

ficers, and General Auxiliary Officers of the Church for your sustaining vote. Thank you, brethren and sisters, for this manifestation of your cooperation and loyalty. May the Lord bless all of us as we go forward in unity, devot-

ing ourselves to the upbuilding and success of the Church.

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Bishop Carl W. Buehner.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My soul is subdued as I face this vast conference audience, and I seek, therefore, for an interest in your faith and prayers during these next few minutes.

Several weeks ago I had a telephone call from an anxious father about his nineteen-year-old son, who, having read certain scriptures, was resisting the idea of going on a mission lest he would do an injustice to those who would reject his message, thus placing them under condemnation as he had construed certain scriptures, which he had read, to mean.

As I sat with this young man, at the request of the father, I found that he had two particular scriptures in mind. The first was the injunction of the Master to his disciples when he said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16.)

And then in our day one somewhat similar: "Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor.

"Therefore, they are left without excuse, and their sins are upon their own heads." (D&C 88:81-82.)

So this young man asked, "Why send the missionaries out to preach the gospel, if to do so would put people under condemnation who would not accept? Would it not be better for people to be kept in ignorance than to be taught and then not to accept?"

Of course, these questions opened up a subject which would require far more time than is at my disposal this afternoon, but with the thought that these same questions may be in the minds of others, particularly our young men who do not understand, I shall this after-

noon make a few observations relative to the point raised by this young man. Some of these thoughts were expressed in my interview with him.

The Master commanded his disciples: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost": (Matthew 28:19.)

"Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:23.)

And so the scriptures record, the disciples preached, "Repent, and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38.)

The Master's admonition to Nicodemus, who came confessing Jesus as a teacher come of God, and undoubtedly seeking to know, like so many others who are true seekers after truth, just what he must do to be saved. He was told that he must be born again if he would see the kingdom of God. This statement, the Master clarified, when he explained, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.)

This new birth, then, was to be accomplished through the medium of baptism by immersion and by the laying on of hands for the conferring of the Holy Ghost, as the disciples, thereafter as they went out among the people, administered these sacred ordinances.

Then Nicodemus asked: "How can these things be?" And in answer, the Master declared the profound truth regarding the atonement, which explains to all who would understand the reason why the gospel must be preached by authorized servants to all people. Said he:

"For God so loved the world, that he

gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (*Ibid.*, 3:16.)

And then he emphasized, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (*Ibid.*, 3:17.)

I then paraphrased to my young missionary friend: "So our missionaries go not out into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through their teachings, might be saved."

Being saved from everlasting condemnation through the atonement of the only Begotten Son becomes a new birth, or a redemption from spiritual death, the meaning of which is explained by revelation as the Lord has revealed it.

From the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they and their posterity suffered a spiritual death, or a separation from direct communication with Deity. This is what the revelations have taught us:

"And it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet—

"Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment, wherein he became subject to the will of the devil, because he yielded unto temptation.

"Wherefore, I, the Lord God, caused that he should be cast out from the Garden of Eden, from my presence, because of his transgression, wherein he became spiritually dead, which is the first death, even that same death which is the last death, which is spiritual, which shall be pronounced upon the wicked when I shall say: "Depart, ye cursed." (D&C 29:39-41.)

Man through the baptism of the water and of the Spirit is redeemed from this spiritual death and by the power of the Holy Ghost, brought back into direct communion with God, and these are "born again." To those who keep the commandments ". . . he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you." (Mosiah 18:10.)

Those who suffered this first "spiritual

death" were cast out from the presence of God from the Garden of Eden, as the Lord had said to the spirits in the premortal world, that they might "prove themselves to see if they would do all things whatsoever the Lord their God should command them," and there was granted unto all men, therefore a "probationary" period as the Prophet Amulek explained: "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God," (Alma 34:32) or in other words, a time for all men to work out their salvation and to prepare to come back into the presence of God.

It was this plan of salvation to which the Resurrected Lord made reference when he said to the Nephites: "And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end." (3 Nephi 27:19.)

Baptism of water and of the Spirit by those having authority are the necessary ordinances for this cleansing, for as the Lord told Adam, ". . . by the water ye keep the commandment, by the Spirit are ye justified, and by the blood are ye sanctified." (Moses 6:60.)

It was undoubtedly this same principle that the apostle Paul had in mind when he taught the Galatians: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27.)

Involved in this question of the universal proclamation of the gospel is another principle implied in the Master's instruction to Peter. The Master, having declared the fundamental principle upon which his kingdom would be built, conferred upon Peter the "keys of the kingdom," which have been conferred upon all prophet-leaders in every dispensation and held today by our own President David O. McKay in our time. He said the purpose of so establishing his kingdom with that authority was that the "gates of hell" should not prevail against it.

The broad implication of that statement, having in mind the periods of apostasy which have followed each dispensation, is that even during such periods of apostasy when there was no

Thursday, April 6

one on earth to administer these saving ordinances, the devil would not prevail against the plan of salvation of all of our Father's children.

This further provision in his plan contemplated the preaching of the gospel then, not only to his children who were upon the earth, but also to the spirits of mortals who had lived upon the earth. The Master prophesied of the time when that would take place when he said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." (John 5:25.)

Not long after this prophecy was uttered, it was fulfilled when the Crucified Lord, as Peter tells us, "... quickened by the Spirit, went and preached unto the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:18-21.) And thus, although temporarily, the powers of the devil drove the Church into the wilderness of apostasy after the apostolic period, the gates of hell did not prevail against the plan of salvation, either for the dead, who did not have ample opportunity to receive the gospel on earth, as well as for those then living when authorized servants were on the earth to perform the essential saving ordinances.

The missionary work in the spirit world was thus introduced by the Master and has continued from that time down to the present "... that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, and yet live according to God in the Spirit," to attain which, is to gain eternal life. (1 Peter 4:6.)

So, surely with the preaching of the gospel made thus vital to the eternal blessing of all who will hear and accept, no one should hesitate when called by proper authority to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. Among the Nephites there was an example of how men of this kind of devotion and dedication applied themselves to their teaching. Jacob writes:

"For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi.

"And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsi-

bility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day." (Jacob 1:18-19.)

There is no more welcome voice to the honest in heart than the voice of the true messenger preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have a classic example of inspired teachings and how they come. The sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him, and when he saw them returning from their missionary journeys, the record says, he rejoiced exceedingly "to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding, and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

"But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God." (Alma 17:2-3.)

When I read that word "diligently" which the Lord has repeated again and again, as when he said: "And I give unto you as commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom," and then added, "Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you" (D&C 88:77-78), I have tried to define those words "diligently" and "grace." Diligently, the dictionary says, is "perseveringly attentive, prosecuted with careful attention," which is opposite laziness, or carelessness, or indifference. And when I looked for the definition of "grace," I found it defined as a "state of being pleasing to God because of responsiveness."

But I do not think that is what the Lord meant by "grace" when he said, "My grace shall attend you." I believe the definition of "grace" is implied in the fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants where the Lord promised to those who would engage vigorously in

missionary work: ". . . and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul." (*Ibid.*, 4:4.) The saving "grace" of the Lord's atoning power would extend to the giver as well as to those who would receive the saving ordinances of the gospel.

Surely, therefore, no one with that understanding of these fundamental principles would think he were doing our Heavenly Father's mortal children a disservice by giving them these priceless gifts.

May God bless us all and all our Father's children, that they may be responsive to the call of the missionaries. May this young man and all others like him, may they realize that this is a responsibility which the Lord has given to his Church in every dispensation, and to his authorized servants in the world of spirits, to teach the

gospel to every creature in order that each be left without excuse in the day of judgment, and that all might be redeemed from the Fall and brought back into the presence of the Lord. We who have the command to preach and teach must, like the Apostle Paul declared, "not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. . . ." (*Rom.* 1:16.)

I pray humbly we may all understand and so teach with the power and authority of God, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. Bishop Carl W. Buehner of the Presiding Bishopric will be our next speaker.

BISHOP CARL W. BUEHNER

Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

The message contained in the words of an old song suggest a few thoughts worthy of consideration:

"Who's on the Lord's side? Who?
Now is the time to show;
We ask it fearlessly;
Who's on the Lord's side? Who?"

Ever since the great council was conducted in heaven for the purpose of providing a plan of salvation, the right of choice has become most important. The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, through the writings of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, some of the things which took place on this occasion. He told how Satan went before the Father saying:

"—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor." (*Moses* 4:1.)

Then the Father's Beloved Son came forth with another plan described by the Father as follows:

"But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the

beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever." (*Ibid.*, 4:2.)

Satan's proposal was rejected. He rebelled, and as a result of this rebellion, he and his followers were cast out of heaven. Since that day, he has been trying to destroy man.

The primary purpose of our Father in heaven and his only Begotten Son is to exalt mankind. Satan's desire is to take away our free agency and reduce everyone to his level.

We are here today because of the choices we have made.

One verse of another song we frequently sing expresses a thought along this line:

"Choose the right! there is peace in
righteous doing;
Choose the right! there's safety for the
soul;
Choose the right in all labors you're
pursuing;
Let God and heaven be your goal."

History is replete with examples of blessings and adversity that came to