

Friday, October 5

ing. Insistent demands of current and important Congressional sessions have kept me in Washington. My heart is at home with you, but my duty is here. God bless you and keep you."

These services are also being broadcast in the Assembly Hall by television. Those who are standing in the doorways may possibly find seats in this building. We extend a hearty welcome to our "unseen audience" and to all who are gathered in these audiences.

We again acknowledge, with appreciation, the presence of our stake presidencies, high councilmen, bishoprics, temple presidencies, General Auxiliary officers, patriarchs and others. We are favored again this afternoon by the presence of the Relief Society Singing Mothers from the Central Idaho and Bannock Welfare Regions, with Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen conducting and Elder Roy M. Darley at the organ.

We shall begin these services by the Relief Society Singing Mothers rendering, "Unto Thee I Lift Mine Eyes." The invocation will be offered by Elder James David Pratt, president of the Burbank Stake.

The Relief Society Singing Mothers sang "Unto Thee I Lift Mine Eyes."

Elder James David Pratt, president of the Burbank Stake, offered the opening prayer.

President David O. McKay:

The invocation was offered by Brother James David Pratt, president of the Burbank Stake. The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now favor us with "The Lord's Prayer," conducted by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen. After the singing President Joseph Fielding Smith will give the opening address.

An anthem, "The Lord's Prayer," was sung by the Singing Mothers.

President David O. McKay:

President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Quorum of Twelve, will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder Howard W. Hunter.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH FIELDING SMITH

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren and sisters, I trust I may have the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord in what I shall say. I want to make a plea to the brethren holding the priesthood and to the sisters of the Church to spend a little more time in the study and the research that they might give to the standard works of the Church, and particularly to the Book of Mormon.

We had a campaign a short time ago in which we asked the members of the priesthood to read the Book of Mormon. It seems to me when we know the history whence the Book of Mormon came and how it came, no member of this Church could rest satisfied until he or she had read it from cover to cover—not once, but many times.

Now, there are some religious organizations who have centered their attack largely upon the Book of Mormon. They go into the homes of members of the

Church and point out to them what they consider to be errors or changes or additions to what was given in the first publication. If anybody has published a book he knows that the first thing that stares him in the face the moment it comes off the press is some glaring error. We have never claimed that in the beginning there were not some errors which the Prophet corrected, but they were very, very few. But some of these complaints or charges are against certain writings that appear, and in the limited time that I have I wish to refer to two of these accusations.

I have a letter on my table now from a man who seems to be very much disturbed because he, in conversation with some of these people, was told that the Book of Mormon did not tell the truth in regard to the birth of the Son of God, and that the Book of Mormon declared that the Savior would be born in Jeru-

salem, the land of their fathers. Now the Book of Mormon makes no such statement. I am going to read it to you.

Alma, in speaking about the coming of the Son of God, said: "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, . . ." (Alma 7:10.) Now, if he had said the city of our forefathers it would have made a difference, would it not? Well, wasn't Jesus born in the land of Jerusalem, Jerusalem being the capital? Alma did not say he would be born in the city of Jerusalem, but in the land over which Jerusalem was the capital. But they make a great deal out of this, and some of our people seem to be unable to defend themselves. Now, *at* does not mean necessarily *in*. You might read in the newspaper, if you were in Great Britain, that a certain vessel arrived at London, but it did not—it landed at Southampton, the port for London, which is many miles away. There is no mistake in this statement whatever. Jesus was born at the land of Jerusalem, the land of their forefathers. So much for that.

The other charge that is made that I wish to mention is the statement of Abinadi, and a similar statement occurs in some other places, that Jesus Christ is both Father and Son to us.

"And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

"And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—

"The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—" (Mosiah 15:1-3.)

What's wrong with that scripture? What is a father? One who begets or gives life. What did our Savior do? He begot us, or gave us life from death, as clearly set forth by Jacob, the brother of Nephi. If it had not been for the death of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the spirit and body would never have been united again. Death would have been

inevitable and, as Jacob states—I won't take time to turn to read it—if there had been no redemption from death our spirits would have been taken captive by Satan, and we would have become subject to Satan's will forever.

What did our Savior do? He begot us in that sense. He became a father to us because he gave us immortality or eternal life through his death and sacrifice upon the cross. I think we have a perfect right to speak of him as Father.

King Mosiah put his people under covenant to take upon them the name of Christ. And this was 124 years before the birth of Christ. I want to read a verse or two from this pledge. "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters [spiritually]." (Mosiah 5:7.) Is there anything wrong in us calling Jesus Christ our spiritual Father? "And under this head," this wonderful king said, "ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.

"And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ.

"And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take upon him the name of Christ must be called by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the left hand of God." (*Ibid.*, 5:8-10.)

The Son of God has a perfect right to call us his children, spiritually begotten, and we have a perfect right to look on him as our father who spiritually begot us.

Now if these critics would read carefully the Book of Mormon, they would find that when the Savior came and

visited the Nephites, he told them that he had been sent by his Father. He knelt before them, and he prayed to his Father. He taught them to pray to his Father, but that did not lessen in the least our duty and responsibility of looking upon the Son of God as a father to us because he spiritually begot us.

The Lord bless you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is President Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Quorum of the Twelve. Elder Howard W. Hunter of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder John Longden.

ELDER HOWARD W. HUNTER

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

On the evening of the day of the resurrection, Jesus appeared and stood in the midst of his disciples in the closed room. He showed them his hands through which had been driven the nails and his side which had been pierced by the spear. Thomas, one of the twelve, was not present when this happened, but the others told him they had seen the Lord and that he had spoken to them.

No doubt Thomas had been deeply shaken by the events of the past days. His love and devotion to the Master cannot be questioned, but the flame of faith had burned low and had grown cold. The tomb was empty, this he knew. Mary Magdalene and the other women and Peter and John had been there. Jesus later appeared to Mary in the garden, and she told the disciples of this event as she had been commanded. That very day the Risen Master had walked with Cleopas and his companion down the road to Emmaus and had also appeared to Simon Peter in Jerusalem. In spite of these evidences, Thomas was skeptical, and he said to the disciples:

“. . . Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” (John 20:25.)

This statement of Thomas has caused him to be remembered down through the ages and his name placed with the skeptics, the doubters, and the faint-hearted; with those who will not believe until they see. In a sense, Thomas represents the spirit of our age. He would not be satisfied with anything he could not see, even though he had been with the Master and knew his teachings con-

cerning faith and doubt. Jesus had said: “. . . O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matt. 14:31.)

“. . . Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” (Mark 4:40.)

“. . . If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” (*Ibid.*, 9:23.)

“. . . According to your faith be it unto you.” (Matt. 9:29.)

All of these things Thomas well knew, but his personal faith had been dimmed by a great disappointment. Faith does not take precedence over doubt when one must feel or see in order to believe.

Thomas was not willing to stand on faith. He wanted positive evidence of the facts. He wanted knowledge, not faith. Knowledge is related to the past because our experiences of the past are those things which give us knowledge, but faith is related to the future—to the unknown where we have not yet walked.

We think of Thomas as one who had traveled and talked with the Master, and who had been chosen by him. Inwardly we wish that Thomas could have turned toward the future with confidence in the things which were not then visible, instead of saying in effect, “To see is to believe.”

It must have saddened the heart of the Savior, but this had happened before. Within the past few days Judas had betrayed him, Peter had denied him, and now Thomas doubted him.

A week later, the disciples were again together in the same house in Jerusalem. This time Thomas was with them. The door was closed, but Jesus came and stood in the midst of them