

## HOUSE IN ORDER

*Is your house in order, brothers and sisters? Are you ready if the Lord should call you or your son tomorrow? Have you trained your family that you can say to your eldest son, "Well, they've called me, son, to go on a mission." Will your son answer, "That's all right, father. Mother and I will get along all right, because you have trained us to do so?"*

May God bless us that these ways may be ours. If they are, then let me read you what some young men have said to me as they reported their missions. Here are their words, I copied them from a report book:

I am at peace with myself. I know the way I want to go. Now I know the true way to happiness. I have learned to love all people. I have seen a life changed.

Then one boy said to me, making his report of his mission:

I heard a father bear his testimony in the mission field. He had had a serious sickness over a long period of time, and he bore his testimony in grateful appreciation to the Lord for his recovery, and then a miracle happened. His boy, his deaf son who hadn't heard a voice for fourteen years, arose and said, "I have heard my father's voice for the first time."

God bless us that we may prepare and do our part for the great days ahead in missionary service. May we be true to those we love that they may be a pride and a joy to us, to the Church, and to their Father in heaven, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

*First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric*

I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that I might enjoy an interest in your faith and prayers.

This great conference has been a most impressive one. As I listened to the addresses of our beloved President George Albert Smith, President Clark, and President McKay, members of the Council of the Twelve, and all who have addressed us, and listened to the most inspiring music, the thought came into my mind, "Count your many blessings, count them one by one, and see what the Lord has done."

## A BLESSED PEOPLE

We are a blessed people. We have the blessing of membership in the restored Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We enjoy a divinely authorized leadership who receive the mind and will of our Heavenly Father. We have the privilege of enjoying citizenship in a great republic. We have the privilege of associating with one

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another as brethren and sisters in the true sense of the term. We have our families. We have so many blessings that time does not permit to enumerate them all.

But have we ever stopped to think that all of these blessings have come to us because of someone else's faith, someone else's work, someone else's prayers? I never think of this Church and its organization but what there comes to my mind the story of a boy who was confused as to which church he should join. And in studying the scriptures, he came upon that memorable admonition found in James, wherein the Lord said this:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. (James 1:5-6.)

This fourteen-year-old boy took this admonition to heart, and going out into the woods, he supplicated God with a faith that was implicit; and in answer to that prayer, God the Eternal Father and his Son appeared to him—that same God that Adam knew, the God of Moses, and Abraham, and Jacob, and all of the other ancient servants of the Lord—that same God who spoke from the heavens when his Son, Jesus Christ, was being baptized in the River Jordan, and the voice of God was heard saying:

Behold, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (Matt. 3:17.)

And so, out of the supplication, and the prayers, and the works of a humble boy, used as the instrument in the hands of God, the Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth, and the gospel in its fulness and simplicity was returned for the salvation and exaltation of the Lord's children.

And along with the restoration, there came the priesthood of God whereby we might enjoy leadership inspired by revelation; men who are humble and men who have but one desire, and that is to serve God in such a way that they might do the most good for his people and for the world.

#### FAITH OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

When I think of the founders of this great republic, I think of George Washington. There is no question but what he was an instrument of God in the founding of a nation where the Church might be restored and where the gospel might be returned to mankind, because this nation is founded upon the great cornerstone of the gospel, namely that of free agency. But, unfortunately, there are those among us who would have us believe that George Washington was an unbeliever; but I want to tell you that if a man ever had the help of Almighty God, that man was the Father of our country.

I think of him at Valley Forge, standing at the head of a hungry, ragged, cold army—discouraged, many of them returning to their homes. George Washington had to work with a Continental Congress that was unable to supply him with the sinews of war. I am sure that George Washington, in that hour, realized that in and of himself he could never gain victory; and being a God-fearing man, there is no question but what he sought wisdom from on high; and he received it, because thereafter, this same ragged army defeated the haughty Cornwallis at Yorktown and made it possible to open up the way whereby this great republic in which you and I enjoy citizenship was founded.

And I think of those who framed the Constitution of the United States. They were prayerful men; for the Lord make it known to the Prophet Joseph that he permitted the Constitution to be established by good and wise men. It is true that when the members of that assembly came together there was some dissension, some differences of opinion, but one day there arose among them an old patriot who made the suggestion that as the assembly open each day they supplicate God for his help to the end that they might have wisdom. And God was supplicated, and as the great Gladstone said:

The Constitution of the United States is the greatest document ever stricken off by the hand of man in a given period of time.

#### PRAYERS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

And there was another man who sought wisdom from God. That great leader who preserved the Union, namely, Abraham Lincoln, a man who was scorned and held in disdain even by those who were closely associated with him. And when the day of the battle of Gettysburg came, he was composed, he was calm. After the battle was over and the victory had been won, General Sickles asked him the question: "How was it that you seemed to be so calm and composed when the rest of us were worried?" And here is the answer of that great man to the general. Said he:

In the pinch of your campaign up there, when everybody seemed panic-stricken and nobody could tell what was going to happen, oppressed by the gravity of our affairs, I went to my room one day and locked the door and got down upon my knees before Almighty God and prayed to him mightily for victory at Gettysburg. I told him that this war was his, and our cause his cause, that we could not stand another Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. Then and there I made a solemn vow to Almighty God that if he would stand by our boys at Gettysburg, I would stand by him, and he did stand by you boys, and I will stand by him. And after that, I don't know how it was, and I cannot explain it, soon a sweet comfort crept into my soul. The feeling came that God had taken the whole business into his own hands, and that things would go right at Gettysburg, and that was why I had no fears about you.

This great man followed the admonition of James, too, and sought wisdom from on high; and as a result of his faith and his

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prayers, the army at Gettysburg was able to achieve the final victory.

And then, too I think of the pioneers, as they made the great trek across the plains and through the rugged defiles of these mighty mountains. It is said in the diaries of some of them at the close of each day, "Brigham Young and his associates went to the highest hill and there supplicated God for direction." It seemed that they liked to pray on the heights, on the mountains, and the hills. I have sometimes thought that the reason for that was that they not only wanted to get close to God spiritually, but they also wanted to get near to him physically. And so out of their prayers and seeking divine wisdom from on high, it was possible for them to find this place in the West that God had reserved for them; and out of their work, prayers, and divine wisdom you and I today are living in one of the grandest places upon the whole earth.

#### DIVINE GUIDANCE NEEDED

We are now facing another day with more problems. We have now come to the time when this nation stands at the crossroads. A road, which, if we continue to follow it without question will take us down the path of socialism and communism. Let me say to you that once we are in the shackles of either one of these, we will lose our free agency and merely become the pawns of lustful, godless leaders. This is the day and time when the leaders of this nation and all of us as citizens of this great country should follow the admonition of James, seek wisdom from on high, divine guidance that we may be able to solve our national problems and preserve for unborn generations the same blessings of citizenship and freedom that you and I have enjoyed.

I was thrilled some few years ago when I heard a United States senator say that every morning he and a few of his companions went into a small room in the Capitol Building, and there they supplicated God for direction. I would that every one of our representatives in the national assembly would supplicate God every day. Just as surely as they would do that, there would come to them that wisdom, that divine direction, which would preserve this nation as a great republic and also the principles for which it stands.

#### RESPONSIBILITY, TO BE PRAYERFUL

Now, you and I have some definite responsibilities too—the responsibility of being prayerful, that we will remember in our prayers those who guide and direct the destiny of this nation to the end that God will touch their hearts and out of it all we will be able to follow that path laid down by George Washington, and the path of Abraham Lincoln, to the end that we may follow it for our own happiness and joy and for those who shall follow after us.

Of all the people in the world, we should be the most prayerful; we should follow the admonition of James and seek God continually for wisdom from on high. For the Lord has said to us through his Prophet:

Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God. (D. & C. 88:119.)

And there is no reason why every Latter-day Saint home should not be a house of God; for, in most instances, there stands at the head of every Latter-day Saint home a servant of Almighty God holding the priesthood and having the right to call upon God and supplicate him for the benefit and the blessings and the good of those who reside within his household.

The Lord has made it plain to us that if we are not a prayerful people, if we fail to remember the king of this land, Jesus Christ, we can lose all of these blessings. We should harken to the words of Amulek when he said to his people:

Yea, I say unto you that if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence, and the sword.

But it is by the prayers of the righteous that ye are spared; now therefore, if ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand; but in his fierce anger he will come out against you; then ye shall be smitten by famine, and by pestilence, and by the sword; and the time is soon at hand except ye repent. (Alma 10:22-23.)

And so it seems to me that what we need in this fair land of ours is a shining example of prayerfulness, and the Latter-day Saints are the people who are chosen to exemplify to the world the power of prayer. Every Latter-day Saint home should be a house of God, where the altar of prayer is ever in use and where the proper example is set to our children in supplicating God for divine guidance in all of our endeavors. For the Lord has again said to us:

And they shall also teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord. . . .

And a commandment I give unto them—that he that observeth not his prayers before the Lord in the season thereof, let him be had in remembrance before the judge of my people. (D. & C. 68:28, 33.)

#### PRAYER IN THE HOME

Only a short time ago I was in a home in which an aged grandmother said to me: "I am most unhappy. In this home we have nothing but the spirit of disunity. We do not seem to be able to agree upon anything. There is a negative spirit here, and I can tell you why we have that spirit. We have it because we cannot

get together and pray and ask the Lord for his direction in solving our problems."

On the other hand, I have a remembrance of a home where the children were taught to pray. That little mother taught them how they should pray—giving them the proper concept of God. She told them the story of the appearance of God, the Father, and his Son to Joseph Smith. That gave the children the proper concept of God. They knew that they were praying to a God with body, parts, and passions. He was real to them. He was a God of love; he was a God who could hear and answer prayers. In later years this little mother became very ill. Her children stood outside of the house beside her bedroom window, and they heard her screams. Finally, one said to the other: "Let us pray for Mother." They couldn't go into the house because the house was filled with older people who were trying to help, and the only place left was the coal shed. These two youngsters, one eleven and the other thirteen, went into the coal shed, and kneeling down among the lumps of coal, supplicated God to the end that their mother would be restored. And before night came on, that little mother was restored. She was healed. What does all of this mean? It means that because of the fact that a mother had taught her children to pray, in the hour of her extremity, with full faith in God, her children called upon him to bless their mother and preserve her, and God heard that prayer, and it was answered.

#### PRAYER A PRIVILEGE

We should teach our children that prayer is a privilege and not a duty. We should teach them to pray from their hearts and not from their lips and not to pray by rote. We should teach them to utter prayers of gratitude to God for all the blessings that we enjoy—prayers of generosity, not thinking so much about the things we want or need, but praying for those who are in distress. Prayers need not be long; they should be rather short and to the point and well thought out.

If we will establish houses of prayer, there is no question that they will become houses of faith; houses of glory; houses of God; because his holy Spirit will come and abide in such homes in rich abundance. And in these homes we will find the spirit of unity, the spirit of cooperation, the spirit of sympathy, the spirit of kindness, and the spirit of love.

Brethren and sisters, in these dark hours, I am sure if we supplicate God as James indicated centuries ago, in full faith, we can be instrumental in preserving all of the rights and privileges given to us in this great government of ours. We can further the cause of the Master. We can teach the gospel of peace, and help Almighty God to consummate his plans before the coming of the King of kings.

I pray we will follow the advice of the Lord given to us again through the Prophet Joseph, wherein he said:

Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work. (D. & C. 10:5.)

May God bless us that we will be prayerful. May God bless us that we will establish houses of prayer, houses of glory, houses of faith, and houses of God, I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Brigham Young University Mixed Chorus and the congregation joined in singing the hymn: "Now, Let Us Rejoice In The Day Of Salvation."

### PRESIDENT J. REUBEN CLARK, JR.

#### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

My brethren and sisters, I ask that you be good enough to help me with your prayers that what I may say today may be in accordance with the mind and the will of the Lord, and then it will be of benefit and blessing to all of us.

I should like to refer to the fine instructions given us last night by President McKay, in which he told us that the duty of the elder is to teach and to warn, and if the Lord leads me along the line that I have thought I might talk about, I want to say something by way of warning.

I want to follow along the thought that was expressed and the situation that was referred to by Elder Stephen L Richards this morning, when he called attention to certain influences that are at work amongst us.

#### FREEDOM OF WORSHIP

One of our Articles of Faith says:

We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

That is the expression of a great principle, a principle that has been operative among the children of God from the earliest period of which we have any record. It was pursuant to that principle, and in the exercise of the rights guaranteed thereby, that a third of the hosts of heaven revolted, in an effort to overcome the plan which God adopted.

Personally, I would not in any way, and in the lightest or slightest degree, hamper anyone's free agency. Literally, I feel and be-