

Friday, October 5

First Day

The bishop did. He called that man in and talked to him, and the man said, "I cannot become active. I do not know that I can come to church regularly." The bishop asked him why. He said, "Because I have some habits that I cannot quit." The bishop talked to him as any bishop would. He said to the man, "Oh, I think you can quit. What is the first one?"

"Well," he said, "I have smoked for many years, and I can't quit it."

The bishop said, "Oh, yes, you can, because I will help you."

This man was grateful to the bishop and said, "What can you do, bishop?"

"Will you try to quit today?" the bishop asked.

"Yes, I will quit today."

"Then," the bishop said, "I will fast and pray for you."

"Would you do this for me, Bishop?" the man asked.

"Yes," replied the bishop, "I would do that for you."

The bishop did fast and pray for several days for this man, and I do not need to tell you that the man has not indulged since the fasting of that wonderful bishop.

God bless you bishops that you may take that same interest in those men who need you, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President David O. McKay:

Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us. Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our concluding speaker.

### ELDER FRANKLIN D. RICHARDS

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

My dear brothers and sisters, I pray that I may have the Spirit of the Lord with me as I speak to you this afternoon. I bring you love and greetings from the missionaries and Saints of the eight eastern American missions.

As I travel throughout the Church, members continually ask me this question: "Tell me more about the new missionary program. Do converts really understand the gospel and are they staying in the Church?"

My brothers and sisters, as we have heard here today, this is not a new missionary plan—it is in effect the simple plan which was used by Peter, Paul, Joseph Smith, Wilford Woodruff, Parley P. Pratt, and other outstanding missionaries throughout the history of the Church in all dispensations. Great missionaries have been characterized by their simplicity and their directness. The Savior has told us that this is a day of warning and not a day of many words. (See D&C 63:58.)

Thus, Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost was Christ and him crucified. They were pricked in their hearts and said unto Peter, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said unto them—"Repent, and be bap-

tized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. . . ." (See Acts 2:37-38.)

Through the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Savior has given us this charge, ". . . go among this people, and say unto them, like unto mine apostle of old, whose name was Peter:

"Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus, . . .

"Repent and be baptized. . . ." (D&C 49:11-13.)

Our beloved Prophet David O. McKay, has counseled that every member should be a missionary.

Right here in Salt Lake City, a stake missionary while eating lunch at a counter met a young tourist en route to the Seattle Fair. He asked him what he knew about the Mormon Church, and if he would like to know more. He said he would like to know more. During the next few days the stake missionaries gave him the six discussions. He postponed his trip to Seattle and was baptized.

The Savior has said that the first great commandment is to love the Lord, and the second is to love our neighbors as ourselves. There is no better way to evidence our love to our Heavenly

Father and to our neighbors than by sharing the gospel.

While attending a stake conference in Long Beach, California, I was told that one of the wards had a project of gathering newspapers. A young boy, while collecting papers from the neighbors, asked the "Golden Questions." Two families said they would like to know more about the Church and were later taught and baptized by the missionaries.

The effective use of the every member a missionary program incorporates the use of the Golden Questions, "What do you know about the Mormon Church—and would you like to know more?" By the members and missionaries asking these questions, thousands of interested persons are found and taught by the missionaries, individually and in groups.

One of the most powerful forces in the Church is and always has been its youth. They love their friends and are not afraid to ask them the Golden Questions. A young boy from Charlottesville, Virginia, was baptized. He went home and said to his grandmother, "Grandma, you ought to be baptized." "I have been baptized in the Baptist Church," she said. "Yes, but, Grandma, you haven't been baptized into the true Church." She said, "Maybe I haven't. Who told you this?" He told her the Mormon elders. She said, "Send them to me." He did, and his grandmother was taught the gospel and baptized.

Through the youth, many families are and will be brought into the Church, and again here, group meetings play an important part.

Group teaching was an important phase of proselyting at the time of Christ and was one of the effective means used by successful missionaries early in this dispensation. President John Taylor came into the Church after attending group meetings held by Parley P. Pratt.

When those interested in knowing more about the Church are brought together, the missionaries use the discussion plan to unfold the gospel story. The six discussions presented under the influence of the Holy Spirit form the

basis of this new but old program.

Group meetings are designed to make contacts think independently. Most of the questions begin with "why" and "how," and give the contacts a chance to express themselves. The presentations are natural and conversational, and extreme simplicity is characteristic of the doctrine presented. Missionaries bear strong and specific testimonies and pray with contacts before and after each discussion. Visual aids are incorporated by using the flannelboard.

The discussions present in logical sequence the need for living prophets and the beautiful story of the first vision of the Prophet Joseph is related, specifically pointing out the nature of the Godhead.

Also the apostasy from the principles and faith established by the Savior and the restoration of the truth and the authority and power to act for God is simply discussed. Next the story of the Book of Mormon and its great worth as another witness of the divinity of Christ is explained.

In other discussions the tremendously interesting and important questions "Where did we come from," "Why are we here," and "Where do we go after this life" are considered. This includes a discussion of our pre-existent state, the atonement by the Savior of our physical and spiritual deaths, and the necessity of observing on this earth the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In connection with life after death, consideration is given to the spirit world, the degrees of glory, and the barriers between man and God, physical, spiritual, and intellectual, and how these are overcome. The interesting subject of baptism for the dead is also reviewed in some detail. We might say that the six discussions contain the gospel of Jesus Christ—the plan of life, in condensed form.

The elders had baptized the wife and children of a man in Charlotte, North Carolina. They tried to teach the husband, but he refused to listen and said, "I will never be baptized into your Church, but you can come to our home if you want." Two weeks later he was baptized. He said, "I have learned more from these six discussions you have given me than I learned in the eighteen years I was a Baptist."

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The discussion plan is not designed to convince intellectually, but rather, the discussions are instruments through which the Holy Ghost can work to awaken a spiritual awareness and bring a personal testimony into the hearts of the listeners that Joseph Smith is a Prophet and the Church is true.

Many contacts after participating in the discussions and listening to the testimonies of the missionaries, frequently ask, "How may I obtain this knowledge and receive a testimony?" A prophet of the Lord has said that if an earnest seeker of truth will ask God with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will have manifested to him, by the Holy Ghost, a testimony that these things are true. (Moroni 10:4-5.)

Recently Sister Kemp of Atlanta, Georgia, earnestly prayed that the Lord would bless her with wisdom and understanding in raising her daughter thirteen, her two sons fourteen, and sixteen. Shortly after praying, her sons brought two Mormon elders home. Sister Kemp knew her prayers had been answered. The missionaries gave the family the six discussions, and the children asked for baptism, but the parents were not ready.

As Brother and Sister Kemp witnessed the baptisms, the daughter came out of the water and threw her wet arms around her mother saying, "Mommie, I know this is the Church of Jesus Christ." Shortly thereafter the parents requested baptism. Surely the Lord moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

The incidents I have related are typical of what is happening throughout the stakes and missions of the Church. Yes, many investigators do ask God with a sincere heart and with real intent, and after participating in the discussions have a reasonably good understanding of the gospel and possess a testimony.

And are the converts staying in the Church and remaining active? Where fellowship programs are effective, generally a high percentage of the converts remain active. Fellowshiping, however, includes loving converts into the Church and giving them work assignments. It is not unusual to hear converts say, "It's a great feeling to be needed." I heard Brother Robert Giles, a convert

in Las Vegas, Nevada, so testify at a recent stake conference.

Now brothers and sisters, we have been called to gather the Lord's elect and we are told that they will not harden their hearts. For this day our Prophet has given us the challenge—every member a missionary.

As each of us ask the Golden Questions, participate in the referral program, and hold group meetings we can say as the Prophet Alma said, ". . . this is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy." (Alma 29:9.)

I testify that we are engaged in the work of the Lord. I know that Jesus is the Christ, and that prophets have been raised up in these latter days. I am thankful for the Prophet Joseph Smith and for all those that have followed him.

I love and sustain our beloved Prophet David O. McKay, his counselors, and the Apostles standing at the head of the Church of Jesus Christ today.

May we be faithful and energetic in gathering the elect in this the eleventh hour of warning, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Twelve.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now favor us with "Abide With Me, 'Tis Eventide," conducted by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen. The benediction will be offered by Elder Burton R. Smith, president of the Flagstaff Stake.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Relief Society Singing Mothers from the Central Idaho and Bannock Welfare Regions, under the direction of Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen with Roy M. Darley at the organ. In behalf of all who have listened to your beautiful singing during the General Conference sessions today, the General Authorities, the audience here in the Tabernacle, the great radio and television audience, we express, sisters, appreciation and thanks for the beautiful music. With all my heart I say, God bless you for the service you