

responded with happy enthusiasm, saying, "No, never!"

Here, in my opinion, was a successful man. No doubt he had many vicissitudes in his life. His worldly possessions were probably minimal, but his good works—treasures in heaven—are innumerable. Here is evidence of just one of the thousands—millions—who have had similar experiences of becoming a "somebody."

And I ask you, brethren, sisters, where would we be, where would you be, where would I be, if it were not for

the power of the gospel of Christ? I bear witness to its power and I do so humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We have just listened to Elder John H. Vandenberg, Assistant to the Twelve.

President Spencer W. Kimball, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, will now be our concluding speaker.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President of the Council of the Twelve

Beloved brethren and sisters and friends: Long will this solemn assembly remain in our memories. Long will we tingle from the impressive address of President Lee, following the voting. I think almost if one had a heart of stone, it would melt with the demonstration of this morning to see all the various groups raise their hands in unison to support the leaders of the Church, and it touched my heart deeply.

Sustaining of President Lee

Another act in the greatest drama is being played. No theatrical stage has ever produced such acts of such engrossing interest and importance as have been the scenes of the history of the Church in these last days. The stage has changed from New York to Ohio to Missouri to Illinois to Utah. The conditions have altered and the people who have taken the parts are different people. Today another great leader is sustained. What a privilege for us who are here to be a part of such an important event! In this change in leadership of the Church, it is important that the quorums of the priesthood and the assembly of the Saints have an oppor-

tunity to express their gratitude, pledge their support and confidence, and reaffirm their covenants.

The calling of President Harold B. Lee follows the same pattern as that of the other Presidents back for many, many years. He holds all the same keys, has the same authority, represents the same church except that it has grown much larger.

Growth of Church

When the Church was organized in 1830 it was composed of six people. So the Prophet Joseph Smith presided at first over a very small group, but it grew to many thousands by the time of his martyrdom.

When Brigham Young became President, there were approximately 40,000 members. In 1877 the new President, John Taylor, presided over about 145,000. Wilford Woodruff in 1887 had about 192,000 under him. When Lorenzo Snow became President in 1898, there were about 253,000 members, and then Joseph F. Smith had over a quarter of a million. President Heber J. Grant had nearly half a million; George Albert Smith one million, and when

David O. McKay became President in 1951, there were over 1,100,000 members.

When Joseph Fielding Smith took over the reins, there were 2,800,000, and as President Harold B. Lee becomes the President, there are about 3,200,000 and growing very rapidly.

Constancy amidst change

It is reassuring to know that President Lee was not elected through committees and conventions with all their conflicts, criticisms, and by the vote of men, but was called of God and then sustained by the people.

The Church has had three different Presidents in three years. A *Deseret News* editorial writer wrote this:

"In many organizations such rapid turnover at the top could readily bring on confusing shifts of direction and with them a feeling of hesitancy and uncertainty.

"By contrast, the feeling within the church during this historic period has been one of stability and clear purpose, of constancy amidst change." (*Deseret News*, July 8, 1972, p. A-6.)

The pattern divine allows for no errors, no conflicts, no ambitions, no ulterior motives. The Lord has reserved for himself the calling of his leaders over his church. It is a study of great interest and importance.

Foreordination to responsibilities

President Harold B. Lee became the President of the Church on July 7, 1972, but was ordained an apostle April 10, 1941, and was undoubtedly foreordained to these responsibilities in the far, far-away past as were his predecessors. The Prophet Joseph Smith made this statement over a century ago:

"Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before

this world was." (Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1940 ed., p. 365.)

One of the early apostles spoke of Joseph Smith:

"That authority was not conferred upon him when he first saw angels and had some of the gifts . . . it required the laying on of the hands of someone who had the authority of the Holy Priesthood."

In due time he received that authority under the hands of those who last held the keys upon the earth. He continues:

"When Jesus . . . took His three disciples into the mount, He was transfigured before them, and Moses and Elias administered unto them, and at that time Peter was ordained to hold the keys of that dispensation. He held the keys in conjunction with his brethren, James and John.

"They came in modern times and unitedly laid their hands upon the heads of Joseph [Smith] and Oliver [Cowdery] and ordained them to the authority that they themselves held, that of the Apostleship." (George Q. Cannon, in *Gospel Truth* [Zion's Book Store, 1957], vol. 1, pp. 253-54.)

Continuous leadership

Significant to us is the fact that there has never been one minute since April 6, 1830, 142 years ago, that the Church has been without divine leadership. No deceased President has ever taken the keys and authorities into the spirit world away from the Church on the earth.

The second that the spirit left the body of President Joseph Fielding Smith on July 2, President Harold B. Lee in that same second as president of the twelve apostles rightfully assumed command and was the true and recognized leader, having been foreordained as said by Joseph Smith.

President George Q. Cannon speaks of the foreordination:

"It is a remarkable fact that Joseph Smith had gifts before he was ordained. He was a Seer, for he translated before he was ordained; he was a Prophet, for he predicted a great many things before he was ordained . . . ; he was a Revelator, for God gave unto him revelations before the Church was organized. He, therefore, was a Prophet, Seer and Revelator before he was ordained in the flesh." (*Gospel Truth*, p. 253.)

The Quorum of the Twelve on July 7, 1972, held all these gifts. And President Harold B. Lee has held them and the keys and the fullness of the priesthood since April 10, 1941, reaffirmed by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles on July 7 of this year.

Provision for changes

Full provision has been made by our Lord for changes. Today there are fourteen apostles holding the keys in suspension, the twelve and the two counselors to the President, to be brought into use if and when circumstances allow, all ordained to leadership in their turn as they move forward in seniority.

There have been some eighty apostles so endowed since Joseph Smith, though only eleven have occupied the place of the President of the Church, death have intervened; and since the death of his servants is in the power and control of the Lord, he permits to come to the first place only the one who is destined to take that leadership. Death and life become the controlling factors. Each new apostle in turn is chosen by the Lord and revealed to the then living prophet who ordains him.

The matter of seniority is basic in the first quorums of the Church. All the apostles understand this perfectly, and all well-trained members of the Church are conversant with this perfect succession program.

Joseph Smith bestowed upon the twelve apostles all the keys and au-

thority and power that he himself possessed and that he had received from the Lord. He gave unto them every endowment, every washing and anointing, and administered unto them the sealing ordinances.

Sustaining of new prophet

Today we have the opportunity as did the children of Israel to covenant again and to sustain a new prophet. The Lord said to Joshua, and it applies likewise to President Lee: "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses," the Lord says, "so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." (Josh. 1:5.)

"And the people . . . said . . . we will serve the Lord.

"The Lord God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day." (Josh. 24:21, 24-25.)

Let this then be our covenant today.

An early leader said: "I look at our President—I always did watch the captain of the ship with peculiar interest, when on the ocean surrounded by icebergs or when in the midst of great storms. . . . I watched his eye and his demeanor, and I fancied . . . that I could form a good idea of our peril by watching him. I have been in storms when everybody on board excepting the Elders expected to go down. . . ." (*Gospel Truth*, p. 271.)

Now it is our privilege to sustain President Lee.

Finding fault

An important rule was given to us by the Prophet Joseph with which you are probably familiar: "I will give you one of the Keys of the mysteries of the Kingdom. It is an eternal principle, that has existed with God from all

eternity. That man who rises up to condemn others, finding fault with the Church, saying that they are out of the way, while he himself is righteous, then know assuredly, that that man is on the high road to apostasy; and if he does not repent, will apostatize, as God lives." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 156-57.)

President Cannon warned again: "If any of you have indulged in the spirit of murmuring and fault-finding and have allowed your tongues to give utterance to thoughts and words that were wrong and not in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel, . . . you ought to repent of it with all your hearts and get down into the depths of humility and implore Him for the forgiveness of that sin—for it is a most deadly sin.

"The men who hold the Priesthood are but mortal men: they are fallible men. . . . [No one knows that better than they themselves.] No human being that ever trod this earth was free from sin, excepting the Son of God. . . ."

This is true concerning all of the brethren, I am sure.

"Nevertheless, God has chosen these men. He has singled them out, . . . but He has selected them, and He has placed upon them the authority of the Holy Priesthood, and they have become His representatives in the earth. He places them as shepherds over the flock of Christ, and as watchmen upon the walls of Zion. And He holds them to a strict accountability . . . for the authority which He has given to them, and in the day of the Lord Jesus they will have to stand and be judged for the manner in which they have exercised this authority. If they have exercised it wrongfully and against the interests of His work and the salvation of His people, woe unto them in the day of the Lord Jesus! He will judge them. . . ." (*Gospel Truth*, p. 276.)

This same early apostle tells us that the Lord gives the authority to judge and condemn only to the regularly constituted councils of the Church and

not to man generally; "and those who lift their voices . . . against the authority of the Holy Priesthood . . . will go down to hell, unless they repent." (*Ibid.*)

Responsibility to God

It was President Wilford Woodruff who, in his closing years, made this statement: "I ask my Heavenly Father to pour out his spirit upon me, as his servant, that in my advanced age, and during the few days I have to spend here in the flesh, I may be led by his inspiration. I say to Israel, the Lord will never permit me or any other man who stands as president of this Church to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so he will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from his oracles of God and from their duty. . . ." (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff* [Bookcraft, 1969], pp. 212-13.)

This should give us deep assurance.

One other leader wrote: "Men do not obtain place in this Church because they seek for it. If it were known that a man was ambitious to hold a certain office in the Church, that fact itself would lead to his defeat because his desire would not be granted unto him. This is the case with the officers of this Church. . . . [They] are responsible to God. God chose and nominated [them], and it is for him to straighten [them] out if [they] do wrong." (George Q. Cannon, in *Deseret Weekly*, May 21, 1898, p. 708.)

Testimony

May the Lord bless our new President and his counselors and fully sustain them. May we the people uphold his hands and totally sustain President Harold B. Lee, whom I know to be the Lord's prophet on this earth. I bear testimony that God, whose voice was heard on the Jordan River, among the

Nephites, in the grove in New York, is our Heavenly Father; and the one to whom he alluded when he said, "This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," is our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. I bear testimony too that President Lee is a prophet of God, and if we will follow him, we will make great headway in the kingdom. I bear this testimony to you in all fervor and sincerity and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

I am sure I express the feelings of everyone of you in listening to our beloved President Kimball, to see how the Lord has brought him through miraculously with inspired doctors who waited on him when his life hung in the balance, and preserved him for the great mission which the Lord has now called him to fulfill. Thank you, President Kimball, for that matchless testimony. May the Lord continue to bless you through the longest day of your mission on earth.

We express our thanks and appreciation to the General Authorities

who have spoken to us in this, the first session of conference.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the Men's Chorus from the Tabernacle Choir with Richard P. Condie conducting and Alexander Schreiner as the organist. We are grateful for those devoted brethren of the Tabernacle Choir who have brought to us their inspiring music this morning.

The chorus will now favor us, very appropriately, with the hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour."

The benediction will then be offered by Elder J. Howard Dunn, Regional Representative of the Twelve, after which this conference will stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

The Men's Chorus of the Tabernacle Choir sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

The benediction was offered by Elder J. Howard Dunn, Regional Representative of the Twelve.

The conference was then adjourned until 2 o'clock p.m.

FIRST DAY AFTERNOON MEETING

SECOND SESSION

The second session of the conference convened at 2 p.m. on Friday, October 6, 1972.

President Harold B. Lee presided and conducted this session.

The choral music for this session was provided by the Relief Society Combined Choruses of the Granger, Jordan, and Midvale Regions. This chorus was conducted by Ellen Neilson Barnes, with Robert Cundick at the organ.

President Lee made the following introductory statement:

President Harold B. Lee

To all assembled here in this historic Tabernacle and to the many tuned to these proceedings by radio and television, we extend our warm greetings and welcome to this, the 142nd Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This afternoon we are pleased to welcome special guests, educational leaders, regional representatives and mission representatives, stake and mission presidencies, temple presidencies, bishoprics, members of the