

Miller, President of Weber College; Royden C. Braithwaite, President of the College of Southern Utah; Howard McDonald, President of the Los Angeles State College; Wendell H. Wiser, President of the Church College in New Zealand; John L. Clarke, President of Ricks College; A Sherman Christenson, Associate Judge of the Federal Court; M. Lynn Bennion, Superintendent of Salt Lake City Public Schools; M. Blaine Peterson, United States Congressman; Honorable Jesse A. Udall, Associate Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court.

These have been noticed, and there are probably others who should be mentioned, who have our hearty welcome. We appreciate their companionship and trust they will enjoy the meeting this morning.

The singing, as already announced, will be furnished by the Brigham Young University Combined Chorus, with Kurt Weinzinger conducting, and Alexander Schreiner at the organ. We shall

begin this session by the Brigham Young University Combined Chorus singing "Cherubim Song." The invocation will be offered by Elder Ernest A. Strong, Jr., president of the Kolob Stake.

The Brigham Young University Combined Chorus sang, "Cherubim Song." Ernest A. Strong, Jr., president of the Kolob Stake, offered the invocation.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation just offered was by Elder Ernest A. Strong, Jr., president of the Kolob Stake. The Brigham Young University Choir will now sing "Christ, The Lord is Risen Today," conducted by Kurt Weinzinger.

Singing by the Brigham Young University Combined Chorus, "Christ, The Lord, Is Risen Today."

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

One hundred and thirty-two years ago today a group of men and women, in obedience to a commandment of God, were assembled in the house of Mr. Peter Whitmer, Sen., for the purpose of organizing the Church.

It was just a group of friendly neighbors, unknown to anyone beyond the countryside in which they followed their daily vocations. A good picture of the moral and economic atmosphere of the neighborhood may be surmised from the following introduction of one of the citizens: Joseph Knight, Sen. "'owned a farm, a grist mill and carding machine. He was not rich, yet he possessed enough of this world's goods to secure to himself and family, not only the necessities, but also the comforts of life. . . .' He 'was . . . a sober, honest man, generally respected and beloved by his neighbors and acquaintances. He did not belong to any religious sect, but was a believer in the Universalian doctrine.' The business in which Joseph Knight, Sen., engaged, made it necessary at times for him to hire men, and the Prophet Joseph was occasionally employed by him. To the Knight family, . . . the

young Prophet related many of the things God had revealed respecting the Book of Mormon, then as yet, to come forth." (DHC 1:47.)

Of such ordinary, rural men and women was the group composed who assembled in Peter Whitmer's house in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, a century and thirty-two years ago today.

Means of communication were primitive—seven years before the telegraph would be known. The only light in the house after dark would be furnished by candle, perhaps by kerosene lamp. The electric light globe would not be known for forty years. Sixty years—almost a lifetime—before the automobile would be used! And the airplane existed only in the realm of imagination. Yet one year before the organization of the Church, under the inspiration of the Lord, Joseph Smith had written:

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

There is no evidence that such a statement had ever before been made by an obscure lad, and if it had, it would have passed into obscurity with

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the boastful pretensions or imaginations of its author. Just as the anticipated, foolish aspirations of "Darius Green and his flying machine,"—I am not sure whether I am right on that, but that is as I remember it as a boy—who spoke disdainfully of the man who had made "wings of wax" that would not stand "sunshine and hard whacks," and who boastfully said: "I shall make mine of leather, or something or other."

I mention that merely to emphasize the fact that a Church to become a "marvelous work and a wonder" must contain those elements of truth which find lodgment in the human mind, which in honesty recognizes and loves truth wherever or whenever it is found.

It is true that over a century ago, when men heard that a young man claimed that God had revealed himself, they mocked him, and in doubt turned away from him just as in the beginning of the Christian Era wise and able men in Athens turned away from a lonely little brown-eyed man who challenged much of their philosophy as false and their worship of images as gross error, yet the fact remained that he was the only man in that great city of intellectuals who knew by actual experience that a man may pass through the portals of death and live—the only man in Athens who could clearly sense the difference between the formality of idolatry and the heartfelt worship of the only true and living God. By the Epicureans and Stoics with whom he had conversed and argued, Paul had been called a "babbling," a "setter-forth of strange gods;"

"And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest is?"

"For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean." (Acts 17:19-20.)

"Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship,

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him declare I unto you." (*Ibid.*, 17:22-23.)

Today, as then, too many men and women have other gods to which they give more thought than to the resurrected Lord—the god of pleasure, the god of wealth, the god of indulgence, the god of political power, the god of popularity, the god of race superiority—as varied and numerous as were the gods in ancient Athens and Rome.

Thoughts that most frequently occupy the mind determine a man's course of action. It is therefore a blessing to the world that there are occasions such as this, which, as warning semaphores, say to mankind: *In your mad rush for pleasure, wealth, and fame, pause and think what is of most value in life.*

What fundamental truths, what eternal principles, if any, were associated with that little group which assembled one hundred and thirty-two years ago?

The first was *Man's Relationship to Deity*. For the first time in eighteen hundred years, God had revealed himself as a Personal Being. The relationship of Father and Son had been established by the divine introduction: "This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Joseph Smith 2:17.)

Those who were baptized into the Church that day in April 1830 *believed in the existence of a Personal God; that his reality and that of his Son Jesus Christ constitute the eternal foundation upon which this Church is built.*

Commenting upon this eternally-existent, creative power of God, Dr. Charles A. Dinsmore of Yale University, in *Christianity and Modern Thought*, aptly says:

"Religion, standing on the known experience of the race, makes one bold and glorious affirmation. She asserts that this power that makes for truth, for beauty, and for goodness is not less personal than we. This leap of faith is justified because *God cannot be less than the greatest of his works, the Cause must be adequate to the effect.* When, therefore, we call God personal, we have interpreted him by the loftiest symbol we have. He may be infinitely more. He cannot be less. When we call God a Spirit, we use the clearest lens we have to look at the Everlasting. As Herbert

Spencer has well said: *"The choice is not between a personal God and something lower, but between a personal God and something higher."*

"My Lord and my God" was not merely a spontaneous, meaningless exclamation of Thomas when he beheld his Risen Lord. The Being before him was his God. Once we accept Christ as divine, it is easy to visualize his Father as being just as personal as he; for Christ said, ". . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . ." (John 14:9.)

How boastful, how unfounded, is the brazen declaration of communism that "there is no God," and that "Religion (the church) is but an opiate!"

Faith in the existence of an Intelligent Creator was the first element that contributed to the perpetuity of the Church, *the everlasting foundation upon which the Church is built.*

The second cornerstone is the Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ. The gospel teaches that Christ is the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world. No true follower is satisfied to accept him merely as a great teacher, a great reformer, or even as the One Perfect Man. The Man of Galilee is not figuratively, but *literally* the Son of the Living God.

A third principle which contributes to the stability of the Church and which impressed not only that little group, but millions since, that a great and marvelous work was about to come forth, *is the immortality of the human soul.*

Jesus passed through all the experiences of mortality just as you and I. He knew happiness. He experienced pain. He rejoiced as well as sorrowed with others. He knew friendship. He experienced also the sadness that comes through traitors and false accusers. He died a mortal death even as every other mortal. As his spirit lived after death, so shall yours and mine.

A fourth element which contributed to the perpetuity of that little group was the *Cherished Hope for the Brotherhood of Man.* One of the two great general principles to which all others are subsidiary is this: ". . . love thy neighbour as thyself;" (Matt. 19:19) and correlated with it, the promise: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of

these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (*Ibid.*, 25:40.)

The gospel bids the strong bear the burdens of the weak, and to use the advantages given them by their larger opportunities in the interest of the common good that the whole level of humanity may be lifted, and the path of spiritual attainment opened to the weakest and most unlearned as well as to the strong and intelligent.

The Savior condemned hypocrisy and praised sincerity of purpose. He taught that if the heart be pure, actions will be in accord therewith. Social sins—lying, stealing, dishonest dealings, adultery, and the like—are first committed in thought.

"Sow a thought, reap an act,
Sow an act, reap a habit,
Sow a habit, reap a character,
Sow a character, reap an eternal destiny."

—E. D. Boardman

Jesus taught that an unsullied character is the noblest aim in life. No man can sincerely resolve to apply to his daily life the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth without sensing a change in his own nature. The phrase, "born again," has a deeper significance than many people attach to it. This *changed feeling* may be indescribable, *but it is real.* Happy the person who has truly sensed the uplifting, transforming power that comes from this nearness to the Savior, this kinship to the Living Christ.

Resistance is necessary along with obtaining a sense of the real divinity. There should be developed also the *power of self-mastery.* Someone has said that when God makes the prophet, he does not unmake the man. I believe that, though being "born anew," and being entitled to new life, new vigor, new blessings, yet the old weaknesses may still remain. The adversary stands by, ever eager and ready to attack and strike us at our weakest point.

Take, for example, the incident of Jesus on the Mount of Temptation. After he had passed through the ordinance of baptism to fulfil all righteousness, after he had received the commendation of the Father and the testimony from on high that he is the Beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased, the tempter was there ready

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to thwart, if possible, his divine mission. At his weakest moment, as Satan thought, when his body was famished by long fasting, the Evil One presented himself, saying, ". . . If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." (Matt. 4:3.) Though his body was weak, his spirit was strong, as he answered: ". . . It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (*Ibid.*, 4:4.)

With unwavering strength, Jesus withstood the tempter's taunts and promises that followed, and triumphantly demanded, ". . . *Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*" (*Ibid.*, 4:10.)

So it is with each of us in our daily resisting of the tempter. He will make his appeal to what may be our weakest point of resistance. His strongest strain will be on the weakest link in the chain that binds our character. It may come in the form of yielding to habit, tendency, or passion which we have indulged for years. It may be a desire for the old pipe or the cigaret which we determined, if we were sincere, to put aside when we entered the waters of baptism. And when that longing comes, after we are in the Church or kingdom, in that moment when temptation comes, we may say to ourselves, "Though I intend to throw it aside, I will take it only once more—this once will not count." That is the moment of resistance when we should say, as Christ, "Get thee behind me."

This power of self-control in regard to our bodily longings, satisfying the passions, applies to every member of the Church of Christ. In some way, the Evil One will attack us; some way he can weaken us. In some way, he will bring before us that which will weaken our souls and will tend to thwart the true development of the spirit within, the strengthening and growth of the spirit, which time cannot kill, which is as enduring as the Eternal Father of the spirit. And the things which will tend to dwarf this spirit or to hinder its growth are things which members of the Church are called upon to resist.

One hundred and thirty-two years ago

the Church was officially organized with six members. It was unknown, and, I repeat, would be known only to the extent that it contained and radiated those eternal principles which harmonize with the eternity of its Author, and only thus could it become a great and marvelous work.

Today there are branches of the Church in many parts of the world. As the effulgent light of a glorious sun gladdens the surface of the earth by day, so the Light of Truth is entering into the hearts of many honest men and women throughout the world.

The marvelous progress that has been made in transportation and communication makes it possible for the promulgation of the truths of the restored gospel to be made known to the children of men everywhere on the face of the globe. It is possible for millions in America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the islands of the sea not only to hear, but in many instances to see what you are doing as members for the gospel of truth.

To all members, and to our Father's children everywhere, we declare in all sincerity that God lives! As sure as the light of the sun shines upon everything on the physical earth, so the radiance that emanates from the Creator brightens every soul that comes into the world of humanity, for it is in him that we "live and move and have our being." All of us, therefore, should make him the center of our lives.

Jesus Christ his Beloved Son also lives and stands at the head of the kingdom of God on earth. Through him the eternal plan of the gospel has been given to man and restored in its fulness to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Through obedience to the principles of the gospel, we may become partakers of his divine Spirit, as Peter of old, after two and a half years of association with the Redeemer, testified. (See 2 Peter 1:4.)

In the words of President John Taylor:

"Go, ye messengers of glory;
Run, ye legates of the skies;
Go and tell the pleasing story
That a glorious angel flies;

"Go, to all the gospel carry;

Let the joyful news abound;
Go till every nation hear you,
Jew and Gentile greet the sound.
Let the gospel echo all the earth around."

I pray in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

ELDER ALVIN R. DYER

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brothers and sisters, it has been our great privilege this morning to hear the opening message of our beloved President. I feel grateful for his words of counsel and enlightenment, which have already, through his remarks today and in meetings previous to the conference, set the spirit of the conference.

I feel that I should be ungrateful this morning if I did not testify to you, my brethren and sisters, and to my fellow associates, as one with you who has come to know that President McKay is truly a prophet of God, and who in the inspiration and revelation of his calling is effectively leading the Church in its present great period of expansion. I have witnessed his prophecies come true and have participated in the unerring wisdom of his counsel. Truly he is a great missionary Apostle and President. His travels throughout the world in behalf of God's work have exceeded even the travels of the early-day apostles.

President McKay is loved by each of the General Authorities who stand unitedly by his side and who are willing to give their all in following his inspired leadership. His guileless love for the Saints finds a spring of affection in the hearts of us all. His vision is the inspiration, I am confident, behind the acceleration of our proselyting effort all over the world with which I have been directly connected and to which I can testify. Not only this, but under his direction other facets of Church growth are going forward to match these increased conversions: the expanded building program to provide the facilities of worship and cultural growth among the members; the increased activity in the priesthood, in the church education system whereby through uni-

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve, former president of the European Mission, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve.

versities, colleges, institutes, and in the auxiliaries, the youth of the Church, who, while safeguarding their lives, are being prepared for leadership in the Church—the integral expansion of which is demanding that at least 15,000 new stake and ward leaders be called each year to match the growth of the Church.

The erection of temples, particularly in foreign lands, has proved to be a great stimulus to the faith of the members in these areas, and has caused thousands to remain in their native lands to help build the Church stronger, rather than to come to America and the West. The effectiveness of the Church welfare program continues.

Many other phases of the Church program could be mentioned which are going forward under the inspired leadership of our beloved President.

I am deeply grateful, my brethren and sisters, for the great honor and privilege that came to Sister Dyer and me and our son for a part of his mission which he also spent in Europe; for the privilege of serving in these ancient lands and of having the privilege of witnessing the power of God go forward in the expansion of his work. I have seen almost daily the witness of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of people and have seen many men and women in almost every land receive of the teachings of the gospel from the missionaries and then have watched their lives change and have witnessed their preparation to become leaders in the Church.

I am most grateful this morning that here in the congregation are men who have been called to preside over stakes in Europe. I have been directly connected with these men. I know of their