

Saturday, April 7

Second Day

it produces: (1) physical benefits, (2) intellectual activity, (3) spiritual strength."

In tonight's *Church Section of the Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*—I just saw it at noon today—there is another very wonderful article on the law of the fast by President McKay.

Now, what of the blessings accruing to the poor through the payment of the fast offering each month by all members of the Church? Of course, only those grateful souls who receive such assistance could possibly describe those blessings. How would the man describe hunger who knows nothing of its pangs? Or cold when he has always been warm? Or illness when he has always had good health?

Fasting, prayer, and the contributing of the full amount of fast offering are the Lord's divine prescription for many of the blessings which everyone of us needs in one way or another or at one time or another. In order that this great Church may do its part in taking care of the poor, that both the giver and the receiver may be blessed as the Lord desires, we commend to you more serious consideration of the law of fasting, and then prayer as its companion, and then the payment of an honest fast offering in keeping with the value of the meals not consumed on that day.

About the turn of the century one of America's most brilliant, prominent attorneys had an occasion to defend a helpless person, and he used this very beautiful allegory: "When God decided to make man, he called the three angels who waited on his throne—Justice, Truth, and Mercy—and said: 'Shall we make Man?' Justice replied: 'Make him not, O God, for he will trample on thy laws.' Truth replied, 'Make him not, O God, for he will pollute thy sanctuaries.' Mercy, kneeling, looked through her

tears, and said, 'Make him, O God, and I will watch over him all the days of his life.'

"So God decided to make man and said, 'Thou art a child of Mercy; go out and live with thy brothers.'"

I know that God is our Father. I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is our beloved Savior. I felt it strongly when President McKay said the other day, "Jesus is real." I am grateful to you brethren whom we meet each week. What strength you give us as we come to you, most of the time in fasting. I am grateful that I learned a few days ago, rather accidentally, that my wife fasts for me every Sunday morning as I come to you. For that I am grateful.

May we live the law of the fast, and you cannot think of fasting without praying. God bless us that we may take seriously fasting, praying, and the payment of an honest fast offering as the Lord has divinely ruled it so, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Thorpe B. Isaacson, Assistant to the Twelve, has just addressed us. The Ricks College Choir and Congregation will now sing, "How Firm A Foundation," conducted by Richard W. Robison. After the singing, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley will speak to us.

The Ricks College Choir joined with the Congregation in singing the hymn, "How Firm A Foundation."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter.

ELDER GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters, I rejoice with you in the attendance here of bishops and presidents of stakes from foreign lands. This is a great and significant day in the history of the Church, and

foretells, I think, the time when these general conferences shall become in reality great parliaments of men gathered from over the world, endowed with the Holy Priesthood, whose only desire

is to promote the cause of peace and goodness among the people of the earth.

I rejoice in the reports which have been given by those who have been supervising the missions in various parts of the world. The manner in which the Lord is pouring out his Spirit upon the people of the earth quickens the testimony of each of us.

As many of you know, I have some responsibility for the work in the Far East, and I feel a compelling desire in behalf of our dedicated mission presidents and missionaries to give a brief report of what is going on in that part of the Lord's earth, which is strange to many of us.

I have learned to love those faraway places, and those wonderful people with the strange-sounding names—the Honggs and the Kims, the Fongs and the Kumagais—and all of the host of faithful Latter-day Saints who in their lives and words bear testimony of the conviction which they carry in their hearts that God truly lives; that Jesus is the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, the Savior of mankind; and that Joseph Smith is a Prophet, ordained of God to bring forth the re-establishment of his work in this generation of time.

It is an inspiring experience, my brethren and sisters, to witness the manner in which the Lord is weaving the tapestry of his grand design in those foreign parts of the earth. He is gathering his children there as elsewhere—"one of a city and two of a family." He is remembering the promises made of old as he works among those who have seen so much of poverty and misery and evil and oppression. He is answering the prayers of those who have gone before, and who struggled to establish a foothold for the gospel in those distant places.

What wonderful people these are whose lives have been touched by the light of the gospel! Witnessing the faithful Saints in the Philippines, in Hong Kong, in Taiwan, in Japan, in Korea, in Okinawa, one is led to declare with Peter of old:

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:34-35.)

Today we have some eight thousand native members of the Church in this part of the world, in addition to many faithful American Saints who are in military service and in other positions with the government. I would not have you think that this harvest of converts has come easily. Converts are won hard there as they are elsewhere. Heartache and discouragement and disappointment are all part of the labor that goes on there, and behind today's achievement is a history of prayer and prophecy and patient waiting for the day when the Spirit of the Lord would move upon these lands.

I have not walked the crowded streets of the Orient, in which today we are enjoying a significant measure of success, without remembering with appreciation those of our people who more than a century ago went there under direction of the servants of the Lord to initiate the work.

In a special conference held August 2, 1849 in the Bowery that stood on this square, Hosea Stout and two companions were called to go to China. They arrived in Hong Kong in April 1853. I can imagine with what misgivings they must have stepped ashore in that place so different from the one they had left. They became ill from the oppressive heat and the food to which they were not accustomed. Their message fell on deaf ears. There was no response other than ridicule. In four months they returned home.

A century passed, but in the meantime the realm of China had been dedicated under authority of the holy apostleship for the preaching of the gospel. On January 9, 1921, President David O. McKay, while touring the missions of the world, turned the key to unlock the door of this great area of the earth. I have read his prayer again and again. It is at once a prayer and a dedication and a prophecy.

One or two statements from that prayer offered in the "Forbidden City" of Peking appear particularly significant to me. He prayed: "Heavenly Father . . . break the bonds of superstition, and may the young men and young women come out of the darkness of the past into the glorious light now shining among the children of men. Grant,

Saturday, April 7

our Father, that these young men and young women may through upright, virtuous lives and prayerful study be prepared and inclined to declare this message of salvation in their own tongue to their fellow men."

I bear testimony that God is answering that supplication. The shackles of superstition are falling. The young men and the young women are coming out of the darkness of the past. I wish that you might have been with us recently in a conference in Hong Kong to hear our young Chinese brethren and sisters sing the songs of Zion in their native Cantonese and bear witness of the truth of this work to congregations numbering more than eight hundred. I wish you might have talked, as I did, with our young native Chinese elders who are serving as missionaries. One said: "I hated Americans. I hated all foreigners until I met the missionaries." Another responded, paraphrasing an old Chinese proverb, "As I look at foreigners, I think, he is not American; he is not British; he is not Canadian; he is my brother."

I wish you might have been with us in Taiwan to hear a handsome and brilliant young man discuss the gospel in his native Mandarin. He was a local missionary, a young man whose forebears for generations before him had been Buddhists. I have seen nowhere a more able or devoted or personable missionary in this Church.

In that same dedicatory prayer offered in 1921 President McKay stated: "May the elders and sisters whom thou shalt call as missionaries have keen insight into the mental and spiritual state of the Chinese mind. . . . May the work prove joyous, and a rich harvest of souls bring that peace to the workers' hearts which surpasseth all understanding."

How I wish you might have been with us in an upstairs room in Tsim Sha Tsui in Kowloon, where for thirteen hours the elders and sisters bore testimony of their love for the Chinese people. I shall not soon forget the words of a young man from a comfortable home in the States, who stood in a cold, barren room in Taipei in the Republic of China and said, "I am

thankful for eyes to see and voice to speak and feet to go from door to door to teach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Such is the spirit of those who have been called from Los Angeles and Burbank, from Rexburg and Logan, from El Paso and Tooele to those strange lands, where under the influence of the Spirit they learn the difficult languages and bring light and faith and understanding to the wonderful people who live there.

The story is similar in Japan. The work was opened in 1901 by President Heber J. Grant. It was dreadfully discouraging. In twenty years only 127 converts came into the Church, and the mission was closed in 1924. Then following World War II it was reopened, and the Spirit of the Lord began to rest upon those people.

Today we have more than four thousand Japanese members of the Church, intelligent and able, as faithful and devoted as those in any mission in the world; and we now have branches scattered from Okinawa on the south to as far north as Asahigawa on the island of Hokkaido. I feel confident and satisfied in my heart that we have a great work ahead of us among the good people of that great nation.

I speak with comparable feelings concerning the work in Korea. There are now some 1,300 members of the Church there. For the most part they are well-educated. They are buoyant in their faith. The tears welled in our eyes as we stood with them in a cold hall and sang that great hymn from the pen of Brother William W. Phelps:

"Now let us rejoice in the day of salvation.

No longer as strangers on earth need we roam.

Good tidings are sounding to us and each nation,

And shortly the hour of redemption will come, . . ."

I have never met with the Saints in those lands and listened to their testimonies and partaken of their spirit without thinking of Paul's statement to the Athenians concerning God, our Father, who

". . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the

face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him. . . ." (Acts 17:26-27.)

That which is going on has demonstrated that the gospel is for all of our Father's children, and that the good people of the Orient are as responsive to its teachings as are the people of any land when the Spirit of the Lord touches their hearts. Here is one of the great evidences of the divinity of this work. Wherever it is taught, the honest in heart respond, each in his own tongue speaking the same testimony.

One sees there the same quiet kind of miracle that one sees everywhere when men and women bring the gospel into their lives. What a marvelous thing it is to witness a peddler of fish, a man from the ranks of poverty and superstition, take on a new grace and a new goodness when he accepts the gospel and is endowed with the Holy Priesthood. He appears almost to become a new man. He literally is born again as he sheds old ways of thought and living and rises from the very waters of baptism to positions of leadership in his native land.

But with all of the joy and the inspiration that come of witnessing this marvelous thing, there comes likewise an almost overwhelming sense of obligation. There comes a new consciousness of the magnitude of our great responsibility. The harvest is so great, and the laborers are so few in those lands where dwell millions upon millions upon millions of people. In the city of Tokyo alone are more than ten million, with cities of three and four and five million not far removed.

Brigham Young, on the occasion of the departure of the first missionaries to China, declared: "The work urges, and is becoming very much enlarged and extended, and requires a commensurate accumulation of men and means, and expansion of mind and energy,

ability and perseverance." (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 15, p. 107.)

If that were the case in 1852, how much more urgent is it today? My brethren and sisters, the work is becoming very much enlarged. It does require a commensurate accumulation of men and means. It requires an expansion of mind and energy, ability and perseverance. Let us prepare ourselves more diligently for the great assignment which God has laid upon us to carry this work to the children of the earth wherever we may be permitted to go.

To our young men I would like to say, prepare yourselves, not only financially as you have been urged to do, but also intellectually and morally and spiritually. Study languages. This gospel is not for the people of America only. This gospel is for the people of the earth, and we have incumbent upon us the obligation to learn to speak their tongues. If you be called to a foreign language mission, you will be better equipped if you have studied the language. If called to an English-speaking mission, you will understand your own language better.

Live for the opportunity when you may go out as a servant of the Lord and an ambassador of eternal truth to the people of the world. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14.) This is our commission, and this is our obligation spoken anciently and reaffirmed in modern revelation.

God give us the faith and the wisdom and the foresight and the breadth of vision to go forward and fulfill it, I pray, as I leave you my testimony, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us and be our concluding speaker.