

ing as a child might pray, and the Lord appearing to him. Using the words of the Psalmist, "Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore, God hath blessed thee forever more." With the Father was Jesus the Savior. Joseph heard the voice of God and the divine words: "This is my Beloved Son." A new day was at hand. From that moment he was heart and mind for the word of the Lord. What a message for our missionaries of today!

He learned that day that the divisions of Christendom are its most conspicuous reproach and the chief cause of its inefficiency. They present a moral affront to the enterprise inaugurated by Jesus Christ, and constitute the outstanding limitation of its progress. Christianity is weakened by its divisions in facing the problems of today, among which are class hatreds, race antagonisms, blindness to social justice, the lure of vicious literature, crime-instigating narcotics, and the spread of military spirit in the world.

The supreme test of religion is revelation. No religion can be persuasive unless it relies on the principle of revelation. The living Church of Jesus Christ must be revelatory. One readily sees that the very lifeblood of the Church is the principle and potency of redemption. Christianity in its pure sense is the religion of redeemed personality. While all true men reveal God, the complete carrier of revelation can be no other than a chosen personality.

By the power of the Holy Priesthood which he received from heaven, Joseph Smith established our true relationship to God. Out of this grows the salvation of man—his true immortal life.

BISHOP CARL W. BUEHNER

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

My dear brethren and sisters, it is always an honor to greet you at a general conference of the Church and to bear you my testimony of the divinity of this great, ever-growing, latter-day work. What I have read, heard, and observed concerning serious conditions confronting this world in which we live makes me more appreciative than

The nations all bear witness to the need of a light that is not of man. We can give our word to the world that the forces which are to make the world the world it ought to be are now within it.

Thousands, yea millions of people are waiting to hear the voice of our Father in heaven. Millions are turning to God, and we are in these days of world turmoil experiencing a rising tide of understanding and goodwill that is constantly ebbing and flowing among us all. The fact that the movement has been reserved for our day fills us with the deepening sense of our responsibility and duty to make sure that the golden opportunities it offers are not lost.

"It changes everything.

I can see the end of war in this, some day.

I can see the joy of women and little children—some day.

I can see the cities and great spaces of land full of happiness.

I can see love shining in every face.

There shall be no more sin, no pain, no loss, no death—

Only life, only God—some day when the world shall have learned."

—Charles Rann Kennedy

I pray God to bless us all this day.
Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric will now address us, and he will be followed by Elder John Longden.

ever before of the testimony I have of things eternal.

I am sure we are all interested in security, and would like to say to all people living that if we are interested in security, we should live close to the teachings of the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ, for he has said, "... and though the heavens and the earth pass

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away, my word shall not pass away, . . ." (D&C 1:38.) I think more people than ever before are turning their hearts to religion for an answer to some of the perplexing problems we face.

I find great joy in my work in the Church, and I hope it will always be my desire to have the work of the Church come first. I like people who put "first things" first in the Church.

It is very encouraging to know that progress is being made all along the line. I enjoy my experiences in the stakes with you people.

Recently, a young man speaking at a stake quarterly conference said: "I am a very important person in my ward. I hold the office of a priest. I am the only priest in my priests' quorum. In our quorum, it is either one-hundred percent or nothing." It did not take long for this young man to prove to us that he was a hundred percent. I admire the young men and young women who are achieving to be hundred percenters by the standards with which we measure them. I am sure we cannot measure all of their activities, but many of them are making remarkable progress. This is even carrying over to some of our bishops and some of our other leaders.

I learned not long ago while attending a Fathers' and Sons' banquet in the Summit Stake that one bishop in a ward—and I guess he has been the bishop a long time or else it is the continuous record of two bishops—said they have not lost a boy to inactivity in their ward for thirteen years.

In another stake I attended, I heard a bishop make a similar report, but his was for six years, and still a third bishop in another stake said, "We haven't lost a boy in our ward for five years." Then I began hoping for the day when we could say to the whole Church, "We have not lost a boy or a girl in the Church this year, or for five years, or ten years." I think we are moving forward and accomplishing things that we have never accomplished before.

I was interested in hearing a young Latter-day Saint girl speak on the topic, "When and How Does a Young Woman Make Preparation for Marriage in the Temple." As she developed her subject, she said: "I have come to one

conclusion. There is a right way to get married, and there is a wrong way to get married. If some young man does not propose to me who can take me to the temple, I will convert one who can. I have a desire to be married the Lord's way, and I am going to insist that the man whom I marry is one who can take me to the House of the Lord."

I heard another little experience of a man who had recently been asked to supervise a district in ward teaching. He said, "Bishop, I will accept on one basis, that we do one-hundred percent ward teaching, and when I am unable to maintain one-hundred percent, I quit." I got a letter from his bishop the other day, who said, "For forty months, he has had one-hundred percent, and we see no reason why this will not continue indefinitely."

There come to us many experiences of devoted and dedicated ward teachers to the ever-expanding ward teaching program. I learned of a pair of ward teachers who travel 180 miles each month to visit three families, and they always get the three families visited. In another stake—I think in Florida—two ward teachers travel 160 miles each month to visit the families in their district, and they are always doing one-hundred percent teaching. If I remember right, we had a report some time ago of two teachers in one of the Canadian stakes who traveled approximately 4,000 miles a year to visit those in their district, and they faithfully visited every family each month.

I learned of a faithful ward teacher up in the Ogden area who has just completed fifty-six years as a ward teacher with a perfect record of never missing one month in the fifty-six years' time that he has been a teacher, even though for the first ten years or more he had twenty-five families in his district. He underwent a serious operation; he had some other difficult problems, but his perfect record was maintained in spite of these conditions. He is held in high esteem by the families in his district.

I learned of two high priests who impressed me very much. One of them is ninety-two years of age and served as a ward teacher for seventy years. The other at the age of ninety-four had

been a ward teacher for eighty-two years, having started when he was twelve years of age. This good brother indicated that he had only missed visiting his district four or five times in this eighty-two year period. In my humble opinion, I think when men, who give this type of service to the responsibilities that come to them, report to the other side, someone is going to stand there with outstretched arms, welcoming them into the kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

The ward teaching program is one of the oldest programs in the Church, having come to the Prophet Joseph Smith by revelation sometime between the first and sixth day of April 1830, in what is known as the twentieth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The program is designed to reach the fireside of every family in the Church with a spiritual message at least once each month and more often if necessary.

Ward teachers carry a challenging responsibility, that is, to watch over the Church. Residing within a ward teaching district may be families and individuals whose activities represent a commendable peak, while there may be some totally indifferent to things spiritual. You may be interested to know that at the present time there are in excess of 139,000 men and boys serving as ward teachers in the organized stakes of Zion. During the year 1958, 3,386,000 visits were made to the homes of these families, and this represents eighty percent of the families visited every month during the year, which is the highest record we have achieved in the Church.

Ward teachers are expected to promote the spirit of goodwill; be prepared to meet the criticism of those who find fault. They are always to defend the Church, uphold its doctrine, and support its leaders; to strengthen those who are offended or weak in the faith; to comfort those who mourn or have sorrow; to be among the first to offer assistance in cases of emergency and sickness; and to deliver a message of good cheer to the discouraged, the unfortunate, the aged, and the homebound. Their message should be gauged to meet the understanding of both the young and the old in each family.

If ward teachers faithfully perform their duties, each family—and for that matter, each member who is willing—will find themselves enfolded in the arms of the Church. In some instances, faithful ward teachers have been responsible for bringing people into the Church. A member now residing in Arizona made this report to the stake president in my presence. He said: "You do not know who I am. A few years ago, I came here from the East, having been retired because of poor health, and I was told that if I came to Arizona I may have an opportunity to prolong my life. I had a little money, and I invested in some real estate. The city grew out my way, and my property became very valuable. I sold it, bought more, and I have made a lot of money. In short, this is what has happened to me.

"I have recovered my health. I have become a member of your Church, first having been contacted by the ward teachers, who had the stake missionaries sent to me. I have made a lot of money. Now I would like to show my appreciation for the goodness of the Lord to me by having you select a number of young people who might serve as missionaries, but who haven't the finances to take care of their own expenses. You call them and send me the bill." I thought that was a nice way to express his appreciation.

I should like to close with another experience I have heard related in which ward teachers entered a family's home who were rather lukewarm, and even a little bitter, when the ward teachers came to pay a visit.

In a brusque voice, the head of the family said, "I am a very busy man. You can have fifteen minutes to get on with your message." This startled the ward teachers, and because their experience had not been too great, they paused and wondered just how to approach the subject. They learned about some of the children in the family, and discovered among them, a little girl who was going to turn eight years of age in just a few days. While they were talking to the children, the head of the family said, "Five minutes are gone; you have ten minutes left." They inquired a little further into the family, and after a few more minutes, the

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man reminded them again that they had five minutes left. In desperation, the ward teachers suggested that the family kneel down and have prayer with them before they left. This they did, and during the prayer, the ward teacher prayed that the Lord would protect this little girl who was about to become eight years of age, that nothing harmful would happen to her but that she might be baptized a member of the Church.

The following day, this man was mowing hay in the field behind his home. A number of children were playing in the yard, among whom was his little daughter. While making one of the rounds with his tractor, the wheel of the tractor went over a mound. As he quickly looked around, he observed that his daughter was missing. A sickening feeling overcame him. He went to the mound, pushing aside the hay, and deep below was his little daughter, who looking up said, "Daddy, don't tell them where I am. I am hiding from them." The prayer of the

ward teacher had been heard. The little girl's life had been preserved, and needless to say, the family's reaction to the ward teachers was from this time forward, completely reversed.

May we all have a desire to fulfill our assignments faithfully and well, and if possible, be hundred percenters. I cannot help but be reminded of the statement that the Savior made: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48.) To a great degree, we can accomplish this one-hundred percent perfection.

I leave you my testimony of the divinity of this great work, and my blessing, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Carl W. Buehner has just spoken to us. Our closing speaker will be Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve.

ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

From the inspiration of these two meetings today and after listening to the reports of my brethren from the four corners of the earth, along with my own deep-seated testimony as to the divinity of this great latter-day work, I should like to address my remarks to the subject of nine great latter-day prophets.

I reflect back 130 years last February when the Lord spoke to Joseph Smith saying,

"Now, behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men." (D&C 4:1.)

During this conference we have heard about the prophets in the Old and New Testaments. In the few moments which are mine I should like to speak briefly about the nine great men, modern-day prophets, who have been responsible under the inspiration of the Almighty for directing this latter-day marvelous work.

First, of course, there was Joseph

Smith, the prophet, the seer, the revelator. Yes, he was given the keys of the kingdom in this, the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. He received a personal visit from God the Father and Jesus Christ, his Divine Son. Reflect upon his accomplishments in the thirty-nine years of his mortal life: organized the Church of Jesus Christ in correct and lawful manner; translated the Book of Mormon; received the revelations from the Lord as contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, also the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price; translated some writings of Abraham from one ancient record; wrote a 3200 page history of himself and the Church; and was visited and given instructions and authority by the Savior, John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John, Moses, Elias, and Elijah and then sealed his testimony to the truthfulness of all these things with his life's blood, following the pattern of the Savior himself.

Before Joseph Smith was murdered,