

Saturday, October 1

Second Day

Valley Stakes was present and furnished the choral music for the meeting, with Ruth Hardy Funk conducting and Roy M. Darley at the organ.

President David O. McKay:

This cable which I hold in my hand was sent today from Buenos Aires, South America, and illustrates how close our far away members are to us here at headquarters. It is from President Valentine, who says, "The Argentine Saints and missionaries are all safe. Joining you in spirit at Conference."

Again the great Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City is filled to capacity. Every seat is taken, so far as we can observe, and there are people standing in the doorways, at this the fourth session of the 126th Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Overflow meetings are being held in the Assembly Hall and in Barratt Hall and services are being televised over KSL-TV, Channel 5, and broadcast over Radio Station KSL, and by arrangement over eleven radio stations in Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Arizona, and California. And this is particularly interesting: special television cable installation will be shown in four chapels in Pocatello, Idaho, and by special arrangement over three television stations in Idaho. The names of these stations have already been announced to the radio audience.

The singing for this afternoon's session will be by the Mutual Improve-

ment Association Chorus from the Salt Lake Valley stakes, with Sister Ruth Hardy Funk conducting, and Elder Roy M. Darley at the organ.

We shall begin by the Mutual Improvement Association Chorus singing, "Let the Mountains Shout for Joy," conducted by Sister Funk.

The opening prayer will be offered by Elder David E. Heywood, Sr., President of the Phoenix Stake.

Singing by the Chorus, "Let The Mountains Shout For Joy."

President David E. Heywood, Sr. of the Phoenix Stake offered the opening prayer.

President David O. McKay:

Elder David E. Heywood, Sr., offered the invocation. He is president of the Phoenix Stake.

The M.I.A. Chorus from the Salt Lake Valley stakes will now favor us with "Jesus, Name of Wondrous Love," conducted by Sister Ruth Hardy Funk, after which Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will address us.

The Chorus sang the anthem, "Jesus, Name of Wondrous Love."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Elder Eldred G. Smith.

ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I WAS SURELY PLEASED, brothers and sisters, when the First Presidency invited these wonderful young people to sing at this conference, and I would like you young people to know how grateful I am for your willingness to be here and for the excellence of your performance.

I am very proud of the MIA and the work the MIA is doing, and I am very proud of you that you sing so beauti-

fully to our Savior, whom I know you love. I am glad that now, this year, together with all the rest of the young people of the Church, every week you recite our MIA theme in which you declare that you are not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I know you love it. I hope that always you will love it and that you will be faithful and true in every respect. God bless you for your work.

I do love the young people of the

Church, and I love their faith. As I visit with them from time to time, I know that the Spirit of God rests upon them, and that the spirit of conversion is in them, and that most of them are serving the Lord and keeping his commandments. So I feel very, very good about the rising generation and about the future of this great Church.

Occasionally, however, there are some of our young people who go off on a tangent and do not keep the faith. One day I had a young man come in to visit with me. He had lost his faith. He came to me not because he thought I could do him any good, but because his mother had asked him to come to one of the brethren and see if some different picture might be given to him whereby his faith might be restored. As he came into the office and sat down and opened the subject, he told me he had lost his faith, and he told me in what class at school he had lost it and who the teacher was who had been responsible for it.

As he told me about his difficulty, he said that he could not believe in God any more because who could believe in a Creator or suppose that there was some being who could create an earth like this. He did not believe in the Savior nor that the Savior ever wrought out an atonement that would do us any good. How could the death of a man on a cross two thousand years ago benefit a person now in this modern, enlightened time? And who could believe in a resurrection? It was all just incredible.

Then my mind went back to the time Paul stood before Agrippa and began there to defend his faith and his faith in the resurrection, and he asked Agrippa, you will remember, why he thought it was incredible that God could raise the dead.

And so we talked together, this young man and I. I asked him if there was anything in this modern world that he considered to be incredible. He could accept most things that are going on now.

I showed him a picture in a magazine of a little platform about four feet in diameter, with a railing around it, and a man standing in the middle.

That platform stood in the air without any visible means of support.

I said, "Do you believe it is possible that the picture you see there really is a picture of something that happened and that a man could stand on a little platform, six or twelve feet in the air—just stand there—and that by turning a little handle he could cause this platform to move up or down?"

I said, "It looks incredible to me, but there is a photograph of it. The United States Navy has it and is using it. Does it seem incredible to you? Does it really seem possible that a little platform could stand in the air like that?"

Then I asked him if he had read some of the things that are being spoken of these days about a trip to the moon. No longer is it idle talk. Men are actually talking about flying to the moon.

They are going to prepare what they call an island in the sky as a springboard, and that island is going to be stationary. They plan to fly their airship to that island, get out on it, walk around, and then take off again and go on to the moon.

Does that seem incredible? And yet the men of science today say that it is within the realm of possibility. They are really figuring it out. Incredible?

"No," he said, "it isn't incredible. I believe that a man could fly to such an island as that and then go on to the moon."

I said, "You are no different from the scientists of the world who are believing the same thing and working in that direction. But," I said, "is it any more incredible to believe that a man could leave this earth and go out into space than to believe that a man could come from space and visit this world? Which is more difficult to believe, that you or I could fly to the moon or that Moroni could come to the Prophet Joseph Smith?"

Then he said, "But then there is that gold plate story that I cannot take."

I said, "What about the gold plate story?"

He said, "Well, this idea that there was a book of gold plates with ancient inscriptions, and that Joseph Smith found it buried in the ground."

I said, "Would you believe it if it

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came from an archaeologist? If an archaeologist should find plates of ancient vintage with inscriptions upon them, and those plates were metallic, would you accept it?"

He said, "Well, I could believe it because archaeologists are men of science."

I said, "These men of science have proven that there are such things as plates of gold. They themselves have dug up metallic plates with ancient inscriptions on them, records of the past, and they may be seen in museums of this day. Is that incredible? Is it any more difficult to believe that an archaeologist could find ancient records of lead or silver or copper or gold, with inscriptions, records of the past, than to believe that the Nephites made records of the past and that they were brought forth in our day? Which is the more difficult to believe?"

Then he said, "But, I do not believe in prayer."

"Why don't you believe in prayer?"

"I don't believe that I could kneel down in my bedroom and whisper a few words and have God way up in heaven, if there is a God, hear what I would whisper those many, many miles away."

Then I told him about my wife and me being in Buenos Aires last Christmas. As we sat with the missionaries in the mission home that evening, the telephone rang, and we said, "Hello." On the other end of that telephone wire and across space where there were no wires, and then again picked up by other wires, came the voices of our daughter and son-in-law wishing us "Merry Christmas," saying it would not be Christmas unless they could speak to us.

Incredible? There we were in Buenos Aires speaking in a normal tone of voice. They were in Salt Lake City. Our voices would go to the end of the wire, and then they would travel where there would be just space, and beyond the space over another wire. Is that incredible? If man can do that, do you not suppose God could hear your prayer?

Then I brought up another thing. "In the Book of Mormon, which you say you do not believe, it says that the

voice of Christ was heard all over the land by the people, all at once, simultaneously. I have heard people like you say they could not believe that."

"No, I could not believe it," he said.

Incredible? Which is more difficult to believe, that God could speak in heaven and all the people of America hear it, or that the President of the United States could speak in the White House and all the people in America hear it? Which is more difficult to believe? Are these things incredible?

Then he brought up the Bible. "The Bible is full of stories that nobody could believe."

I said, "For instance?"

"Well, I don't think of any at the moment."

I suggested the story of Moses and the bulrushes. "Yes, the story of Moses and the bulrushes," he quickly said.

"Do you not know that the archaeologists have discovered facts which prove that Moses was found in the bulrushes by a daughter of Pharaoh, and that they can even tell you the name of daughter of Pharaoh, that they know now from ancient records which they have dug up that that story is true, and that Moses was reared in the household of Pharaoh, and that he became a leader of the Israelites and led them back to Palestine? If the archaeologists have proved it, is it any longer incredible to you?"

"Well, I would believe them, but I would not believe the Bible."

"What about the story of Abraham? Do you believe there ever was an Abraham?"

"No, I do not."

"But the archaeologists have also found out that there was a person called Abraham, a great astronomer of ancient times, who went down into Egypt and taught the Egyptians astronomy. That has been discovered. Is the story of the Bible then incredible?"

Then I said, "I would like to tell you something that is incredible to me. I can believe all these things, but I would like to tell you something that is incredible."

And he said, "What is that?"

I said, "It is incredible to me to believe that the earth could be made by chance, without a Creator."

Then I took from my bookcase a little book called, *Man Does Not Stand Alone*, by Cressy Morrison. Cressy Morrison is past-president of the New York Academy of Science, past-president of the American Institute of New York, member of the Executive Board of the National Research Council, a Fellow of the American Museum of Natural History, a life member of the Royal Institution of Great Britain. He wrote this little book to prove from the standpoint of an up-to-date scientist that it would have been impossible for the earth to be made by chance. I read this:

Suppose you take ten pennies and mark them from one to ten. Put them in your pocket and give them a good shake. Now try to draw them out in sequence, from one to ten, putting each coin back in your pocket after each draw. Your chance of drawing number one, is one to ten; your chance of drawing one and two in succession would be one in a hundred; your chance of drawing one, two, and three in succession would be one in a thousand. Your chance of drawing one, two, three, and four in succession would be one in ten thousand, and so on until your chance of drawing from number one to number ten in succession would reach the unbelievable figure of one chance in ten billion.

Then Morrison goes on to say:

The object in dealing with so simple a problem is to show how enormously figures multiply against chance. So many essential conditions are necessary for life to exist on our earth, that it is mathematically impossible that all of them could exist in proper relationship by chance, on any one earth at any one time. Therefore, there must be in nature some form of intelligent direction. If this be true, then there must be a purpose.

Then he reviewed the intricacy of creation, the intricacy of our own lives, of our bodies, the bodies of other living things, even of little plants. He talked about evolution and said that Darwin's theory was concocted before science had learned about the genes. "The genes," he says, "keep all forms of life within their own spheres. Life produces creations," he said, "of varied designs in the image of its predecessors and gives them the power to repeat themselves for untold generations."

Then he asked the question whether it

is really incredible to believe what the Bible says about everything having been formed originally to bring forth after its own kind:

Then he writes,

No oak tree ever bore chestnuts. No whale ever gave birth to a fish, and waving fields of wheat in every grain are wheat, and corn is corn. Law governs the atomic arrangement in the genes which absolutely determine every genus of life from beginning to extinction.

Then he makes this startling statement:

The first chapter of Genesis contains the real story of creation, and its essence has not been changed by knowledge acquired since it was written. The differences have arisen over details, which are not worth controversy.

He says that even the chronological arrangement in the story of the creation as given in Genesis fits into the modern scientific knowledge, and then he asks the question, "Can science pick a flaw in this briefest story ever told, the world's history in a few lines of print?" With regard to the story of creation, he again asks whether we should consider it incredible.

Finally, as he closes his book, he says:

The existence of a Supreme Being is demonstrated by infinite adjustments without which life itself would be impossible. Man's presence on earth and the magnificent demonstrations of his intellect are a part of a program being carried out by the Supreme Intelligence. Let us then hold fast to our belief in a Supreme Intelligence, the love of God and the brotherhood of man, lifting ourselves closer to him by doing his will.

I was certainly happy, recently to read a graduation address delivered at the commencement exercises of one of our large universities, by Dr. Joseph W. Barker, president and chairman of the Research Corporation of America and formerly dean of the engineering school of Columbia University.

He explained in his address that the scientists of the nineteenth century had been misled by certain of their observations and as a result came to conclusions which definitely were atheistic, but now he says:

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Even the most pragmatic materialist in the face of present-day scientific knowledge, is led to the inevitable conclusion that the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmaments showeth his handiwork.

As the children of Israel foreswore the worship of the golden calf and returned to the faith of Jehovah, so have we foresworn the crass mechanistic materialism and returned to that faith in God, of which the Psalmist of old sang: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1.)

To paraphrase the words of Paul: Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that there should be a God? Why should it be a thing incredible with you, that he should speak to men and show himself to them? Why should it be a thing incredible with you, that he should record the history of his people on plates of gold? Why should it be a thing incredible with you that a little boy of fourteen years should go into a grove of trees near his home, pray to God in all humility and receive an answer?

I testify to you, and I testify to all men, that God has made known to me that he lives, and I know it as well as I know that I live. He has given me testimony that Jesus of Nazareth was

his literal Son in the flesh, and that he is our Savior, and our Redeemer.

And he has given to me testimony that Joseph Smith truly knelt in prayer and in answer received the glorious visitation in which he talked face to face with the Father and the Son.

And he has given me personal testimony that the Book of Mormon is true. I know it as well as the three witnesses or the eight witnesses who held the plates in their hands. I know it. God has made it known to me, and I give you my testimony. It is not incredible.

And I, together with the young people of the Church, "am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

May we be faithful and true to our trust, true to the restored gospel, and not be incredulous, is my humble prayer, in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve. Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch to the Church, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Milton R. Hunter.

ELDER ELDRED G. SMITH

Patriarch to the Church

MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS: It is a thrilling experience to be in these conferences. Nevertheless, I humbly seek an interest in your faith and prayers in my behalf.

I have heard President Clark a number of times refer to his theme song, as he calls it, that of unity, and with his permission I would like to join his chorus. We should all join his chorus, not alone in words, but in action. Paul taught the same doctrine when he wrote to the Ephesians:

I therefore . . . beseech you that ye walk worthily of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all, (Eph. 4:1-6.)

When I talk about unity in the gospel, I am often reminded of an experience that I had while on a mission in Germany. When this German Choir sang for us yesterday in the conference meetings, I was reminded again of those experiences, especially when I was assigned to work in Celle in the Hanover District in Germany. Once a month we went to the little town of Uelzen, which was a self-sustaining branch. We went there to get their reports and to help them as we could. Since my companion