

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, just as I arose to step up here to the rostrum, my good friend and associate, Elder Christiansen said, "The Lord bless you." I think I have never needed his blessing more than I do at this moment, and I pray for the good Spirit, and pray also for your support and your sympathy.

I was impressed very much with the remarks of President Joseph Fielding Smith. He referred to the comprehensiveness of Mormonism, how this gospel of the kingdom must be preached to every creature—all of God's children—whether they be living or whether they be dead. A few years ago I was over in Norway and visited the little town of Trondheim where a car took us up to an elevated place just back of the Viking Monument in that city. As the car stopped I said to the driver, "Do you know where Brother John A. Widtsoe and his mother lived when their home was in this city?" He said, "Of course. Everyone knows that. Would you like to see it?" Of course, I would.

He drove us down through the city, and we finally stopped in front of a little white dwelling. Everything about that place was immaculate. Even the stones around the walks were painted white. I knocked at the door, and I said to the woman who opened it, "May I go around to the back and see the premises in the rear?" She said, "Of course!" I walked around to the back and as I stood there I saw some lettering on the fence. I walked nearer so I could better see the lettering, and I deciphered the name, Karl Vidtsoe. I wrote the name in my book, and when I came back to Salt Lake City I immediately went up to see Brother Widtsoe. I said to him, "Brother Widtsoe, who is Karl Vidtsoe?" He said, "Oh, that is Uncle Karl. Uncle Karl was a good man, but he never could see the beauty and the strength of the restored gospel. But Sister Widtsoe and I have been over there," he pointed to the temple, "and we have done the work for Karl,—all we can do for him in this life, but when we get over on the other side I will surely find Karl,

and I will preach the gospel to him until he is ready to receive it."

Do you see the beauty of the restored gospel? Do you see the anxiety of Brother Widtsoe to proclaim the gospel truths to his relative? It occurs to me as I stand here that our work is probably never done. We will commence on the morrow, or whenever we pass on, just where we left off today. We will search for our relatives and our friends until we will find them, and we will preach to them the self-same gospel which we are teaching the world today, both at home and abroad. It is glorious, brethren and sisters, to contemplate this phase of the restored gospel.

I jotted down here in just a moment, two or three passages of scripture. One reads like this: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all [else] shall be added unto you." (See Matt. 6:33.) Here is another one which has come to us through modern revelation. ". . . Many are called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen?

"Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men. . . ." (D&C 121:34-35.) Have you seen men depart from the faith because their hearts are centered in the things of this world? And because they aspire to the honors of men?

Another statement made by the Savior: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?" (Mark 10:23.) I do not know exactly what the Lord meant when he said that, but I do believe that we have no right as members of the Church to put our first thoughts to the accumulation of worldly things, and I believe he expects us, as stated in that verse I first read, to seek first his kingdom.

He said to the rich young ruler: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and take up thy cross and follow me." (See Matt. 19:21.) The rich young ruler could not comply because he had many possessions, and as a result he went away sorrowing.

Judas Iscariot thought he could get

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nowhere without money, so he betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. The sequence to that is that Judas hanged himself. I know a man who gave up his responsibilities in the Church in order to make money. As a result he is wealthy, and has become a power in the business world, but I now observe that he has lost his family and destroyed his chances and his opportunities for a place in God's kingdom. That is tragic, my brethren and sisters.

I know another man who gave up his position in a large business concern rather than give up his calling as a bishop. I loved that man. He died a year ago, but he left his widow enough for her care while she lives, and I have observed that his sons are recognized leaders in the business world. The Lord blesses devotion and faithful performance.

I have been reading just recently the life of Dr. Karl G. Maeser. Brother Maeser was a remarkable man. Somewhere in the book it tells about a group of missionaries who had met together in Meissen, Germany, the birthplace of Dr. Maeser. One of the missionaries made this remark: "Think what Dr. Maeser has done for the Church." Another responded promptly: "Think what the Church has done for Dr. Maeser." That remark offers a real suggestion. Have you ever stopped to think what the Church has done for you individually? How it has enriched your life? How it has given you courage and strength to go forward in your daily pursuits, and how it has brought you comfort in times of sorrow and distress? It is wonderful to belong to the Church.

Many of our leaders, past and present have made great contributions to the Church. I know men who have laid upon the altar every worldly possession they had for the gospel's sake.

They have gone into strange lands, sometimes far away from home and friends, to teach the gospel of the kingdom, and to explain God's revealed plan of salvation to others. Dr. Maeser, as I have read, was reared in an environment of culture and refinement. He associated with the elite in Germany. He had access to libraries. He was familiar with the best books of his day. His education was broad and varied, and included the study of music and art and several languages. God in his own way had prepared Dr. Maeser for his mission in the Church among the Latter-day Saints.

I can well imagine that it was difficult for Dr. Maeser to make the adjustment, yet I am sure that this good and great man did not complain nor compromise. He did not permit difficulties to obscure his vision of the truth. Brother Maeser had heard the voice of the Shepherd. That voice brought conviction to his soul. That conviction transformed his entire life, but whatever happened, confusion and uncertainty disappeared, and he stood for the first time on the solid foundation of faith in the True and Living God.

Brethren and sisters, may we appreciate our membership in this great Church. May we have the courage and the strength to devote ourselves unselfishly for the promotion of God's work among his children. That is our responsibility. It is our obligation, and may we not fail therein, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Spencer W. Kimball of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us.

ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

Beloved brethren and sisters, it is a joy to be back in this part of Zion. As the other brethren have mentioned their tours in foreign lands, my very recent memories were stirred. I bring to you

also the greetings of the thousands of members of the Church of all nationalities in South America.

Last Saturday and Sunday I was in Peru with various gatherings of Saints.