

practiced for many months so that they could sing their very best for us.

We should like to recognize also some of our special visitors who are with us today—United States Senators, Wallace F. Bennett and Frank E. Moss; United States House of Representatives, Sherman P. Lloyd and Laurence J. Burton; Governor George D. Clyde; Secretary of State, Lamont Toronto; Chancellor of the Unified Church School System, Dr. Harvey L. Taylor; Acting President of the B. Y. U., Earl C. Crockett; President of the University of Utah, Dr. A. Ray Olpin; Superintendent of Salt Lake City Schools, Lynn M. Bennion; President of Weber College, William T. Miller; President of Ricks College, Dr. John R. Clarke; and President of the Church College of Hawaii, Dr. Richard T. Wooten. There may be some whom we have not recognized.

We shall begin this session, under the presidency of President David O. McKay, who has asked me to conduct this service; and may I express on behalf of all of us our sincere gratitude to God that the President is able to be with us and was able to handle the Conference so wonderfully well this morning, but he feels that he would rather we would proceed this afternoon.

ELDER HAROLD B. LEE

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

For the next few minutes I should like to direct your thinking upon one of the great quotations from our Lord and Master, a quotation which has been the text for many a discourse throughout the years. The Master said:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

"Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

"Every tree that bringeth not forth

We shall begin this session by the Chorus rendering, "Behold, God the Lord Passed By," from "Elijah." The invocation will be offered by Elder J. Vernon Sharp, formerly president of the Andes Mission.

Singing by the Youth Choir, "Behold, God the Lord Passed By" (From the Elijah).

Elder J. Vernon Sharp, formerly President of the Andes Mission, offered the invocation.

President Hugh B. Brown:

The invocation was just offered by Elder J. Vernon Sharp.

The Selected Youth Chorus will now favor us with "The Lord's Prayer."

The Youth Choir sang, "The Lord's Prayer."

President Hugh B. Brown:

Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy and President of the Southern Australian Mission.

good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. 7:15-20.)

I pray that what I may say about that quotation may be in harmony with the great keynote address, inspired as it was and delivered to us so masterfully by our beloved President.

Sometimes those who have discoursed upon this text have interpreted this parable or figure of speech, as you may call it, as the fruits by which a people or a person might be judged, applied primarily to temporal growth or to material gain. This concept is well illustrated by a recent article about the Church which appeared in a national magazine known as the *Christian Century*. This is what the article said:

"Looking at the phenomenal growth of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) in recent years, other churches which view many Mormon beliefs and some Mormon practices as unbiblical and bizarre ask, 'What does it have that we don't?'" (Jan. 23, 1963, p. 102.)

The "Fruits"

Then the article goes on to enumerate the membership growth, the number of missionaries, the number of missions, the new congregations, the number of hospitals, the educational programs, church members occupying high posts in government. Then they go on to explain that while proclaiming disbelief in many teachings and disciplines they suggest a reappraisal of methods and programs such as house-to-house evangelism, relief programs for the poor, education, recreation, and employment for those who cannot provide for themselves, the requiring of two years of missionary service without compensation, and the extensive use of laymen to keep to a minimum the number of professional church leaders as possible explanations of the growth of the Church.

True "Fruits"

The article then concludes with this very significant statement from a book written by Frank S. Meads entitled *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, who declared that the Mormons' "missionary experience strengthens both them and their Church, and offers a model of church service and zeal equalled in very few of the other larger churches in America." (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956, p. 126.)

This last comment suggests the true fruits by which the Church and its disciples may best be judged.

"He, the Omnipotent Guide"

This last quotation recalls something that was written by Dr. Mosheim in his *Ecclesiastical History* relative to the mark of the true disciples of the period following the crucifixion of the Savior. He said, "Historians testify that even after the Master's death, he was still

their omnipotent protector and their benevolent guide." Dr. Mosheim speaks of the fulfilment of the Master's promise that he would send to them the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who would "teach them all things, bring all things to their remembrance and show them things to come. He would guide them into all truth and would testify of him." (See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13.)

Then the doctor explains that this fulfilment came on the day of Pentecost. He records a remarkable change noticeable in the disciples after this great event in these words: "The consequences of this grand event were surprising and glorious, infinitely honourable to the Christian religion, and the divine mission of its triumphant author. For no sooner had the apostles received this precious gift, this celestial guide, than their ignorance was turned into light, their doubts into certainty, their fears into a firm and invincible fortitude, and their former backwardness into an ardent and inextinguishable zeal, which led them to undertake their sacred office with the utmost intrepidity and alacrity of mind. This marvellous event was attended with a variety of gifts; particularly the gift of tongues, so indispensably necessary to qualify the apostles to preach the gospel to the different nations. These holy apostles were also filled with a perfect persuasion, founded on Christ's express promise, that the divine presence would perpetually accompany them, and show itself by miraculous interpositions, as often as the success of their ministry should render this necessary. And, indeed, there were undoubted marks of a celestial power perpetually attending their ministry. There was in their very language an incredible energy, an amazing power of sending light into the understanding, and conviction into the heart." (J. L. von Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 61, 67.)

The Greatest Strength of the Church

Today, as it was then, it might well be said that the greatest miracles we see are not the healings of sick bodies, but the miraculous changes that come into the lives of those who become members of the Church, as all missionaries

will testify. The greatest strength of the Church is not the number of units we have, nor the amount of tithing that is paid, nor the congregations, but the greatest strength is the united and fervent testimonies that are in the hearts of church members. And by that same token, we might say that the greatest weapon against all untruth, whether it be in science, so-called, or in the philosophies of the world, or in communism, or what not, the greatest weapon is the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which preached in power will be a bulwark against these false ideas in the world today.

The Master made some applications of the meaning of these spiritual gifts as "fruit" or "fruits." He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." (John 15:5, 16.)

Speaking of these same gifts, the Prophet Alma says: "Yea, after having been such a highly favored people of the Lord; yea, after having been favored above every other nation, . . .

"Having been visited by the Spirit of God; having conversed with angels, and having been spoken unto by the voice of the Lord; and having the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and also many gifts, the gift of speaking with tongues, and the gift of preaching, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of translation"; (Alma 9:20-21.)

From the beginning, our prophet-leaders have declared, as did the Apostle Paul, ". . . that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, . . ." (1 Cor. 6:19) and then he said, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." (*Ibid.*, 3:17.)

And again in a revelation in our day, the Lord said, "For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his

fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace." (D&C 93:20.)

In other words, these scriptures are repeating what the Master had declared: If we would have the good fruits of these spiritual gifts, we must make sure that we keep the tree good.

An interesting distinction between those who bring forth good fruit and those who do not is well illustrated in the parable of the sower, as you recall, where the Master described the three categories of presumably church members—those who brought forth fruit—"some an hundredfold," he said, "some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." (Matt. 13:8.)

And in the interpretation of Lehi's dream in the Book of Mormon, he has four categories: those who partook of the fruit, you will recall, and remained steadfast; those who did partake and then were blinded by mists of darkness which arose from the river and lost their way; those who went so far as to taste the fruit and then fell away because they were ridiculed by those living in spacious dwellings, representing the riches of the world; and finally those who refused to partake of the delicious fruit of the tree. (See 1 Nephi 8.)

"Almost, but not quite . . ."

We were back East a short time ago, and a good bishop made an interesting comment about what he called the saddest words that he knows of a man in high station. He read from the words in the days of the Apostle Paul when Paul before King Agrippa had borne his powerful testimony of his conversion. King Agrippa's reply was, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28.) Then the bishop said, "The king knew the truth but he lacked the courage to do that which would be required; and he could only say then, 'Almost thou persuadest,' almost persuaded under certain circumstances to do the thing the Lord would want him to do."

And then he characterized some things that he discovered in his own ward in a short but powerful sermon. "In response to the Master, 'Come . . .

Saturday, April 4

First Day

follow me' (Mark 10:21), some members almost," he said, "but not quite, say, 'thou persuadest me almost to be honest but I need extra help to pass a test.'"

You young people in the choir might think of that.

"Almost thou persuadest me to keep the Sabbath day holy, but it's fun to play ball on Sunday.

"Almost thou persuadest me to love my neighbor, but he is a rascal; to be tolerant of others' views, but they are dead wrong; to be kind to sister, but she hit me first; to go home teaching, but it's so cold and damp outside tonight; to pay tithes and offerings, but we do need a new color TV set; to find the owner of a lost watch, but no one returned the watch I lost; to pass the Sacrament, but I've graduated from the deacons now; almost thou persuadest me to be reverent, but I had to tell my pal about my date last night; almost thou persuadest me to attend stake leadership meeting, but I know more than the leader on that subject, so why should I go. Thou persuadest me almost to go to Sacrament meeting, but there is going to be such an uninteresting speaker tonight. Almost! Almost! Almost! but not quite, not able quite to reach."

How to Cultivate Good "Fruit"

There are incidents which illustrate how good fruit can be developed by proper cultivation of the seeds of faith through keeping fully the commandments, and I want to cite just two very briefly, even though at first the quality of the fruits of the Spirit was not so.

I have on my desk a letter, and I shall not tell the name, of course, and no one excepting her will know of whom I speak, a mother of four who has gone through illness, pain that was alleviated by what was discovered later to be habit-forming pills, and then came the fight to overcome these devastating drugs until she almost despaired of life. Then she went to visit a friend, and to her surprise she found that her friend was paralyzed by some cancerous affliction and the severe medical treatments which had followed. After visiting this faithful, devoted friend, she went home. She said, "I had a long talk with

the Lord, and I started to count my blessings instead of thinking that the Lord was persecuting me personally. Now I go to Sacrament meeting. Now I go to Relief Society. I am visiting the sick, and I am taking something that I have cooked when I visit. I am taking church books to friends from whom I had previously been estranged." Then she wrote, "I have now climbed from the dark depths of despair to the brink where I can now see the sun. I am trying to follow the counsel, 'Keep your eyes fixed on the stars.'"

A short while ago, Elder Franklin D. Richards and I late at night were asked by a fine young bishop and his stake leaders if we would participate in administering to him. He was facing the possibility of an operation for a fatal malady. They had in obedience to the Lord's command sought in the Lord's way for help. He was giving all the service he could as a bishop. He and his wife had been married in the temple, and with his wife they had been faithful in having a little family; and now he had come asking the Lord for help. We heard no more about it until this last week there came a letter from his wife that said this:

Rededication

"They operated and while they found masses of what had appeared by X-ray to be malignant tumors in the chest cavity, amazingly they were all found to be benign. As for my husband and me, one word describes our feelings now—rededication—to each other, to the Lord, and to our part in building up his kingdom upon this earth. My husband asked me to mention in this letter to you that the bishop who returns to the people of his ward is a more humble, compassionate, and dedicated servant than ever before. It has taken this experience, though frightening as it has been, to bring me to the full realization of how precious life itself is and how glorious is this gospel which unites a love like ours for all time and eternity."

Through their surmounting sickness, heartaches, and disappointments, their experiences had resulted in better fruit. They had proved their fruit by

their works. By their fruits, the Lord has proved them. Life and service have taken on an altogether different meaning.

Development of Spiritual Qualities— The True Fruits

On a missionary program that I read the other night, words of President McKay were quoted that seem appropriate to what I am talking about. President McKay was quoted as having said: "Man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his soul, upon things that will contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical nature, or whether he will make as his life's pursuit the acquisition of spiritual qualities."

In short, the President has said to us, the development of one's spiritual qualities will determine whether or not his has been a good tree, and that to be determined only by the quality of the fruit, or the spiritual gifts which come therefrom.

Mortality: Always Pain

A young mother went through the trying experience of having a little child who was killed in an accident, and she came and sought a blessing for comfort. She asked through her tears, "Must there always be pain in this life?" I thought a few minutes, and then said, "The Apostle Paul said of the Master, the Lord and Savior, 'Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.' (Heb. 5:8.) I suppose that the answer is yes; there must always be pain in this life of travail and sorrow, and there is a purpose in it all."

"The road is rough, I said
Dear Lord, there are stones that hurt
me so.
And he said, Dear child, I understand,
I walked it long ago.

"But there is a cool green path, I said
Let me walk there for a time.
No child, He gently answered me,
The green road does not climb.

"My burden, I said, is far too great,
How can I bear it so?
My child, said he, I remember its
weight,
I carried my cross, you know.

"But, I said, I wish there were friends
with me
Who would make my way their own.
Ah, yes, he said, Gethsemane
Was hard to face alone.

"And so I climbed the stony path,
Content at last to know
That where my Master had not gone,
I would not need to go.

"And strangely then I found new friends
The burden grew less sore
As I remembered—long ago
He went that way before."

("In His Steps"—Leona B. Gates)

God help us to understand how we shall develop sometimes through heart-ache, sorrow, and tears those spiritual qualities except for which none of us can achieve to the place of kinship to him who suffered more than any of us may understand, and this I pray and bear you my solemn witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Harold B. Lee of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy and president of the Southern Australian Mission will now speak to us.

ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

Of the First Council of the Seventy

To all who love the Lord and desire salvation in his kingdom, I pose this question: Was Joseph Smith called of God? In every age the great question

is whether the prophet of that day was sent of God. Those who faced the peril of a world-destroying flood were required to answer this question: Was