

Friday, October 9

First Day

Are we doing all that we can in accordance with these revelations, and if we are not are we inwardly opposing them? My brothers and sisters, you be the ones to answer that for yourselves.

Then there is this last one I will refer to, the revelation on harmful indulgences—the Word of Wisdom—and we see the manifest desire of many within the Church to twist the meaning of this great revelation, and those who do this, are they rebelling against the will of God as they did in the earlier days?

I bear record to you, my brethren and sisters, that these revelations have been given to us for our enlightenment, for our growth, that we may return to the presence of our Heavenly Father. They are a distinguishing characteristic of the Latter-day Saints. We are to use them

for our upbuilding and growth within the kingdom of God.

Would it not be profitable to re-view the revelations—to learn afresh—to “know our duty” and then where needful adjust our lives *fully* to the laws and commandments of God?

I bear record to the truthfulness of the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Alvin R. Dyer, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve, has just spoken to us. Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy will now address us. He will be followed by Elder John Longden.

ELDER MARION D. HANKS

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I seek only to be able to speak the truth, to merit the Spirit of the Lord which will direct me and bless me in so doing. I appreciate the wonderful sermons which have been delivered here from the first through Brother Dyer's.

I sat thinking a moment ago of my sainted father who left his little family and departed this earth more than thirty-five years ago, how he went into the missionary field at the call of the Lord through the Brethren, in his late 'teens, carrying copies of the Book of Mormon with testimony and conviction, expressing his deepest assurance of the validity of the work he represented and yet without adequate knowledge, perhaps, because he was but a boy and because much knowledge now available was not had, to defend his viewpoint in the eyes of the world. He had but his testimony, his faith, and the Book.

As President Smith spoke I marveled that we have lived long enough and that we live in a time, you and I, when the wise men, the honest men of the world, are coming to understand some of the things the Lord has taught us through all the years since the establishment of the Church.

As President Smith referred to the age of eight and his faith that a youngster at that age can know, I thought of my

little children and then of a book published recently, written by two of the most accepted, and I think effective, child psychologists of the day, commenting on the age “eight” in the lives of the young.

“Eight seems to be an age when much that was not comprehended before is often easily understood. At that age it is almost as though a new dimension has been added to the child's understanding.”

It is remarkable that qualified and earnest seekers after truth should discover that at age eight a new dimension enters into the life of the child. The Lord assured us of this when he talked of the age of accountability long ago.

Of one thing implicit in both President Smith's and Brother Dyer's remarks, I would speak for just a few moments.

A thoughtful friend phoned this morning to tell me of a book he had just received—I had not seen a copy nor is it available in our bookstores yet—a book called, *I Found God in Soviet Russia*, in which a man tells of his own experiences as a prisoner in a concentration camp in Siberia.

He talks of the religious faith that permitted people to endure and survive.

He mentions in at least four different places, and this would perhaps be a satisfying if sorrowful and surprising thing for us to know, that in a concentration camp in Siberia there is a little band of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, meeting faithfully and loyally, unwilling to deny or let rest or become indifferent to their responsibilities even though to be a member of the Church makes them liable to life imprisonment according to the book.

The book notes that these Mormons insisted on coming together in the name of the Lord—that when they had a few minutes they met to worship God in their own way.

When I think how the Lord must love and look with compassion upon such individuals, when out of my own experience as a parent I can see how much I love my little ones, I can understand (at least within my limitations) what the Lord meant when he talked about the worth of souls in his sight. And I believe I may understand it more impressively and movingly today than I have ever understood it before.

May I read you some words with which all are familiar, and read them in context of what has been said?

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

"For behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him." (D&C 18:10-11.)

There follows the great statement of the joy of the Lord in the soul that repenteth, and this:

"And if it so be that you should labor all your days in crying repentance unto this people, and bring, save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father!"

And then the marvelous statement that ". . . if your joy will be great with one soul . . . how great will be your joy if you should bring many souls unto me!" (*Idem*, 15-16.)

I have in mind to express my testimony about the importance of the one, to add my humble witness to the charge that has been given every teacher and parent, every youth-influencing, every adult-influencing Latter-day Saint, to

be concerned about the one individual child of God.

I heard a statement as I drove toward Brigham Young University the other morning from the Talmud, or so it was quoted: "To save one life is like saving a whole nation." And I began to think of other statements, including the one from the eighteenth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, to which we have alluded. I thought of the statement of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who said, "Every individual is an omnibus." Do you see the significance and implication of this?

As we have the marvelous blessing of setting missionaries apart, I can seldom refrain from thinking of them (and occasionally say it) that in each of them, as in each of us, is wrapped up a heritage and a promise, for each is a distillation of much that has gone before, and beyond all that is represented in the individual now and of the past, there is also the future, because in each of us are the seeds of the future; in each of us there is, in fact, the capacity and possibility of becoming many.

Could I tell you one story which bears repetition—and I have had the blessing of repeating it in some of the stakes of the Church. It is the most significant single experience I have ever had, personally, about the importance of one. It happened long enough ago that I think the individual involved would not be conscious of our noting him, though I see no harm if he is.

A man walked into these grounds and into an office in the Bureau of Information one day long ago. He interrupted a conversation which was private and serious, and did it without apology. He was quite an elderly man; he was not what you would call an attractive human being. He was unkempt, unshaven; he reeked of alcohol and tobacco.

He walked over to the desk where I sat, pointed his hand in the direction of the temple, and said, "How do you get in there?" I assumed that he was a tourist, one of the infrequent but occasional few who do not understand the purpose and the reason of temple-going and who have become affronted because they are not taken into the temple, and perhaps had come to complain.

I told him as best I could, or began to, the story of the temple, but had pro-

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ceeded only a little distance when he interrupted. He waved me away and said, "Oh, you don't have to tell me all that, I know that. I am a Mormon."

"Well," I said, "if you are a member of the Church and you know all of this, what is it you want from me?" He said, "Frankly, nothing. There isn't anything you have to give me. I am here because my wife insisted on my coming in, but I have fulfilled my errand," and out he went.

I tried to pick up the threads of the conversation and finish it, and later, as I sat thinking about him and his story, I looked out the window and saw him walking by the Joseph and Hyrum [Smith] monuments with a younger woman. I went out to talk with them. She identified herself as his wife. He had been married three times; each previous wife had died after bearing a large family.

There are two questions I asked him, which I think each person here would do well to hear answered as he answered them. I asked, in effect, how he had come to his feeling of antagonism and indifference. He told me that at age nineteen he had been ejected from a chapel by a bishop's counselor who had been summoned because of the boy's trouble-making in class. One thing that had been said, this man remembered for nearly sixty years. As he was thrown out, someone objected. The answer that came from the counselor who had the task in hand was, "Ah, let him go, he is just one kid!"

He went, and he never came back, nor was there ever any visiting, never any outpouring or increase of the love that should follow reproof, according to the Lord. He moved to another area of the land, married, had a family; his wife passed away and he married again, his second wife died after bearing a family also. He had come to Salt Lake City at the insistence of his third wife, who, having been taught by the missionaries and converted to the principles of the gospel, had brought him here hoping that somehow he might be touched—he, the member.

This, also, I would like to report: I asked him how many living descendants he had. He counted them and answered, "Fifty-four." I asked him then,

how many of them are members of the Church, and I expect you know the answer, though perhaps not his interesting expression. He said, "Huh, ain't any of them members of the Church. They're a pretty hard lot."

This last question: who was it the bishop's counselor propelled out the door that morning? Just one boy? Just one? This one has in his own lifetime become, in effect, a multitude, and the current has but begun to run, and every one of them denied, according to his own witness, the love of the gospel and the brotherhood of the Saints, the warmth and strength and direction of the programs of the Church.

Oh, I can understand a little more, why the Lord said that one soul was precious to him.

I close with a statement Horace Mann made. This is well-known also, but worth the repetition. To a man who questioned Horace Mann's statement at the dedication of a boy's home or school, that if all the work and energy and effort and money put into this endeavor had been to save just one boy, it would have been worth it, and had said to Horace Mann, "You became too oratorical, didn't you? You didn't really mean that, did you?"—Horace Mann answered, "Oh, yes, I meant it. It would have all been worth it, if the one were my son."

Every son of God is important in his eyes. Every unbaptized child, undordained boy, young man who is not in the right stage of his priesthood progression, every boy and girl not attending seminary when they can and should, every boy and girl not being married in the temple when they could—these are vitally important in the eyes of God and should be, in our eyes.

God bless us to understand the infinite importance of the one, in God's eyes, and to do all that we can to fulfil his purposes for them, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy. Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.