



Harold B. Lee



Harold B. Lee was born on March 28, 1899, in Clifton, Idaho. As a stake president during the Great Depression, he initiated a welfare plan that became the forerunner of the Church's welfare system. On April 10, 1941, he was ordained an Apostle. He was set apart as President of the Church on July 7, 1972. He died a year and half later at age 74, on December 26, 1973, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The following general conference address, delivered in April 1973, was published in the Ensign in July 1973. Punctuation and capitalization have been standardized; subheads and note added.

You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul.

BY PRESIDENT HAROLD B. LEE
(1899–1973)
Eleventh President of the Church

Sitting where we do as the First Presidency, we have been aware these last six months that there has been such a feeling of need to have questions answered, to have spoken from this pulpit at this conference things that are needed by so many in this mixed-up world, to help them to set guidelines for their own lives. . . .

As I have listened to the Brethren, and feeling the concern that has been so frequently referred to, I have remembered the instruction that was given by the prophet Alma as a group of those who had been converted waited on the banks for baptism; and as he explained to them the nature of the covenant in which they were to enter as baptized members, he said:

“As ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

“Yea, and are willing to mourn with those

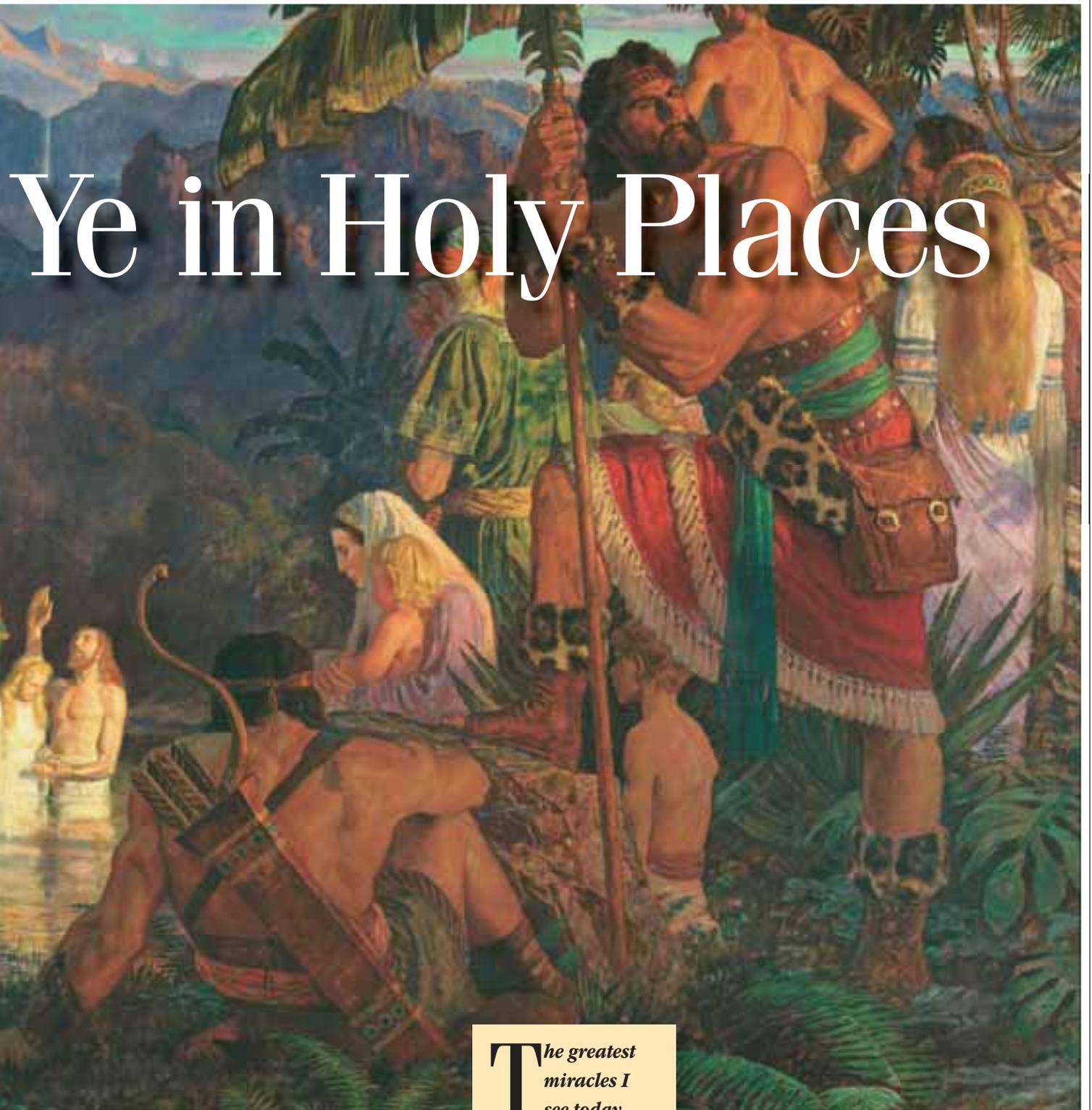
Stand



ALMA BAPTIZING IN THE WATERS OF MORMON, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG

that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in. . . .

“Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a



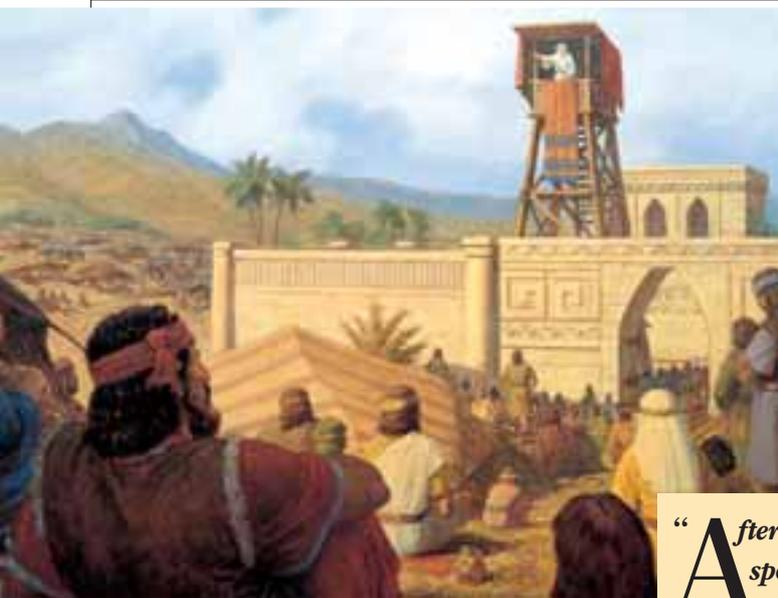
Ye in Holy Places

witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?" (Mosiah 18:8–10).

I call your attention to one of these requirements, particularly that which has

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been stressed by direct and indirect words in this conference: “are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light.” If I were to ask you what is the heaviest burden one may have to bear in this life, what would you answer? The heaviest burden that one has to bear in this life is the burden of sin.



KING BENJAMIN PREACHES TO THE NEPHITES, BY GARY L. KAPP

“After they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience” (Mosiah 4:2–3).

How do you help one to bear that great burden of sin in order that it might be light?

Some years ago President Romney and I were sitting in my office. The door opened and a fine young man came in with a troubled look on his face, and he said, “Brethren, I am going to the temple for the first time tomorrow. I have made some mistakes in the past, and I have gone to my bishop and my stake president, and I have made a clean disclosure of it all; and after a period of repentance and assurance that I have not returned again to those mistakes, they have now adjudged me ready to go to the temple. But, brethren, that is not enough. I want to know, and how can I know, that the Lord has forgiven me also.”

What would you answer one who would come to you asking that question? As we pondered for a moment, we remembered King Benjamin’s address contained in the book of Mosiah. Here was a group of people who now were asking for baptism, and they said they viewed themselves in their carnal state:

“And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified. . . .

“After they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience” (Mosiah 4:2–3).

There was the answer.

If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins, whoever you are, wherever you are, and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability; if it be something that will affect your standing in the Church and you have gone to the proper authorities, then you will want that confirming answer as to whether

or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance. Satan would have you think otherwise and sometimes persuade you that now having made one mistake, you might go on and on with no turning back. That is one of the great falsehoods. The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more, because the Lord has said in a revelation to us in our day: “Go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth [meaning again]

shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God” (D&C 82:7). Have that in mind, all of you who may be troubled with a burden of sin.

And to you who are teachers, may you help to lift that great burden from those who are carrying it and who have their conscience so seared that they are kept from activity, and they don’t know where to go to find the answers. You help them to that day of repentance and restitution in order that they too may have that peace of conscience, the confirming of the Spirit of the Lord that He has accepted of their repentance.

Healing Sick Souls

The great call has come now in the sermons of the Brethren to aid those who are in need of aid, not just temporal aid but spiritual aid. The greatest miracles I see today are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls, those who are sick in soul and spirit and are downhearted and distraught, on the verge of nervous breakdowns. We

are reaching out to all such because they are precious in the sight of the Lord and we want no one to feel that they are forgotten.

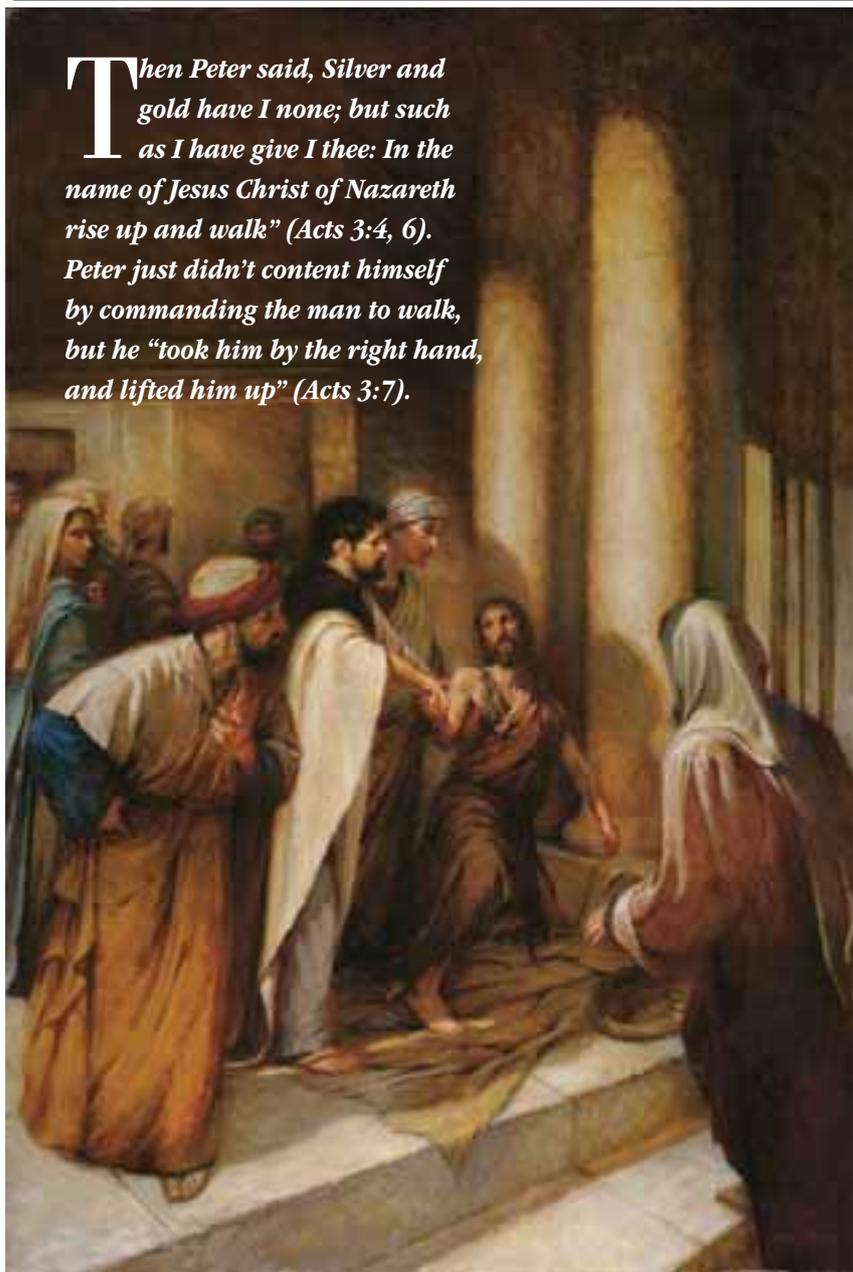
I read again and again the experience of Peter and John as they went through the gate beautiful on the way to the temple. Here was one who had never walked, impotent from his birth, begging alms of all who approached the gate. And as Peter and John approached, he held out his hand expectantly, asking for alms. Peter, speaking for this pair of missionaries—Church authorities—said, “Look on us.” And, of course, that heightened his expectation. “Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:4, 6).

Now in my mind’s eye I can picture this man, what was in his mind: “Doesn’t this man know that I have never walked? He commands me to walk.” But the biblical record doesn’t end there. Peter just didn’t content himself by commanding the man to walk, but he “took him by the right hand, and lifted him up” (Acts 3:7).

Will you see that picture now of that noble soul, that chiefest of the Apostles, perhaps with his arms around the shoulders of this man, . . . saying, “Now, my good man, have courage; I will take a few steps with you. Let’s walk together, and I assure you that you can walk because you have received a blessing by the power and authority that God has given us as men, His servants.” Then the man leaped with joy.

You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You must be sure, if you would rescue the man, that you yourself are setting the example of what you would have him be. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul. You teachers, the testimony that you bear, the spirit with which you teach and with which you lead, is one of the

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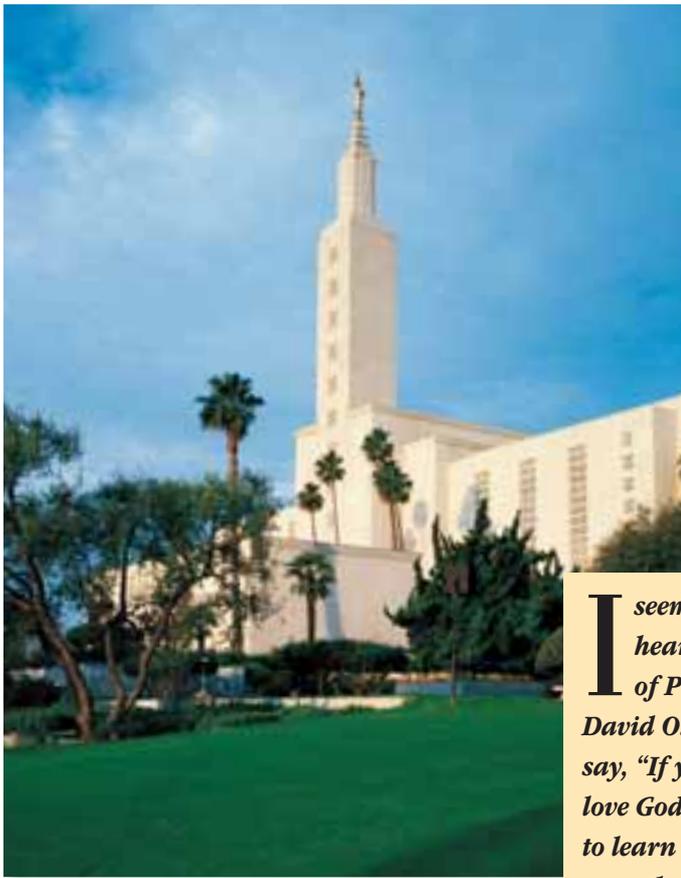


SUCH AS I HAVE I GIVE THEE, BY WALTER IRANE

most important assets that you can have as you help to strengthen those who need so much, wherein you have so much to give. Who of us, in whatever station we may have been in, have not needed strengthening?

May I impose upon you for a moment to express appreciation for something that happened to me some time ago, years ago. I was suffering from an ulcer condition that was becoming worse and worse. We had been touring a mission; my wife, Joan, and I were impressed the next morning that we should get home as quickly as possible, although we had planned to stay for some other meetings.

On the way across the country, we were sitting in the forward section of the airplane. Some of our Church



PHOTOGRAPH BY WEIDEN C. ANDERSEN

I seemed to have heard the voice of President David O. McKay say, “If you want to love God, you have to learn to love and serve the people. That is the way you show your love for God.”

members were in the next section. As we approached a certain point en route, someone laid his hand upon my head. I looked up; I could see no one. That happened again before we arrived home, again with the same experience. Who it was, by what means or what medium, I may never know, except I knew that I was receiving a blessing that I came a few hours later to know I needed most desperately.

As soon as we arrived home, my wife very anxiously called the doctor. It was now about 11 o'clock at night. He called me to come to the telephone, and he asked me how I was, and I said, “Well, I am very tired. I think I will be all right.” But shortly thereafter, there came massive hemorrhages which, had they occurred while we were in flight, I wouldn't be here today talking about it.

I know that there are powers divine that reach out when all other help is not available. . . . Yes, I know that there are such powers.

Guided by the Spirit

As I came to realize the overwhelming magnitude of the responsibility that now has been given to me, if I were to

have sat down and tried to think of the burden, I would have been devastated and wholly incapable of carrying it. But when I was guided by the Spirit to name two noble men, whose powerful words of teaching and testimony you have heard today, President N. Eldon Tanner [1898–1982] and President Marion G. Romney [1897–1988], I realized that mine was not the responsibility to carry these responsibilities alone. And then as we meet week by week

in the temple and look across the room and see 12 stalwart men, men chosen from out [of] the world and given the power of the holy apostleship, I am aware that no greater men walk the earth than these men.

The other day we met in the seminar for regional representatives of the Twelve. These are men who are fanning out over the whole earth now, to every corner of the earth. Newly baptized members who know little about the gospel and much less about the disciplines of the Church must be taught if the Church is to be safely led. These men

who have been chosen from out of the strongest men we have in the Church now are going out now under the direction of the Council of the Twelve. And there are also the mission representatives of the Twelve and the First Council of the Seventy associated with them. They are going out to the humblest everywhere and teaching them these fundamental principles, teaching them, as the Prophet Joseph answered when asked, “How do you govern your people?” His answer was, “I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”¹

They are not going out to do the work themselves. As we have said to them, they are standing as “coaches” rather than as “quarterbacks” on the football team, teaching the quarterbacks how to direct, teaching them correct principles. They are men of faith. And how grateful we are for all these auxiliary workers who have gone out, likewise at great expense, great travel, and sacrifice on the part of their businesses and their families.

To you great leaders, stake presidencies, mission



HELPS FOR HOME EVENING

1. Collect a sack and several large rocks.

Read the story of President Marion G. Romney and the repentant young man. Have each family member write a common sin on a rock and then place it in the sack. Take turns carrying the sack and compare the physical weight to the burden of sin. Then remove each stone while you read the paragraph following “There was the answer.” Bear testimony of the blessing of repentance.

2. Have your family role-play the experience of Peter and John healing the lame man (see Acts 3:4, 6). Read President Lee’s statement on the first page of the article and ask what is meant by, “You cannot lift another soul until you are standing on higher ground than he is. You cannot light a fire in another soul unless it is burning in your own soul.” Discuss ways to lift each other.

found in the writings of Joseph Smith in the Pearl of Great Price, where the Lord told His disciples to stand in holy places and be not moved, for He comes quickly, but no man knows the hour nor the day. That is the preparation.

Go home now to your people, I pray you, and say as did Joshua of old: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Teach your families in your family home evening, teach them to keep the commandments of God, for therein is our only safety in these days. If they will do that, the powers of the

presidencies, bishoprics, priesthood quorum leaders, all of you, the faithful Saints everywhere, you who pray for us, I want you to know that we pray earnestly at the altars of the temple for all of you faithful who pray for us. How grateful we are for you!

As I come to you at the closing moments of this conference, I would like to take you back now to just one incident, and I am sorry that I can tell you only a part of it because of the limitations of some things contained therein.

It was just before the dedication of the Los Angeles Temple.

We were all preparing for that great occasion. It was something new in my life, when along about three or four o’clock in the morning, I enjoyed an experience that I think was not a dream, but it must have been a vision. It seemed that I was witnessing a great spiritual gathering, where men and women were standing up, two or three at a time, and speaking in tongues. The spirit was so unusual. I seemed to have heard the voice of President David O. McKay [1873–1970] say, “If you want to love God, you have to learn to love and serve the people. That is the way you show your love for God.” And there were other things then that I saw and heard.

And so I come to you today, with no shadow of doubting in my mind that I know the reality of the person who is presiding over this church, our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. I know that He is. I know that He is closer to us than many times we have any idea. They are not an absentee Father and Lord. They are concerned about us, helping to prepare us for the advent of the Savior, whose coming certainly isn’t too far away because of the signs that are becoming apparent.

All you need to do is to read the scriptures, particularly the inspired translation of Matthew, the 24th chapter,

Almighty will descend upon them as the dews from heaven, and the Holy Ghost will be theirs. That can be our guide, and that kind of Spirit shall guide us and direct us to His holy home.

And so as it is my privilege to do, I give you faithful members of the Church everywhere my blessing. God bless you, take care of you, preserve you as you travel home, that there may be no accident or no untoward experience. Take to your people out in the far reaches the feeling of love that we have for all of them; and indeed, as the missionaries go out, that love extends not only to those of our Father’s children who are already members of the Church but also to those who are our Father’s children to whom He would have us bring the gospel of truth; make them also to enjoy all the blessings that we now have.

May the Lord help us so to understand and do, and fill our stations, and not be found wanting in the Day of Judgment that we have not done all we know how to do to advance His work in righteousness, I humbly pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTE

1. In John Taylor, “The Organization of the Church,” *Millennial Star*, Nov. 15, 1851, 339.