

Friday, October 7

First Day

"Greetings from the Andes Mission. All are well. . . ." That mission was just organized, where they had the earthquake recently. ". . . May you have an inspirational conference." Signed by President J. Vernon Sharp.

Here is one from the North British Mission, Manchester: "The missionaries and saints of the North British Mission send their sustaining vote and love and wish you an inspiring General Conference. We shall be there with our prayers and spirit." Signed by President Bernard P. Brockbank.

We desire to acknowledge the presence with us this morning of the following prominent persons. I am sure you will all be pleased to know who many of these are. We have a long list, but the following have been observed: Brother Ezra Taft Benson is with us, the Secretary of Agriculture, a member of the Council of the Twelve; Senator Wallace F. Bennett, Senator Frank E. Moss, Congressman David S. King, Governor George Dewey Clyde, Lamont F. Toronto, Utah Secretary of State. President Ernest L. Wilkinson is excused; he is out of the state attending a convention. Dr. John L. Clarke, president of Ricks College; Dr. William P. Miller, president of Weber College. I think there are are others here whom we have not seen. President Olpin I do not see. We miss Brother Allen Bateman. He usually had his place. You all know that he was called suddenly home just the other day. I don't see Dr. Chase, either, or Dr. M. Lynn Bennion.

We are pleased also to have our stake presidencies, bishoprics, temple presidents and general auxiliary officers. There are present also today our mission presidents from the United States, Mexico, Central America, Canada, and Hawaii. To all we extend a hearty welcome.

We shall begin this session by the Relief Society Singing Mothers rendering, "The Lord Is My Light," conducted by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen. The invocation will be offered by Elder Ben E. Lewis, president of the East Sharon Stake.

The opening musical number was rendered by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, "The Lord Is My Light."

Elder Ben E. Lewis, president of the East Sharon Stake, offered the invocation.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation was just offered by President Ben E. Lewis, president of the East Sharon Stake.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now sing, "Come, Ye Blessed Of My Father," conducted by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen. I did not tell you that Alexander Schreiner is at the organ, accompanying these singers.

Selection by the Relief Society Singing Mothers, "Come, Ye Blessed Of My Father."

PRESIDENT DAVID O. MCKAY

That is glorious. I am sure you will agree with me that the singing of these beautiful women, our mothers, bears evidence of the truth of the Lord's saying, "The song of the righteous is a prayer unto me." (D&C 25:12.) God bless them!

"But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

"Jesus said unto him, 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." (Matthew 22:34-40.)

I am glad that text is in keeping with the plea made by Brother Lewis at the opening of the session in his invocation, and that that spirit of faith in God and

love for one's fellows dominates this session.

Many who deny his divinity declare him to be the one perfect character, the peerless personality of history. Millions accept him as the Great Teacher, whose teachings, however, are not applicable to modern social conditions. A few accept him for what he really is—"the Only Begotten of the Father"; who came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world and to bear the sins of the world.

Last Monday morning, October third, the Premier of Soviet Russia threatened that if the United Nations does not reorganize as he demands, the communist bloc will "rely on their own strength to block us." He also threatened to ignore the United Nations' peace-making machinery unless the Secretary General of the United Nations resign, and his position, that is, the Secretary's position, be replaced by a communist-styled, three-man presidium armed with veto powers.

Who is this man who presumes to tell the United Nations what to do? He is a man who rejects the divinity of Jesus Christ and denies the existence of God, who is imbued with the false philosophy of Karl Marx, whose aim in life was "to dethrone God and destroy capitalism." He is a follower of Lenin, who said, "I want children to hate their parents who are not communists." The followers of these men, to gain their ends, "resort to all sorts of stratagems, maneuvers, illegal methods, evasions, and subterfuges." This atheistic attitude, and the advice to hate others, even one's own family, is just the opposite of the spirit of love as manifest and taught by the Savior. In sessions in another part of the United States are men who believe as I have indicated and who are willing to resort to any subterfuge, any scheme, that will further their ends to dethrone God. We appeal to God, who exists and lives, and with whom we are in harmony this morning—we have met in the name of his Beloved Son.

About fifty years ago, Lord Balfour, Prime Minister of Great Britain, delivered a lecture in the McEwen Hall of the University of Edinburgh, upon the subject, "The Moral Value which Unites

the Nations,"—the moral values. In an interesting and convincing manner, the gentleman presented the fundamental ties that unite the different nations of the world: First, common knowledge; second, common commercial interests; third, the intercourse of diplomatic relationships; fourth, the bonds of human friendships.

The audience greeted his masterful address with a great outburst of applause. As the presiding officer arose to express his appreciation and that of the audience, a Japanese student who was doing graduate work at the university stood up, and leaning over the balcony said, "But Mr. Balfour, what about Jesus Christ?"

Mr. Robin E. Spear, to whom Professor Lang related this incident, writes as follows: "One could have heard a pin drop in the hall. Everyone felt at once the justice of the rebuke. The leading statesman of the greatest Christian empire in the world had been dealing with the different ties that are to unite mankind and had omitted the one fundamental and essential bond. And everyone felt, too, the dramatic element in the situation—that the reminder of his forgetfulness had come from a Japanese student from a faraway, non-Christian land."

Nearly two thousand years ago, Christ's chief apostle on one occasion, when he was arraigned before the Jews for having healed an impotent man, made the following declaration:

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

"This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:10-12.)

That was a most dramatic occasion, and it took strength and fearlessness to make that statement to those men, some of whom had participated in Christ's crucifixion. Peter, on that occasion, bore a strong testimony to those people. These officers warned Peter and John

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not to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, but they heard Peter and John answer as I have read, and they saw the impotent man standing before them healed. They counseled among themselves what to do. Returning, they cautioned Peter and John not to preach Jesus Christ, but Peter, as spokesman under the inspiration of the Lord, answered:

"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

"For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (*Ibid.*, 4:19-20.)

The knowledge that Jesus is truly the Son of the Living God had been declared by Peter in the presence of his Master on an occasion when Jesus and his apostles were at Caesarea Philippi, when Christ had asked his disciples,

". . . Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? [a grammatical error, by the way, which comes down through the ages.]

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

"[And Jesus] saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

"And Simon Peter, [the spokesman, fearless, impetuous by nature answered], Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, [Simon, son of Jona]; for *flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee*, but my Father which is in heaven.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter [Simon's other name, which means a rock], and upon this rock [of revelation] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:13-18. Italics added.)

Comparatively speaking, only a small group of men and women knew him as he really is—the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind. This testimony has been revealed to every sincere man and woman who has conformed to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who has obeyed the ordinances and become entitled to and has received the Spirit of God and that of the Holy Ghost. Every individual stands independent in his sphere in that testimony, just as

these thousands of incandescent lamps which make Salt Lake City so brilliant at night, each one of which stands and shines in its own sphere, yet the light in it is produced by the same power, the same energy from which all the other lights receive their energy. So each individual in the Church stands independently in his sphere, independently in the knowledge that God lives, that the Savior is the Redeemer of the world, and that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored through Joseph Smith the Prophet.

"To some it is given," says the Lord in the Doctrine and Covenants, "by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus is the Son of God, and that he was crucified for the sins of the world." (D&C 46:13.)

It is to these I refer who stand firm upon the rock of revelation in the testimony that they bear to the world. But the Lord says further that there are those to whom it is given to believe upon the testimony of the words of others. Note that. They believe upon the words of others that they may also receive salvation if they continue faithful. For all these, however, there comes a testimony also of daily experience. The members of the Church throughout the world find confirmation of their testimony in every performance of duty. They know that the gospel teaches them to be better individuals, that obedience to the principles of the gospel makes them stronger men and truer women. Every day such knowledge comes to them, and they cannot gainsay it. They know that obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ makes them happier, better, and truer husbands, true and honored wives, obedient children. They know that obedience to the principles of the gospel makes them in every respect ideal home builders. The ideal is there. They sense it in their minds. They cannot gainsay it. They know it, and they know that transgression of these principles will have the opposite effect upon their individual lives and upon their home lives. They know that obedience to the gospel fosters true brotherhood and fellowship among mankind. They know that they are better citizens by virtue of obedience to the laws and ordinances. So, as they go through their daily activities and apply religion in their

weekly vocations, the truth of the gospel becomes exemplified in their lives, thus with a testimony of the Spirit, the testimony of reason, and the testimony of daily experience, members of the Church throughout the world stand impregnable.

I have always been strongly impressed with a statement by Thomas Nixon Carver in his book, *The Religion Worth Having*, wherein he says:

"The church that can say to the unchurched, 'Our way is best because it works best, our people are efficient, prosperous, and happy because we are a body who aid one another in the productive life; we waste none of our substance in vice, luxury, or ostentation; we do not dissipate our energy in brawling, gambling, or unwholesome habits; we conserve our resources of body and mind and devote them to the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, which is not a mystical, but a real kingdom; it is a body of people dominated by ideas of productivity, which is mutual service. We do not strive for the things that satisfy but for the moment and then leave a bad taste; we strive for the things which build us up and enable us and our children to become strong, to flourish, and to conquer. We strive to make ourselves worthy to receive the world by fitting ourselves to use the world more productively than others. We believe that obedience to God means obedience to the laws of nature, which are but the manifestations of His will, and we try by painstaking study to acquire a most complete and exact knowledge of that will, in order that we may conform ourselves to it. We believe that a reverence for God is respect for these laws; that meekness is teachableness and willingness to learn by observation and experience. By practicing this kind of meekness or teachableness we believe that we shall inherit the earth, whereas the unmeek, the unteachable, who are dominated by pride of tradition, shall not. We offer you hard work, frugal fare, severe discipline, but a share in the conquest of the world for the religion of the productive life.' Such a church," he continues, "is founded upon the rock of economic efficiency and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

My testimony, as yours, is that this Church of Jesus Christ can offer to the world all the good things which this author is looking for, and more, because God has revealed more in the government and conduct of his Church.

Brethren and sisters, the testimony of the gospel is an anchor to the soul in the midst of confusion and strife. Knowledge of God and his laws means stability, means contentment, means peace, and with that a heart full of love reaching out to our fellow men, offering the same blessings, the same privileges. Love will beget tolerance and kindness.

Now I suggest that during the next month or so, when our towns and cities and states will be more or less stirred by political contention, that we restrain our tempers, control our tongues, and try to manifest charity and love for one another. Let us not besmear our brother's reputation. I mean that while we are urging our particular political belief, that we avoid dealing in personalities. We cannot afford to hurt our brother's feelings and wound him.

Leaders in the Church, in fact all members thereof, are striving to establish the kingdom of God. Let us hold to that fact as the anchor of our soul and then breathe forth charity and love to those who may not see just as we do.

"Oh, brother Man! fold to thy heart thy
brother,
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is
there;
To worship rightly is to love each other,
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a
prayer.

"Follow with reverent steps the great
example
Of Him whose holy work was 'doing
good';
So shall the wide earth seem our Father's
temple,
Each loving life a psalm of gratitude.

"Then shall all shackles fall; the stormy
clangor
Of wild war music o'er the earth shall
cease;
Love shall tread out the baleful fire of
anger,
And in its ashes plant the tree of peace!"
(John Greenleaf Whittier)

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In conclusion, let us stand with our hearts centered and our aims firmly fixed upon this eternal truth—that the gospel of Jesus Christ is among men for the redemption and salvation of the human family. Let us go forth in that spirit and deal with our fellow men in the spirit of love and kindness. Let us work in our councils, in our quorums, guided by that same spirit.

God grant that we may remain true to the Church, that we may ever be found defending the men whom God has called to guide us, and realize that harmony with them means that we are in harmony with God, for he sustains

them. I pray for this blessing for all of us throughout the entire world, and that each member may carry the responsibility of his membership in the Church preparatory to the establishment of the kingdom of God, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Our next speaker this morning will be Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

ELDER HENRY D. TAYLOR

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters, after listening to President McKay's inspiring message, I feel that all of us, from the bottom of our hearts, can say, "We thank thee, Heavenly Father, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days."

While World War I was raging in Europe, there were certain individuals here at home who would sit back in their easy armchairs, surround themselves with maps, and follow the progress of battle by reading the newspapers. They were extremely critical of the generals and those who were directing the campaigns and were very eager and vocal in outlining the strategy they would employ if in similar positions of leadership. These individuals were referred to as "armchair generals."

Prior to demolition of old buildings or the construction of new buildings, a solid fence is built to protect passersby. It has become a practice to bore holes in the fence or to instal glass portholes. From these observation points many pause and watch with interest the demolition or construction activities. There are those among the viewers who would improve the way the job is run. Some would knock a building down immediately, while others would have it done bit by bit. Then there are those who would make changes in the architectural design of the building. Others are critical of the manner in which the cement is poured, the bricks are laid, and the glass

is installed. These persons are known as "sidewalk superintendents."

Then there is another group belonging to this category. While riding in a car they are continually offering suggestions to the driver as to how the car should be operated, the speed that should be traveled, when to turn, and the signals to be employed. These are the "back seat drivers."

The Church becomes an object of criticism from just such "experts." They are dissatisfied with the manner in which the superintendent manages the Sunday School. They find fault with the way the bishop conducts the affairs of the ward. The stake president does not please them, and they criticize his administration. They are unhappy with the way the tithing is disbursed. These are the persons who find no fault with their own actions, but seem willing and anxious to confess another person's sins.

The Savior was chastising such groups as these when he said: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is within thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is within thine own eye? . . . Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5.)

I believe that is the same thought that the poet Burns desired to express when he penned the lines: