

## Elder Alvin R. Dyer

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

● I know now, my brethren and sisters, what it is to dig the last fence-post hole. Being one of the last speakers at this conference has prompted my mind in the reflection of some other last things, and I thought of my grandparents who were convert immigrants from England. They were on one of the last wagon trains to Utah before the coming of the railroad. That officially makes them pioneers.

### Experiences of pioneer family

My father, with long, curly, black hair, was a member of this pioneer family. While they were on the trail camped for the night, well-meaning Indians came into the camp in search of food. The chief of the Indian band later that night stole back with seven Indian ponies and tied them to the wagon wheel and took my father. This held up the wagon train for several days until the scouts could find the Indian camp. They waited for the braves to go on a hunting expedition. Then they rescued my father from a wickiup and left in payment, in Indian fashion, the same seven ponies, but they placed on the back of each pony a pioneer blanket. This is a true Indian trading principle, and I believe it is a good principle, because it is always better to give more than we receive.

Two of my aunts, Valentina and Annie Etta, died on that entourage; Valentina was buried on the plains. This black-haired boy grew to manhood and became a part of the Old West. For a number of years as a young man he used to light the gas lamps on Main Street. There were 36 of them. I have often heard him tell that they chose him because he was tall and he could reach and turn them off in the morning and on at night.

### Influence with young men

There is another story that I remembered of him, as Victor Brown was

speaking about the deacons. My father had a great influence with young people. There in the area where he lived, one of the deacons had been seriously reprimanded by the bishop or someone who was teaching the class of deacons, and he became belligerent and vowed that he would never go back to church again. This young man was so influential that he influenced 11 other deacons to stay away from church, and these 12 boys bound themselves together and called themselves the twelve apostles. They built a hut that was partially submerged under the ground, and this is where they held their private meetings. Their sole purpose was to bother any boy who would try to go to priesthood meeting, and many of them were beaten up on their way and intimidated to try to prevent them from going to church.

My father was given the assignment to try to get these boys back into activity in the Church, and he did this by going to their hut and visiting with them for long periods of time, until one by one he got them to come back. This is a success story, for every one of those boys except one went into the mission field. I have often thought of this experience accomplished by the boy who was taken by the Indians, who left seven ponies to pay for him. I am glad, of course, that they didn't keep him.

### Feast of the gospel

I rejoice with you, my brothers and sisters, in the faith-promoting inspiration of what we have heard and felt at this great conference, which will soon come to a close.

Such gatherings in ancient times are scripturally referred to as feasts, and I suppose that description is appropriate today, for surely we have had a feast of the gospel. As always, when the saints of God meet in conference, there is an outpouring of the Spirit, causing a renewal of faith and a reas-

urance of our convictions, that we might continue steadfast through gratitude and sacrifice in meeting the challenge of a righteousness in the progressive journey of life.

Perhaps if a central motif or master theme could be deducted from this conference, it would emphasize the need of testimony, of a contriteness of spirit, a greater meekness in serving the Lord and in working out our salvation. I think it was Pogo who said, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

In a revelation especially applicable to the Saints in Zion, who at that particular time were assembled in Jackson County, Missouri, the Lord gave this commandment, among others that were stressed at the time, and which I think finds application among us today as it did then:

#### Thank the Lord in all things

"Thou shalt thank the Lord thy God in all things.

"Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness, even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit." (D&C 59:7-8.)

This divine commandment is related, I believe, to other utterances of the Lord and is characteristic of his person.

#### The Beatitudes

In one of his never-to-be-forgotten sermons unto the multitudes that followed him, he uttered the sayings which have become known as the Beatitudes. Herein is described the moral character required in those who are to constitute his kingdom. These are familiar to all of us. May I repeat them.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for

they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:3-10.)

#### Importance emphasized

To seemingly emphasize the importance of these characteristics, and that they were displayed in the Master himself, we have his utterances upon another occasion.

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

"Even so, Father: for so it seemeth good in thy sight.

"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:25-30.)

#### Preparation for celestial glory

Concerning the inheriting of the earth by the meek, this no doubt has reference to its condition after it has received its regenerated glory unto that of a celestial glory. Of this the Lord has plainly spoken in this dispensation.

"Therefore, it must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory;

"For after it hath filled the measure of its creation, it shall be crowned with glory, even with the presence of God the Father;

"That bodies who are of the celestial kingdom may possess it forever and ever; for, for this intent was it made and created, and for this intent are they sanctified." (D&C 88:18-20.)

## Humility and meekness

I believe there is perhaps a distinction between humility and meekness. It may be said that meekness is a condition of voluntary humility. The prophet Alma seemed to recognize a distinction, as we may gather from these words:

"And now, as I said unto you, that because ye were compelled to be humble ye were blessed, do ye not suppose that they are more blessed who truly humble themselves because of the word?"

"Yea, he that truly humbleth himself, and repenteth of his sins, and endureth to the end, the same shall be blessed—yea, much more blessed than they who are compelled to be humble because of their exceeding poverty.

"Therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble; or rather, in other words, blessed is he that believeth in the word of God, and is baptized without stubbornness of heart, yea, without being brought to know the word, or even compelled to know, before they will believe." (Al. 32:14-16.)

## The pure in heart

The beatitude said, "Blessed are the *pure in heart*: for they shall see God."

While speaking unto the weary and oppressed of the Saints, who had participated in laying the foundation in Zion, the Lord proclaimed that only those with the obedience and willingness of the pure in heart and mind were of the house of Ephraim. Here is his important counsel given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, which is applicable today as preparations go forward in the destiny of God's people.

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.

"And the rebellious shall be cut off out of the land of Zion, and shall be

sent away, and shall not inherit the land.

"For, verily I say that the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim, wherefore they shall be plucked out." (D&C 64:33-36.)

It is the good and honest of heart among the people of the world who most readily respond to the message of the Restoration as declared by the missionaries who bring it to them. And these who are truly spiritually converted become and are the more faithful of the Latter-day Saints. For the Lord himself declared that only those who "doeth good" are ready to receive a fullness of the gospel. (D&C 35:12.)

## Opposite characteristics

Perhaps the impact of meekness and honesty of heart can be more fully appreciated by the characteristics that are opposite. These are appropriately spoken of by Paul the apostle in relation to the very day and age in which we live, wherein he has said:

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

"For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

"Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

"Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

"For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3:1-7.)

## Live by the truth

I bear testimony of the fact that we have the truth. The course of the true Latter-day Saint is to nurture and live by that truth which we accept, casting aside the extraneous things that can only mar and distort the simple effectiveness of the gospel. For truly the

everlasting gospel is the glad tidings of great joy.

In closing, I quote these words from the apostle Peter, which I think make a good code for our protection:

"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king [Christ]." (1 Pet. 2:17.)

I bear my testimony to you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

**President Harold B. Lee**

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us.

## President Harold B. Lee

*First Counselor in the First Presidency and President of the Council of the Twelve*

● Before we announce President Smith as the next and concluding speaker of the conference, it seems appropriate to say one or two things.

### The President of the Church

When the Church was first organized, in fact, the day on which it was organized, the Lord was speaking to the Church. He didn't mean just the six members that were then the constituted number of the Church: he was speaking about the President of the Church, who was the Prophet Joseph Smith at that time. And this is what he said:

"Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words [the President's words] and commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;

"For his word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.

"For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory." (D&C 21:4-6.)

### Tight places

We have some tight places to go before the Lord is through with this church and the world in this dispensation, which is the last dispensation, which shall usher in the coming of the Lord. The gospel was restored to prepare a people ready to receive him. The power of Satan will increase; we see

it in evidence on every hand. There will be inroads within the Church. There will be, as President Tanner has said, "Hypocrites, those professing, but secretly are full of dead men's bones." We will see those who profess membership but secretly are plotting and trying to lead people not to follow the leadership that the Lord has set up to preside in this church.

### The only safety

Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet, "as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me; . . . as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith." (D&C 21:4-5.) There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory." (D&C 21:6.)

### Activities of President Smith

Now we have a President of the Church who has grown to great years.