

Saturday, April 8

Second Day

than Moses and a greater prophet than Isaiah. . . ." (*Joseph Smith An American Prophet* by John Henry Evans, foreword.)

To these may I add my testimony;

I believe—I know Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God; that he was visited by heavenly messengers. Among them were John the Baptist, Peter, James, and John; Moses, Elias, Elijah; and one Moroni who led him to some hidden golden plates, the characters on which he translated and thus produced the Book of Mormon. I also believe—yes, I know, that he was visited by the Father and by the Son and was instructed by the Son. This testimony I bear humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., As-

sistant to the Twelve. The combined Choirs of the Utah State University and the congregation will now join in singing, "How Firm A Foundation, Ye Saints of the Lord," conducted by James L. Bradley. Elder Alma Sonne will be the speaker after the singing.

The Combined Choirs and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "How Firm A Foundation, Ye Saints Of The Lord."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson.

ELDER ALMA SONNE

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, there were power and inspiration in the song which we have just sung. I appreciate the good singing by the various choirs who have appeared during this conference. I am especially grateful for the singing of the choir this morning, coming as it did from the Logan Institute and from the Utah State University. I am very happy that the program of this great Church provides for the development of choirs and choral groups.

For a few minutes I would like to say something about our missionary effort in the world. This is a missionary Church, and when one becomes a member of it, he is also a missionary. As an introduction I want to read from the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which is also a preface, or an introduction, to the revelations which follow.

Said the Lord: "For verily the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated.

"And the voice of warning shall be

unto all people, by the mouths of my disciples, whom I have chosen in these last days.

"And they shall go forth and none shall stay them, for I the Lord have commanded them." (D&C 1:2, 4-5.)

The Savior's great commission to his chosen apostles prior to his ascension is similar in all respects to what I have read. Said he: "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.)

Under those solemn injunctions God's work has gone forward in the earth. Neither persecution, ridicule, nor bigotry have been able to stop it from progressing.

When I visited the Canadian Mission a few months ago, I was told that Elder Orson Hyde opened the mission in 1833. The Church was then three years old, after having been organized by six humble men. In the same year Joseph Smith the Prophet and Sidney Rigdon strengthened the mission by their personal ministry. Their first meeting was

held in a store building in the province of Ontario. The location was pointed out to us as we visited the place. It is a historical landmark.

The result of that effort was fourteen baptisms. Three years later in 1836 Apostle Parley P. Pratt went to Toronto. He had with him a letter of introduction to John Taylor from a man named Moses Nickerson. Taylor was a minister in the Methodist Church. Such letters are now called referrals and are very effective in reaching the people. John Taylor and a group of businessmen were holding weekly meetings to study and search for the truth, using the Bible as a guide.

Parley P. Pratt explained the gospel to those men, and all but one was converted and baptized. In the same year John E. Page and Orson Hyde returned and converted and baptized six hundred. Thus the work was begun in the great country of Canada.

I need not tell you what has happened since those early days. Similar results were obtained in Great Britain, in Scandinavia, in the United States, and elsewhere. In the year 1837, seven years after the Church was organized, Heber C. Kimball, a member of the Twelve, was set apart by the First Presidency of the Church to preside over a mission to be established in England. Six others, similarly called and set apart, accompanied him.

They were poor, these men, in the things of the world. They had attended no theological seminary in preparation for their ministry, and they were not prominent in the affairs of men. The following words from President Heber C. Kimball illustrate the spirit under which they did their work.

Humbly President Kimball said: "The idea of such a mission was almost more than I could bear up under. I was almost ready to sink under the burden which was placed upon me. However, all these considerations did not deter me from the path of duty. The moment I understood the will of my Heavenly Father I felt a determination to go at all hazards, believing that he would support me by his almighty power, and endow me with every qualification that I needed, and although my family

was dear to me, and I should have to leave them almost destitute, I felt that the cause of truth, the gospel of Jesus Christ, outweighed every other consideration." (See *Heber C. Kimball's Journal*, Vol. 7, pp. 10-11.)

There, my brethren and sisters, is an example of magnificent faith. President Kimball was a strong man, full of faith and testimony. He was not easily dismayed. Many of you people who are now listening to me have visited the city of Preston in Lancashire, England. Some of you have seen the River Ribble, which flows through the city. It was in that river that nine baptisms were performed, the first in Europe in this dispensation. The baptismal ceremony was witnessed by a crowd of between seven and nine thousand people. Great Britain was being proselyted by great and good men who were humble and God-fearing, but very effective.

In 1840 eight members of the Quorum of the Twelve were in England laying the foundation of the work to be done in that prolific field. Among them were Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Wilford Woodruff, and others. Their success was phenomenal. Nothing like it had occurred since Peter, the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, delivered his marvelous sermon on the day of Pentecost. Congregations of religious worshippers joined the Church and accepted the restored gospel. Many of them immigrated to America, to return as missionaries to their native lands and to make contact with their former neighbors and friends.

Out of their numbers came great leaders like John Taylor, George Q. Cannon, Charles W. Penrose, Charles W. Nibley, and many others. From Scotland came the McKay family, whose faith and devotion have touched the hearts of thousands in Zion and on foreign shores. The missionary system of the Church has not failed, nor will it fail. There is no commercial or professional aspect connected with it. It is a plan of proselyting adopted by the Savior when he sent his disciples out into the world to teach the nations.

Jesus chose humble men to represent him before the world. The same caliber of men has been chosen in this dispen-

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Second Day

sation. Humility is a godly virtue. The missionary realizes that he is engaged in God's work. It is not man's work. His best qualifications are his worthiness and a firm and unshakable testimony.

Someone has said, "A testimony supported by two or more witnesses is worth a thousand arguments." I know that is true. Converts are a source of strength to the Church. On June 6, 1840 the first company of English converts left their native country for Nauvoo, Illinois. Other companies followed in rapid succession. They arrived in Nauvoo at a crucial moment when the forces of evil were asserting themselves with persistent and relentless fury. God is blessing

the missionary endeavors of 15,000 missionaries laboring at home and abroad. He will continue to do so.

God's work will triumph in the earth, and the warning is going forth to the nations. May the Lord inspire us to support the missionary program of this great Church, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us. Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, will now speak to us.

BISHOP THORPE B. ISAACSON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

President McKay, President Moyle, President Smith, my beloved brethren and sisters: I am very grateful for the prayer offered by Brother Trauffer at the beginning of this session: He is a great man in his own right, deeply loved by the people in far-off Switzerland and by everyone.

When one faces this responsibility, I assure you that much fasting and prayer precedes this assignment.

I address my remarks today to the young men of America upon whom so much responsibility rests for all that we are to become in this land of freedom.

Not anything of value is without price, neither honor nor freedom, neither life nor living, neither health nor wealth, nor anything which is counted for the blessing of man. The greater the worth, the greater the price.

I cannot talk of all our great blessings within the limitation of my allotted time. Therefore, in considered judgment, I desire to speak of that great blessing of freedom which is so often talked about, so seldom appraised, and less frequently appreciated.

George Washington knew full well the price of freedom and felt it was his duty and a privilege to pay that price.

Abraham Lincoln was well acquainted with the price of freedom. In an editorial in the Church News, February

18, 1961, it was said of him, and I quote, "He realized that Washington's success lay largely in the divine help which came to him. Lincoln fully believed that God guided and prospered Washington in winning freedom for the United States." With this feeling, he spoke to his friends in Springfield before leaving for the nation's capitol, and said:

"I now leave, not knowing when or whether I may ever return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him [Washington] I cannot succeed. But with that assistance, I cannot fail." (John Wesley Hill, *Abraham Lincoln Man of God*, p. 206.)

Lincoln was convinced that "independence came to America as a gift of God, and that George Washington was but an instrument in the Divine Hand to bring it about."

Yes, Washington and Lincoln were both believers in God, humble servants who prayed constantly and received answers to their prayers.

I quote again from the editorial in the Church News:

"No man who has been an instrument in the hands of God, has any doubt about it. He knows it and feels it unerringly. He recognizes the divine Spirit upon him, he is conscious of its strength and of its direction.

"Lincoln wrote about this power and