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Second Counselor in the First Presidency

With President Smith and others of the brethren and with all of you I miss President George F. Richards, and our other close associate, Brother Frank Evans. However, who knows but that they may be nearer to us than we think.

TEXT

"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

"Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?" (John 1:37-38.)

About forty years ago, a stranger sat in this Tabernacle and listened to a message such as those messages to which we have listened throughout this conference. My informant didn't tell me who spoke on that occasion, but he thought it was President Charles W. Penrose. As the stranger and his host walked out from that meeting, the visitor said to his companion, I would give all that I possess if I knew that what that man has said this afternoon is true."

Well, he would not have to give all that he possessed to know that; if he had but followed the example of these two disciples, he might have learned, as they, the truth of what President Penrose, or whoever it was, gave on that occasion.

PATH TO KNOWLEDGE

With your cooperative help and the inspiration of the Lord, I should like to mark out that path.

"What seek ye?" and the answer, "Master, where dwellest thou?" And thereby, "Come and see." These two disciples sought Jesus upon the testimony of John the Baptist, whom they had been following, and who only a day or so before, seeing Jesus walking near Jordan, said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29.) It seems that none left John's side, at that time, but the next day John repeated his testimony, and these two disciples, one of whom was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, followed Jesus. We can only conjecture how clearly or deeply they sensed the fact that in thus seeking the Son of Man they were taking the first step toward eternal life. But this we do know, that the Savior has given the divine assurance that ". . . this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3.)

QUESTS DETERMINE SUCCESSES

Man's success or failure, happiness or misery, depends upon what

he seeks and what he chooses. What a man is, what a nation is, may largely be determined by his or its dominant quest. It is a tragic thing to carry through life a low concept of it.

The great writer Carlyle says, "The thing a man does practically believe, the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain concerning his vital relations to this mysterious universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. This is his religion; or it may be his mere skepticism and no religion; the manner it is in which he feels himself to be spiritually related to the unseen world or no world. I say if you tell me what that is, you tell me to a very great extent what the man is, what the kind of things he will do is."

THE ALL-IMPORTANT QUEST

The disciples' answer to the question, "What seek ye?" gives a key to man's highest and noblest quest: "Master, where dwellest thou?" saying in effect, We desire to know thee and thy teachings. They stayed with Jesus all that day, for it was the ninth hour. And later Andrew sought his brother Simon and said, ". . . we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." (John 1:41.) "If . . . thou seek the Lord thy God," is the promise coming down through the ages, "thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." (Deut. 4:29.)

This, then, brethren and sisters, is the all-important quest of life: To seek God and Jesus Christ, to know whom is eternal life.

HOW WE MAY KNOW GOD

The messages given in this conference have directly and indirectly answered the question of how we may know him. Jesus expressed it clearly on one occasion when, attending the Feast of the Tabernacles in Jerusalem, he declared to the Jews who marveled at his preaching, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:16-17.)

In his Sermon on the Mount, he expressed the same thought in these words: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.)

HIS WILL

These statements awaken in the mind of the honest investigator the great question, "What is God's will?" If we knew it, surely we would obey it.

Well, Christ has not left us with that question unanswered. His will is summarized in the memorable reply he gave to the lawyer

who asked him the question with a desire to entrap him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Answered the Savior: ". . . Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22-36-39.)

Further, regarding the will of God, the Apostle Peter particularized when, on the Day of Pentecost, with one accord the people asked him and the other Apostles, ". . . Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

"Repent," answered Peter, "and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

"For this promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:37-39.)

To repent—this we should note carefully—is to feel regret, contrition, or compunction for what one has done or omitted to do. It means to change one's mind in regard to past or intended actions or conduct on account of regret or dissatisfaction. It means to conquer selfishness, greed, jealousy, fault-finding, and slander. It means to control one's temper. It means to rise above the sordid things which pure nature would prompt us to do to gratify our appetites and passions, and to enter into the higher or spiritual realm.

Thus we become, in the words of Peter, ". . . partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (II Peter 1:4.) Then Peter adds, "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

"And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

"And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." (*Ibid.*, 1:5-7.)

Now note this great promise: "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (*Ibid.*, 1:8.)

JOY FOLLOWS OBEDIENCE

These are the signposts along life's highway which if followed, will lead any man to do the Lord's will, to know his Son, the Redeemer of the world, to know whom is eternal life. And while we are gaining this great knowledge which leads to immortality,

we find the greatest joy in mortality that can be experienced by the human soul.

"The best of all men are they who realize in daily life their luminous hours and transmute their ideals into conduct and character. These are the soul architects who build their thoughts and deeds into a plan, who travel forward not aimlessly but toward a destination." All the happiness that comes with spiritual gifts may be theirs—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, friendship, communion with the infinite; I repeat, communion with the infinite. All these and a thousand other blessings that God gives free of charge are theirs.

"Earth gets its price for what earth gives us.

" 'Tis heaven alone that is given away,

" 'Tis only God may be had for the asking." (Lowell.)

LIFE'S GREAT EXEMPLAR

High in the scale of manhood stand those who ceaselessly aspire toward life's great Exemplar. This great Exemplar is Jesus Christ, who among all leaders in history has wielded the greatest influence upon the human family.

You have asked yourself, as have thousands of others, wherein lies the secret of his greatness? You have probably answered, "Why, it is in his divinity." Well, that is true, but he came to earth as you and I, took upon himself mortality, and he exerted an influence among his fellows, in keeping with the natural laws just as each individual here exerts a natural influence. Wherein is the secret of his greatness, aside from his divinity? He defeated the lawyer in argument, healed the sick where medicine failed, inspired the greatest music ever written, filled hundreds of thousands of libraries with books, inspired missionaries to go to all the world, even to the darkest depths of Africa; yet, in none of the realms in which men and women ordinarily win their laurels do you find historians referring to Christ as having succeeded.

SUPREME IN CHARACTER

"In the realm of character," writes Charles Jefferson, "he was supreme. The only thing which places a man above the beasts of the field is his possession of the spiritual gifts which develop that Christ-like character. Man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, and his soul upon the things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical instincts and passions, or whether he will make as his life's end and purpose the acquisition of spiritual qualities."

Aren't you students thrilled—I hope you are—with the recent tendency among the alleged best thinkers, and I think some of them are, particularly the man who wrote *Man Does Not Stand Alone*,

in their appeal for humanity, for mankind to rise above the low, the sensual, and develop the spirit that is within man. I think we have made the turn from agnosticism into the realm of spirituality.

PRIESTHOOD MEANS SERVICE

Last night we had here in the Tabernacle, Assembly Hall, Barratt Hall, an estimated 14,000 men who hold the priesthood. I don't know that you can find a more inspirational gathering anywhere on earth. Just to be with them was an inspiration. To those 14,000 and to those 250,000 throughout the Church who hold the priesthood I should like to say: Our lives are wrapped up with the lives of others. We are happiest as we contribute to the lives of others. I say that because the priesthood you hold means that you are to serve others. You represent God in the field to which you are assigned. "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 16:25.) This paradoxical saying of the Savior contains the crowning element of the upright character—crowning, I say. Here we touch an important phase of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Selfishness is subdued, in which greed and avarice must be subordinated to the higher principles of helpfulness and of kindness.

"DO HIS WILL"

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17.) Choosing the right with unvarying and unwavering determination, resisting temptations from within and from without, cheerfulness in the face of difficulties and experiences, reverence for God and respect for your fellow men, willingness to assist in the establishment of the kingdom of God—these, though you might miss some of the emoluments of the world, will bring peace and happiness to your soul, and through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the gospel, bring immortality and eternal life. Your soul will rise in ecstasy and clearer understanding of that great word of God given in modern revelation: "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) That friend who said he would give all in the world if he knew it was true can know if he will follow the example set down by the Savior.

In conclusion, as sure as you can tune in on the radio and hear voices from afar, so sure am I that God our Father lives, and the soul of man can commune with him through the Holy Spirit. I give you that as my testimony; I know it. So sure am I that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, through whom and only through whom may mankind find happiness and peace. So sure am I that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored through Joseph Smith, and the authority to represent God on earth is again given to man. Oh, may he give us power to proclaim these truths to an unbelieving world, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.