

Sunday, October 7

Third Day

in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost.

"And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

"And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift. . . .

"And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God. . . .

"And how blessed were they! For the

Lord did bless them in all their doings; . . ." for some one hundred and sixty years. (See 4 Nephi 1:1-3, 16, 18.)

Thus they did have peace, but I repeat again, based upon obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, by obedience to the words of the living prophets and apostles.

I bear testimony that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that President David O. McKay is the prophet to the world today, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of the Seventy, and at present President of the South American Mission, has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Bishop Robert L. Simpson of the Presiding Bishopric.

BISHOP ROBERT L. SIMPSON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

My dear brothers and sisters, how grateful I am for this opportunity of attending this glorious conference. I do not know when I have felt a more generous outpouring of the spirit of our Heavenly Father. Would it not be wonderful if the world's problems and differences could be solved and decided under such a feeling of unity and warmth as we find here this morning? I pray to my Heavenly Father that the expressions of these few minutes will be a direct reflection of the testimony that I feel in my heart.

Living in this jet age of accelerated pace and challenge causes serious reflection on some fundamental issues. We might ask ourselves a few basic questions; for example, "How can precious time and energy be spent most profitably?" "What comes first?" "To what shall we turn our hand next?" "Does a loving Father really dwell in the heavens?" These all-important questions have been asked by practically every person who has ever lived. Sometimes we avoid dedicating ourselves to the direction that common reason tells us to be right until a circumstance forces the issue. I shall never forget a thought-

provoking experience that came to me at the outbreak of World War II, and I would like to share it with you briefly:

The British Empire had just declared war on the Axis powers. At the time I was a missionary in far-off New Zealand, and that country was busily engaged in adjusting itself to wartime footing. Various projects were launched by the government in an attempt to make the people sense the seriousness of their situation. One beautiful morning I was walking with my companion down the main street of New Zealand's largest city, when our attention was captured by a group of low-level bombers approaching rapidly over the city. Their markings were indistinct, and we thought to ourselves "Might this be the enemy?" Just at that moment the bomb bays began to open up. It was a very ominous sight. Then, what appeared to be bombs were released from the bomb bays and everyone stood transfixed. Everyone stood in amazement, and was very much relieved to see that these would-be-bombs disintegrated into thousands of leaflets, fluttering down over the city.

Being tall, I was one of the first to

reach a falling pamphlet, and bringing it quickly into focus, my companion and I read this brief but startling message: "If this were a bomb, where would you be?" Now, brothers and sisters, you can be certain that our thoughts were very serious on that occasion, and I want to tell you that the gospel of Jesus Christ and its importance to mankind seemed foremost, above all else.

The gospel, as set down by the Savior of the world, was never intended to be the least bit confusing, for he is the author of truth and light. Our Heavenly Father has but one desire and that is to have as many of his children as possible, regain his presence.

You know, I had a business acquaintance, and he once complained that to him, religion had become a mass of confusion. He said that the road immediately ahead was covered with thick fog—that the bright goals which seemed so clear and discernible in his childhood, now seemed obscure and questionable. He was losing his faith! He was standing alone!

We oftentimes lose sight of basic goals as we struggle against the adversary in this mortal realm of existence. Nothing would please him more than to have us distracted in our attempts to regain the presence of our Heavenly Father, and such was the plight of my friend.

Often we hear folks say, "I can't see the forest for the trees." How important it is for us to ascend a vantage point from time to time, above the fog that my friend referred to; there to check direction and relative position; there to decide on things of most importance; there to re-evaluate our goals.

The Lord gave the key to all men nearly two thousand years ago when he said:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3:20-21.)

How grateful we should be to have this key to live by. How grateful we should be that as we face the tremendous task of overcoming the imperfections of mortality, he assures us of his pres-

ence and sustaining help; but not without one very important stipulation, that the incentive must come from us, for remember he said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." In other words, he is always there, ready to enter, ready to be with us, but we, too often, fail to recognize the knock.

How can any man look into the heavens and witness the order of his creations, without hearing that knock? How can any witness the wonders of this electronic and nuclear age without hearing the knock? How can we participate in the revealed wonders of medicine without indeed knowing that his mercy and love extend toward all men?

He goes on to say, ". . . if any man hear my voice,"—not just some special, select group of men, but "any man," any or all of more than three billion that live on the face of the earth, may accept of this invitation freely.

". . . if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, . . ." What must we do? It is up to us to open the door! He knocks; we recognize his voice; and then we open the door.

It is not the Lord's plan to force his will upon anyone. Holman Hunt, the artist, felt inspired to capture this stirring scripture on canvas. One day he was showing his picture of "Christ Knocking at the Door," to a friend, when the friend suddenly exclaimed, "There is one thing wrong about your picture." "What is it?" inquired the artist. "The door on which Jesus knocks has no handle." "Ah," replied Mr. Hunt, "this is not a mistake. The handle is inside. It is from within, the door must be opened. Man must take the initiative."

Yes, brothers and sisters, we are weak; we do need help; we need help in overcoming. Where should we turn for spiritual and moral strength? Should we desire to become a doctor, we do not hesitate to seek qualified doctors to train us. If our interest is in the field of law, we turn to those who are graduates in law, to become experts ourselves.

Almost all men have the goal of our Heavenly Father's presence—so why not recognize the knock? Why not seek his counsel and listen to the voice? Let's open the door and let him in. Let's

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partake abundantly of this one great source of truth and light, for his promise rings ever true:

“ . . . I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” (Rev. 21:6-7.)

After we open the door, graciously accepting the help that is so necessary to our success, the Lord gives us another great promise in the following verse, and how appropriate that it follows his promise of help, for it is unlikely that man could ever achieve this promise on his own. He goes on to say:

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (*Ibid.*, 3:21.)

Now, as the Lord draws close to us in fulfilment of his promise, his advice and counsel will be direct and clear and undeviating from that original theme which has been the very core of his message from the beginning of time. He will tell us that our overcoming can best be accomplished in terms of others; for example, the priesthood has been restored in our day. Thousands of priesthood holders are here this morning.

Brethren, what can we do for ourselves with the priesthood? We only do for others with the priesthood. We bless others, we perform ordinances for others, we perform service for others. Such is the admonition given by the Savior to all mankind. Matthew has recorded the Savior's words as follows:

“ . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matt. 25:40.)

Another great prophet, speaking from this hemisphere, expressed it in this way:

“ . . . when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.” (Mosiah 2:17.)

Selfishness and ingratitude are tools of destruction. The civilized world rocks and reels today because of selfish attitudes. I like the expression given in a poem which starts:

“Lord, help me to live from
day to day

In such a self-forgetful way
That even when I kneel to pray
My prayer shall be of others.”

And then concludes:

“Others, Lord, yes, others.
Let this my motto be.
Help me to live for others
That I may live for Thee.”

May we constantly strive to be worthy, worthy of the blessings of our Heavenly Father. None can do it alone. We must open the door wide; we must extend the arm of fellowship to those about us, forgetting self, thinking of others, always others—not waiting until tomorrow, but today—for who can tell—“If this were a bomb, where would you be?”

Brothers and sisters, I know that God lives. I know that Jesus is the Christ. This is his work; the heavens have been opened, and a prophet stands at this day to receive revelation for the peoples of this earth. I bear that testimony to you.

God grant us the vision to see the way clearly ahead is my humble prayer, in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

We have just listened to Bishop Robert L. Simpson of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. The Tabernacle Choir will now sing “Lead Kindly Light,” after which Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy will give the concluding address.

The Tabernacle Choir sang the hymn, “Lead Kindly Light.”

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy and presently serving as president of the British Mission with headquarters in London.