

Monday, April 6

Third Day

ary. I would like to share it with you today.

"Dear Brother Monson:

"I wish to thank you so much for taking such good care of my son who recently completed a mission in Canada.

"He has been an inspiration to us.

"My son was promised when he left on his mission that I would become a member of the Church before his return. This promise was, I believe, made to him by you, unknown to me.

"I am happy to report that I was baptized into the Church one week before he completed his mission and am at present time Athletic Director of the MIA and have a teaching assignment.

"My son is now attending BYU and his younger brother was also recently baptized and confirmed a member of the Church.

"May I again thank you for all the kindness and love bestowed upon my son by his brothers in the mission field during the past two years.

"Yours very truly,
"A grateful father."

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren and sisters and friends: This has been a glorious conference. The messages have been fitting for this particular day and time in which we live. I have been uplifted, benefited spiritually, and encouraged to go forward in the progress of the great work of our Lord.

When Jesus uttered the words: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3), he expressed a truth at once profound and eternal.

But truth must be sought and understood and lived—otherwise, it is useless. It does not impose itself; it waits to be discovered. It waits to be acted upon by intelligence, wise judgment; but when discovered and utilized, it places one on the road to God—to enjoy a life like unto that of God, which is eternal life. When truth is known in its

The humble prayer of faith had once again been answered.

There is a golden thread that runs through every account of faith from the beginning of the world to the present time. Abraham, Noah, the Brother of Jared, the Prophet Joseph, and countless others were obedient to the will of God. They had ears that could hear, eyes that could see, and hearts that could know and feel.

They never doubted. They trusted.

Through personal prayer, through family prayer, by trusting in God with faith, nothing wavering, we can call down to our rescue his mighty power. His call to us is as it has ever been, "Come unto me. . . ." (Matt. 11:28. Italics added.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

We have just heard from Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Council of the Twelve. We shall now hear from Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the same Council.

entirety, it makes one more Godlike, for God knows and understands all things. This blessed condition is what God wants for all his children, for he has declared: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

Truth leads to Eternal Life

Now, where shall we go to discover the truth, that, when utilized, will bring eternal life? Shall we go to the world's halls of learning, the laboratories of the sciences, the studios of art, the dens of metaphysical speculation? Was it from such institutions that Jesus derived his wisdom respecting mortal life, his understanding of eternal life? No, indeed! Although he did not condemn these interests of men, he never used them. He never even referred to them as essential to life ever-

lasting. He did refer often to the kingdom of God as the repository of that truth which makes men free, that provides one with means of well-being, perhaps important, yet incidental to the greater matters of the kingdom of God.

Jesus declared: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32.) Did he mean philosophy or the scientific theories propounded by man? Surely he was not opposed to truth no matter from what source derived, but his source of truth was divine—and it belongs to the kingdom of God. This, no doubt is the reason for his great admonition, ". . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [material goods] shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33.)

The Kingdom of God

The Master places great significance upon the "kingdom of God." And properly so. Was he not responsible for establishing it, with its divine character, here among men—for their good, for their glory and their final exaltation? He surely knew how ineffectual the institutions of men are when compared with that divine institution, the kingdom of God, as the means of ultimately perfecting mankind.

Reading the four Gospels, one is led to marvel at Jesus' numerous references to the kingdom of God. It was ever in his mind. He was constantly anxious that God's children should know of it and its significance. He is just as anxious to have his disciples and all others everywhere know and understand it in this last Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.

Truly, then, the kingdom of God is most important for all mankind to seek after. "But what is that kingdom?" one may ask.

In the Holy Scriptures, both ancient and modern, the terms "kingdom of God," "kingdom of Christ," "kingdom of heaven," are frequently used interchangeably. Yet, specifically, there are distinctions for each. It is well to be acquainted with these distinctions.

From the writings of Elder James E. Talmage we read:

"In this prospective ministration among His gathered saints, Jesus Christ is to be at once their God and their King. His government is to be that of a perfect theocracy; the laws of righteousness will be the code, and control will be administered under one authority, undisputed because indisputable." (*Articles of Faith*, p. 363, see pp. 365-368.)

Commenting upon verse 55 of section 10 of the Doctrine and Covenants: "Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven," the Prophet Joseph Smith had this to say:

"The Kingdom of Heaven is the Church. Sometimes the 'Kingdom of Heaven' means the entire domain in which the government of God has been established—the kingdom in which God is acknowledged to be the Supreme Ruler. This kingdom is, and has always been, in 'heaven.' It is now on Earth in the Church and will be extended over the whole Earth during the Millennium, and during its glorified state. But in this passage the Church especially seems to be meant. The Prophet Joseph uses the term in that sense, when he says, 'The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a mustard seed. Behold, then, is not this the Kingdom of heaven that is raising its head in the last days in the majesty of its God, even the Church of the Latter-day Saints?' (*D&C Commentary*, p. 57.)

President Brigham Young, discussing verse 11 of section 29 of the Doctrine and Covenants: "For I will reveal myself from heaven with power and great glory, with all the hosts thereof, and dwell in righteousness with men on earth a thousand years, and the wicked shall not stand," says:

"It may be asked what I mean by the Kingdom of God. The Church of Jesus Christ has been established now for many years, and the Kingdom of God has got to be established, even that Kingdom which will circumscribe all the kingdoms of this world. It will yet give laws to every nation that exists upon the Earth. This is the kingdom that Daniel, the Prophet, saw should be set up in the last days." (*Ibid.*, p. 147.)

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The late President Joseph F. Smith, defining the kingdom of God, says:

"What I mean by the kingdom of God is the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, over which the Son of God presides, and not man. That is what I mean. I mean the kingdom of which Christ is the King and not man." (*Gospel Doctrine*, p. 72.)

These great authorities make clear and dear to us the nature of the kingdom of God.

Now, what should God's children on earth expect to find in this kingdom to recognize it as his kingdom with proper authority to act?

Since Jesus has been chosen king to rule and reign in the kingdom of God, we may do well to note the character of that kingdom established by him while dwelling here among men. Having prepared the way by teaching principles necessary to man's advancement toward God-likeness, accompanied by a few simple, yet necessary, ordinances, he effected an organization devoid of pomp and pageantry, of appeal to passions, of images, idols, or prelates motivated by selfish interests or desire for the plaudits of men. He chose twelve disciples, called Apostles, with himself at the head. In due time other officials were chosen, set apart, and given authority to act in the name of the Savior, in his kingdom. (See Eph. 4:11-12.)

During his ministry, the Savior indicated that Peter was to give leadership in the kingdom after he no longer would be personally in their midst. Peter was endowed by Christ with power and authority to act for and in his name, which he did courageously and effectively. This divine organization endured until the so-called "great apostasy" when the Lord found it necessary to remove his Church from the earth.

We may expect to find in the kingdom of God today the same type of organization that Christ established when he was here among men with like officers possessing the same divine authority that those original officers received. With such an organization the kingdom of God was surely destined to prosper. The organization alone,

however, was the outward manifestation of the kingdom. In the kingdom of God there must always be found the principles, doctrines, and ordinances which belong to the kingdom established by the Savior and which must be fully accepted for citizenship therein. Without attempting to list all the principles, doctrines, and ordinances, here are a few by way of illustration:

Principles, Doctrines and Ordinances of the Kingdom

1. All people should have an adequate understanding of God and his Son Jesus Christ, who stands at the head of his kingdom on earth.

2. They must have faith in the actuality of both God and Christ, as distinct and separate individuals but united in purpose.

3. They must recognize their own status, that, having the right of choice in this finite life, they will err in judgment. To rectify such erring, it is important everyone practise the principle of repentance—that profound principle of progression and the one which, when fully achieved, guarantees God's forgiveness.

4. Willingness to submit to the divine ordinance of baptism.

5. Seek the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost in order that harmony with God's will and purposes might be established and preserved in the personal life of every soul.

6. An ardent desire to love God and his Beloved Son with all one's heart and soul and to love one's neighbor as one's self.

7. In divine authority bestowed by the kingdom of God one must find divinely authorized agents, otherwise, the kingdom is one of men, not of God.

Stemming from these essentials are other principles and ordinances, simple in application, yet divine, of unchangeable character, and ever-enduring. Unbiased attention to and consideration of them will disclose convincing evidence of their divine origin—their belonging to the kingdom of God.

What, now, is the function and power of that kingdom?

The kingdom of God may not be regarded as an end in itself. It is rather

a means in the hands of God and Christ to help bring about "the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

Since we testify that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the kingdom of God on earth, we understand that the function of one is also the function of the other, and that which is the power of one is also the power of the other.

President David O. McKay, discussing the function of the Church or kingdom of God, said:

The Function of the Kingdom

"The mission of the Church is to establish the kingdom of God upon the earth, which, in the words of Thomas Nixon Carver, 'is not a mythical but a real kingdom. It is a body of people dominated by ideals of productivity, which is mutual service. We do not strive for the things which 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 be 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 the most complete and exact knowledge of that will, in order that we may conform ourselves to it.'" (*Gospel Ideals*, p. 102.)

And again, President McKay has said:

"There are those in the world who say that jealousy, enmity, selfishness in men's hearts will always preclude the establishing of the ideal society known as the kingdom of God. No matter what doubters and scoffers say, the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ is to eliminate sin and wickedness from the hearts of men, and so to transform society that peace and good will will prevail on this earth." (*Ibid.*, p. 103.)

President Brigham Young, speaking upon the same subject, says:

"As this Kingdom of God grows, spreads, increases, and prospers in its course, it will cleanse, thoroughly purge, and purify the world from wickedness. . . .

"When the Kingdom of God is fully set up and established on the face of the earth, and takes the preeminence over all other nations and kingdoms, it will protect the people in the enjoyment of all their rights, no matter what they believe, what they profess, or what they worship. If they wish to worship a god of their own workmanship, instead of the true and living God, all right, if they will mind their own business and let other people alone." (*Discourse of Brigham Young*, p. 440.)

The late President Joseph F. Smith, following in the same channel of thought, remarked as follows:

Our Mission is to Save

"Our mission is to save, to preserve from evil, to exalt mankind, to bring light and truth into the world, to prevail upon the people of the earth to walk righteously before God, and to honor Him in their lives and with the firstfruits of all their substance and increase that their barns may be filled with plenty, and, figuratively speaking, that 'their presses may burst out with new wine.'" (CR, April 1907, p. 118.)

Kingdom of Peace

On another occasion, with the kingdom of God in mind, he said:

"We carry to the world the olive branch of peace. We present to the world the love of God, the word of the Lord, the Truth, as it has been revealed in the latter day for the redemption of the dead and for the salvation of the living. We bear no malice or evil towards the children of men. The spirit of forgiveness pervades the hearts of the Saints of God, and they do not cherish a desire or feeling of revenge toward their enemies or those who hurt or molest them or seek to make them afraid; but, on the contrary, the Spirit of the Lord has possession of their spirits, of their souls and of their thoughts; they forgive all men, and they carry no malice in their hearts toward any, no matter what they have done. . . ." (CR, April 1902, p. 2.)

Examples of such messages could be multiplied many times, illustrating the function of God's kingdom in the earth.

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Third Day

To Stand Against the Adversary

Making authoritative and mighty, beyond the power of evil to hinder or frustrate, is the divine authority of the priesthood inherent in the kingdom. It is so organized as to induce unity of purpose and when righteously used by those who possess it, guarantees the safety of the kingdom against all incursions of the adversary.

The present-day world is threatened by agencies of destruction. Darkness of mind, hearts shaken by impulses of selfishness, the prevalence of error, evil, ignorance of that which is the right and the wrong, corruption, sin, and wickedness, all these and more, now, as in the historic past, constitute the means by which human society could destroy itself. That such may not come to pass is the ardent hope of all who seek righteousness as their way of life. Their seeking will not be in vain if they turn to ". . . the kingdom of God and his righteousness . . ." (Matt. 6:33.) for a realization of their aspirations. All that the kingdom represents is opposed to the destructive forces which I have enumerated. The righteous, we are told, will inherit the earth. That condition will only be attained when the kingdom of God, through its saving power will triumph over evil and wickedness.

Truly everyone desiring salvation and exaltation are obligated sincerely to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Christ in his time of mortal existence did not select the churches of the Pharisees or Sadducees nor the Sanhedrin or any other contemporary church or organization as a basis or framework to set up the kingdom of God on earth. He referred to such religious bodies with scathing denunciation for having so far departed the right way that only a dead form of worship remained. (See Matt. 23.)

Christ's church is distinctive and apart from man-made religious institutions. In all ages his work has been established by revelation and the opening of the heavens from which source angels descended to instruct the prophets and to confer the keys and authority

of priesthood unto leaders chosen of God.

The restoration of his Church and gospel in this last dispensation is no exception as thousands of faithful men and women can and do testify.

The Gospel "for every nation, kindred, . . ."

Many thousands have testified that the kingdom of God, with its inclusion of the laws and principles provided for guidance of life towards salvation and exaltation, is that pearl of great price of which Jesus spoke in his story of the man who sold all his possessions to purchase it.

This thought suggests the value of the kingdom to every living soul. In it is nothing to sadden, to lead astray, or to degrade the children of men. Rather, therein is everything to gladden, to guide aright, to uplift the lives of all who accept it. It provides for satisfactions and joys of group and individual life alike. And that is the destined end of life, for a prophet of the Lord has said, ". . . men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25.) Possessed of that joy furnished by observing the laws, principles, and ordinances of the kingdom, everyone belonging to it may experience, unhindered, an enlargement of soul, a development which will be its own evidence and witness of life growing toward Godlikeness. Is this not a consummation devoutly to be wished? This surely must be the value of God's kingdom in the lives of all people.

Brothers and sisters and friends, I bear humble witness that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is God's kingdom on earth. It is here for a purpose, and in this last dispensation of time that purpose is a tremendous one. The obligation upon us as members of the restored Church of Jesus Christ is to see to it that this gospel is preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, that they may be left without excuse in the day of judgment. I bear you this witness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.