated and proven and sanctified and redeemed.

And when we have finally proved ourselves worthy of exaltation, then eternity will be the measure of life's length; celestial glory will be the measure of its breadth; to be like God will be the measure of its depth.

Our salvation is made up of so many individual thoughts and acts and hours

of effort, certainly it would be the height of foolishness so much to dread to throw mortal life away all at once, but then deliberately to throw away eternal life a little at a time. It has been said that few, if any, will ever lose their salvation by a blowout. Mostly salvation is lost by a series of slow leaks—a little indecision, a little indifference, a little procrastination, a little slothfulness.

Disobedience may cut down life's length by producing spiritual death. Lethargy may reduce its breadth and intensity. Sin may destroy its depth, its godliness, its joy. Ignorance may thwart its purpose.

Brothers and sisters, the gospel has been given to help us increase the dimensions of our lives. That was also the mission of the Savior of the world who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10.) "... all that a man hath he will give for eternal life," (See Job 2:4) is still the greatest bargain in the world. May God help us to spend our lives effectively to that end, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve, has just been speaking to us. We shall now hear from Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Council of Seventy.

### ELDER S. DILWORTH YOUNG

#### *Of the First Council of the Seventy*

**Y**ESTERDAY THERE was a story read to you by Elder Clifford E. Young concerning Peter and John in the court of the temple healing a lame man who asked for alms. May I finish the story for you:

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

But when they had commanded them to

go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight