

No one has overcome the world, the world of carnality and corruption, until he has given his heart to Christ, until he uses all his talents, abilities, and strength in keeping the commandments of God, and in causing this great work to roll forth.

The Lord has given us the agency, the talent, and the ability to achieve in this field. He sent his Son into the world to be the great Exemplar, to be a Pattern, to mark the way whereby we, like him, might attain glory and eternal reward.

It was Christ who said: "I have over-

come the world," (John 16:33) and it was also Christ who promised,

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. (Revelation 3:21.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards.

ELDER STERLING W. SILL

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

IN THE early part of the year 1842, John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, went to Nauvoo and obtained an interview with the Prophet Joseph Smith. He requested, among other things, that the Prophet write out a statement of the things in which the Church believed, and the Prophet wrote the Thirteen Articles of Faith. Later these were accepted by the vote of the people and became a part of the doctrine of the Church. They are now included in the Pearl of Great Price and form a part of that great volume of latter-day scripture.

This afternoon, and on this anniversary of the birth of the Savior of the world, I would like to offer for your consideration the first four words of the Prophet's statement, from the point of view of its being the greatest success formula in the world. Victor Hugo said, "There is nothing in the world as powerful as an idea whose time has come," and if we can learn anything from the signs of the times, we know that the time has fully come when great faith in God should take a firmer hold upon our minds.

It has been a hundred thirty-five years since God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, reappeared upon the earth to re-establish among men a belief in the God of Genesis and to usher in the greatest and final dispensation. And

so as the very foundation of our faith, the Prophet said, "We believe in God."

If the meaning of this phrase were limited to the idea that we believe that God exists, it would still be one of the great statements of the world. That is, there is great strength in the knowledge that we were not created by, nor are we at the mercy of, the forces of a blind and capricious chance. But when we say "we believe in God," we mean much more than merely that God exists. We mean that we understand something about the kind of being he is, that he is literally the Father of our spirits, and, according to the great law of the universe, the offspring may sometime become like the parent.

But the most thrilling and motivating part of this idea is what the words themselves indicate, that "we believe in God." We trust him. We believe that he knows his business, that regardless of chance or the errors of men, his purposes will prevail. We believe that our interests are his interests, that he meant what he said in that wonderful declaration that "This is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." We believe that God does not desire that his children be dull, or unattractive, or unhappy, or unsuccessful.

There are many things that we do not understand. We don't understand our

own birth or life or growth or death. We don't understand light or darkness. No one in mortality has ever seen his own spirit. We didn't discover the circulation of our own blood until just a little over three hundred years ago. It must be obvious, therefore, why a wise Heavenly Father would give us detailed instructions, setting forth objectives and the best methods for attaining them. It must be equally obvious that there are tremendous advantages in a complete acceptance of, and an unwavering faith in, the gospel; for as an earthly father is powerless to confer the maximum benefit upon a son who has no confidence in the motives or abilities of the father, so God is powerless to confer the greatest blessings upon men who do not believe in him. A great power attaches to a definite objective held by a strong faith. Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believe." (Mark 9:23.)

Sometime ago I read about the great woman swimming champion, Florence Chadwick. In 1950 she swam the English Channel, and then on July 4, 1952, she attempted to swim the twenty-one miles of water lying between Catalina Island and the southern California coast. The temperature of the water was forty-eight degrees, and a heavy fog lay over the sea. When she was only half mile or so from her objective, she became discouraged and decided to quit. Her father who was in the boat nearby tried to encourage her by pointing through the fog and telling her that land and success were near at hand. But she was discouraged, and a discouraged person is always a weak person.

The next day Miss Chadwick was interviewed by some newspapermen. They knew that she had swum greater distances on previous occasions, and they wanted to know the reason for her present failure. In answering their questions, Miss Chadwick said, no, it wasn't the cold water and it wasn't the distance. She said, "I was licked by the fog."

And then she recalled that on the occasion when she swam the English Channel, she had had a similar experience. When only a short way from shore she had given up, and this time

also, her father had pointed ahead, and she had raised herself out of the water just long enough to get the picture of her objective firmly fixed in her mind. This gave her a great new surge of strength, and she never stopped again until she felt under her feet the firm earth of victory.

I thought of this recently when a stranger called me on the telephone and asked if he and his wife might come and discuss with me a great tragedy that had recently occurred in their family. He explained that a speeding automobile had taken the life of their only daughter, and they asked me to try and help them understand something about the purpose of life and the meaning of death and what their relationship ought to be with each other, and where God fit into the picture, and whether or not there was any use for them to try to live on.

This great tragedy weighed upon them so oppressively that they almost seemed to be suffocating, and for three and a half hours I tried as hard as I could to help them with their problem. But there wasn't much of a foundation on which to build, and I discovered that it can be a devastating thing all of a sudden to need great faith in God and not be able to find it. It wasn't that they were rebellious or that they disbelieved in God. Their skepticism went deeper; they hadn't given him a thought one way or the other. It wasn't that they disbelieved in immortality; up to this point, they hadn't cared. Then death had stepped across their threshold and taken the best-loved personality there. And then all of a sudden, they needed great faith in God and were not able to find it.

You can't merely snap your fingers and get great faith in God, any more than you can snap your fingers and get great musical ability. Faith takes hold of us only when we take hold of it. The great psychologist, William James, said, "That which holds our attention determines our action," and one of the unfortunate things in life is that we sometimes focus our attention on the wrong things.

I have been disturbed a little, as I have gone around and become more conscious of the great variety of tempta-

tions that we wrestle with and succumb to. When we enumerate all of the temptations, we find that we often fall before some very small ones, merely because we have continued to entertain them. We talk until we are weary about the "temptations down," not so much about the "temptations up."

The dictionary says that to tempt is "to arouse a desire for," and so I assume that I am correct in thinking that temptation can go in either direction, although it is the easiest thing in the world to allow our minds to become loaded with the temptations downward—the temptations of lethargy, the temptations of sloth, the temptations of ignorance, the temptations of sin.

But every thought tends to reproduce itself in an act. Rags, tatters, and dirt are always in the mind before they appear on the body. One of the greatest handicaps to spiritual growth, or any other kind of growth, is to have a negative mind, and I suppose that one of the functions of a great faith is to lift our thoughts upward, to houseclean our minds, to sweep out our "temptations down," and fill our minds with the "temptations up."

And so I would like to offer you the thought of some of the thrilling temptations upward—the temptations of culture, the temptations of service, the temptations of great industry, the temptations to focus our minds on great spirituality, the temptation to believe in God.

I am certain that the greatest waste there is in the world is not the devastation that goes with war; nor is it the cost that accompanies crime; nor is it both of these put together. The greatest waste in the world is that human beings, you and I, live so far below the level of our possibilities.

Henry Ward Beecher was once asked whether or not he believed that Christianity had failed, and he said that so far as he knew, it had never been tried. Compared with what we might be, we are only half awake. We have great concern that our lives may someday come to an end, but the real tragedy is that so many lives never really have a beginning. The fires in our souls need rekindling. In speaking of education,

Francis Bacon said, "If you want a tree to produce, don't worry so much about the boughs; fertilize the roots." Then suppose we give in to that temptation to stimulate those great God-given powers within ourselves which can lift us toward heaven.

The brute creation goes down on all fours, which tends to throw its gaze upon the ground. But man stands upright in the image of his Maker that his vision may reach to the stars.

The mission of Jesus was up. Even in Gethsemane with the awful weight of our sins upon his soul, his face looked up to God. But whatever may be the attitude of the body, the spirit should be on its toes. When Jesus was teaching us to pray, he inserted that wonderful phrase which says, "Thy will be done." But even when we repeat these inspiring words, intended to lift us up, we usually surround it with a spirit of martyred resignation. When we say, "Thy will, not mine, be done" (see Luke 22:42), we may be hoping for the best but we are usually expecting the worst.

We fill our hearts with too many doubts and fears and negative thoughts. But try to imagine what the great Creator would have us do if we did his will. Can you conceive of any limits he would place upon our progress? What would God have us "arouse a desire for"? Certainly not for weakness, or failure, or sin! Certainly he does not want us to fill our minds with the temptations down. He is not pleased when we become the problem children of God. His will is for us to become beautiful and glorious like him.

But the great truths of life become known only to those who are prepared to accept them. So I would like to present for your consideration the thrilling temptations of the gospel, the temptations to live worthily of the celestial kingdom, to attain a celestial body, a celestial mind, a celestial personality, to live with a celestial family and celestial friends on a celestial earth. The gospel offers us the temptation to accept the challenge of Jesus when he said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.)

"Thy will be done," means to become

like God. Now try to imagine what the mind of the Creator is like. If you should lose all of your material possessions, you might have reason to be greatly depressed. But how poor you would be if you lost your faith in God!

My brothers and sisters, we have lived successfully through the long ages of a pre-existence. Now we live in mortality which is very short. And we are very near the end of the race. How unfortunate are they who relax their efforts when on the very verge of success, like the great Roman general, Cato, who committed suicide on the very eve of his triumph. If you sometimes feel that the water is a little cold

and the way is a little foggy, then is the time to look up and have faith, for there is land ahead.

"All things are possible to him that believeth," and so in our daily devotions we hold ever closer the very foundation of our faith, God's formula for success, "We believe in God."

May God bless our faith, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Sterling W. Sill, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I AM SURE as we come to the closing moments of this great conference our hearts are full of gratitude to the Lord for the blessings it has brought to each of us individually, and to the Church. We have had some wonderful counsel and advice and instruction given to us. The music has been delightful. The prayers from these mission presidents have thrilled us, and, altogether, I am sure that we feel in our hearts a re-dedication of our lives and our talents and all that we have to the building of the kingdom of God in the earth.

I recall fifty years ago when with the missionaries and President Grant who was then the president of the European Mission, I attended a conference in Holland that lasted all day. There were many tears shed during that day. At the close of the conference President Grant said: "Today we have feasted on the fat things of the Spirit of the Lord. Now, brethren, go out and give it away. The more you give away the more you will have left." That should be the feeling in the heart of every member who has been privileged to attend this conference. We ought to carry its spirit wherever we go—in our workshops, in our businesses, on our farms, and in all our activities in the Church, and in whatsoever we are called to do, we should carry this wonderful spirit with us into the world.

I am grateful for the presence here of these mission presidents and the great work that they are accomplishing. They are noble men. They have great responsibility. They have entrusted to them your boys and girls, the youth of Zion, who have gone forth as missionaries, and when new converts come into the Church, they have the responsibility to see that they are all put to work, that they use the gifts and the talents with which the Lord has endowed them for the building up of his kingdom, and for the honor and glory of his name, and for the blessing of his children, that there shall be no wasted manpower, just as the bishops in these wards share that great responsibility also.

While Brother Bennion and Brother Evans were speaking about joy and happiness, my thoughts went to the experiences I have enjoyed during the past year. It has been my privilege, besides mingling with the Saints in the stakes of Zion, to go to four of the missions of the Church. I toured two of them. Over in Hawaii, with President Nelson, we held a testimony meeting that lasted from seven o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night, and we had only a fifteen minute recess. We were all there fasting, and eighty-eight of us bore our testimonies, and the Spirit of the Lord was manifested in rich measure.

Then I toured two missions and in-