

Sunday, October 1

Third Day

and it is the eleventh hour, and the last time that I shall call laborers into my vineyard." (D&C 33:3.) And remember President McKay's admonition, "Every member a missionary." The challenge is for each of us to be a missionary. This means for each of us to bring a convert into the Church this year. Let us make this our goal and may the Lord

make us equal to the task, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

**President David O. McKay:**

We have just listened to Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Theodore M. Burton, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us.

### ELDER THEODORE MOYLE BURTON

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My brothers and sisters, I am most grateful for this past year. It has been a marvelous year to have spent in association with these, my brethren. I have had my eyes opened. I have learned many things. It has also been a tremendous blessing to me to be able to travel among the stakes and missions of the Church and see what wonderful strength and leadership we have wherever I travel.

I have been greatly impressed by the strength of the Church, for I feel the strength of the Church is in the hearts of our people who are willing to serve and to sacrifice because of the testimony they have in their hearts that this is the truth.

Now, as a missionary, how can I teach the things that are in my heart to you, the people? How can I strengthen the Saints and teach those who are not yet members of the Church? How can I give confidence to them that God does live and that he does speak in this generation?

Perhaps I can illustrate this by talking for a moment about some of the problems of translation. When I worked for the United States government in the foreign agency service of the Treasury Department, it was my duty to translate some of the customs laws from the German into the English language. I soon learned that a man in order to translate has to know much more than just the words of the language. I found that a translator must give a message, not just a literal translation of the subject word for word.

I found that sentences mean much more than words. I found that para-

graphs are much more important than sentences, and I found that the treatise as a whole must make sense. Otherwise, the translation is not good. Words have many different meanings, and the meanings of these words depend upon their usage. The context in which they are used becomes extremely important.

Let us take as a simple example the word, *corn*. It is a simple English word, but if you were to translate this into another language, you would have to understand some of its many meanings. *Corn* would mean *maize* to the Indian. It would mean *grain* to the Britisher. It would mean *whiskey* to the moonshiner. It would mean to *granulate* to the chemist or to the munitions manufacturer. It would mean to *preserve* to the housewife. It would mean to *plant* to the farmer. It would mean a *horny skin growth* to the doctor of medicine.

So, if you were to translate that word, you would have to know how it was used. Thus a translator must understand the meaning of the information he is to present; otherwise, his translation is impossible. So, if he is to translate, he must become an authority in other fields much more than just an authority in the language with which he is working. He must understand something about the subject being translated.

Let us look now at the problem of translating the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. Not only must the translator know English, he must also know Hebrew. He must know what the Hebrew says, and then he must put that understandingly into the English language.

In the Old Testament there are several Hebrew words, "ro'eh," "hozeh," and "nabhi," all of which are translated by the translators as *prophet*. The first two, almost synonymous, from the roots "ra'ah" and "hazah," both meaning to see suggest the man of vision and should be properly rendered as *seer*. The term "nabhi" from the root "nabha" means to *announce*. But if the translator felt that to see and to *announce* are synonymous and that they refer to the same thing, then he would so use them. Thus we find that all of these words were used and translated as *prophet* and sometimes the word *seer* was used where *prophet* should have been used, and sometimes the word *prophet* was used where *seer* should have been used. Confusion resulted therefrom, because the translators did not understand that these two words *seer* and *prophet* mean different things; that they have different usages.

There is a great difference between these words, because a *seer* is greater than a *prophet*. King Limhi, in speaking to the missionary, Ammon, said, ". . . a seer is greater than a prophet." Then Ammon explained why. He said, ". . . a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God.

"But a seer can know of things which are past, and also things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known." (Mosiah 8:16-17.)

Life for the ordinary man is oftentimes frightening and bewildering. There is so much that we mortals fear. There is so much that we do not understand. There is so much that we do not know. When we talk of knowing, we talk of knowledge, and it would be well to ask ourselves what we mean by "knowledge." Knowledge is only our interpretation of the evidence before us. If our interpretation of the evidence is

wrong, our knowledge is false.

Sometimes, therefore, we make grave errors, for our interpretation of the evidence is wrong. What a shock it is for us to realize that what we once thought we knew—is wrong! This has occurred many times in the history of the earth. Why, the evidence was so plain to those who stated that the earth was flat, that when anyone mentioned that the earth is round, it was a ridiculous thing, and the people just laughed at the idea. Yet by the evidence we have today we interpret this to mean that the earth is round, and we claim that previous persons just didn't understand the evidence presented to them.

The same thing is true when we talked about the sun revolving around the earth. Why, any man with eyes to see could actually see the sun revolving around the earth! Yet our interpretation of the evidence today is just the reverse of this. So, what we say we know is not always true.

What then can a person cling to? Youth lacks experience, and older people jump at conclusions also. Knowledge is often based on too little evidence, either by the young or by the old. Thus, young and old, when they have found themselves questioning, become skeptical, and they begin to question and doubt everything and have confidence in nothing.

Now to what can a man turn? In what can he place reliance? In whom can we put our confidence, our trust? Now remember, Ammon said a seer is greater than a prophet. Before he made this statement he had said ". . . I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer." (*Ibid.*, 8:13.)

Thus one can trust a seer because a seer may see the heavens open. He may see the great vision of God working in all his majesty. He may see the

Sunday, October 1

Third Day

fulness of truth as it is revealed to him by God who makes no mistakes. The evidence is clear, therefore, and the interpretation is clear. The seer can bear personal testimony, not based on books, not based on scholarship, not based on tradition, but based on the evidence of things that God himself can reveal to him in an actual experience with Deity. He may receive a revelation from God by actually seeing and hearing and being instructed in the real truth.

A seer then is one who may see God, who may talk with God, who may receive personal instruction from God. Our prophet is a seer and a revelator. I do not know who originally taught the doctrine. I was told once that it was taught by President Heber J. Grant, but I was taught this doctrine by Elder Marion G. Romney, who told me that the Lord will never let his prophet, the seer, lead his people astray. Men in all ranks on this earth and in the Church have fallen from grace, but the Lord will never permit the great prophet, our seer, and revelator, to fall or to lead the people astray. Before this could happen God must of necessity remove that man from the earth.

There must be someone to whom the people can turn and trust, who can speak for God. God must have someone on earth who can point the way and say, "This is true." How grateful, my brothers and sisters, we should be that God in the fulness of his grace has given us a living prophet to guide us to Him; even more that God has given us a seer, for this seer and prophet reveals personal testimony to young and old alike that Jesus is in very deed the risen Savior, the Living God.

Of this I bear sacred testimony, for under conditions too sacred to mention here God has given me witness three times in the temples that David O. McKay is truly and indeed a prophet of God, a seer, and I bear you this testimony that you can trust him and so put your whole faith in Jesus Christ. We must turn from anything which tears us away from God our Father and turn to that which will lead us to him through repentance, through our determination and through our absolute will to do the work of God.

I bear you this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

The singing, as you know, for this afternoon and this morning has been furnished by the members of the Tabernacle Choir. We have been inspired with their singing. I think it would be fitting at this moment to represent you as well as the General Authorities in saying just a word, at least, of appreciation of the services rendered by many during this three-day conference in making this inspirational gathering so meaningful:

First, to the General Authorities, we express deep appreciation for the inspirational messages they have given to us. Second, to the public press, the reporters, for their fair and accurate reports throughout the sessions of the conference. Third, to the city officials, the city traffic officers in handling increased traffic, etc.; members of the fire department, some of whom you met after one or two of these sessions;

and to the Red Cross representatives who have been on hand to render any assistance and service that might be needed. To the Tabernacle ushers who have rendered service in seating the great audiences of these conference sessions. Quietly and unobtrusively they have looked after your convenience and welfare.

We have already expressed, and we do so again, appreciation to the radio and television stations throughout our own city and the nation who all through the three days have carried the proceedings of these inspirational sessions. These stations have been the means of permitting untold thousands of persons to hear the proceedings of the one hundred thirty-first semiannual conference.

We appreciate especially those who have furnished the singing throughout this conference. Let me remind you