

Friday, September 30

First Day

ing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father." (D&C 110:1-4.)

Visitations of heavenly beings

Joseph Smith also had a visitation from John the Baptist, from Peter, James, and John, from Moses, Elijah, Moroni, and other ancient prophets of God who lived on the eastern or western hemispheres. He was not alone in being a witness to the existence of resurrected beings. Others in modern times also have seen these and have published their testimonies to the world. Those who have received the witness of the Holy Ghost and who also know that there is a resurrection and that the words of the Savior and the prophets are true and faithful are numbered in the thousands.

The Son of the Living God

This is my testimony of the subject. I testify in the name of the resurrected Redeemer that God has spoken from the heavens in this age of the world; that Jesus Christ is the son of God, the Redeemer of the world; that Joseph Smith was a prophet of the Most High

and received the revelations of God for the benefit of mankind; that angels and ancient prophets visited him and delivered to him the keys of the dispensation of the fullness of times; that Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith, Heber J. Grant, George Albert Smith—each in his time has been the successor of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that David O. McKay is now such successor. I also testify that all who receive this gospel with honest heart shall know that the doctrine is true, and if they are faithful unto death they shall come forth in the resurrection of the righteous, to live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

Certainly these scriptures give evidence that God is not dead. He lives. Jesus Christ lives; and I further testify and bear witness to the reality of the resurrection for all mortal beings, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

We have just listened to Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve. Elder Milton R. Hunter will now address us, and Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker.

Elder Milton R. Hunter

Of the First Council of the Seventy

Happiness the object of existence

"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all of God's commandments." These are the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 255-256.)

An ancient American prophet declared: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Ne. 2:25.)

Robert Louis Stevenson said, "Man's highest duty is to be happy."

Obedience to God's laws, man's highest duty

Thus it is reasonable to believe that man's highest duty is to obey the laws of the land and the laws of God in order that he might attain the happiness that he desires. Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to show us through his teachings and his life how to live an abundant life. In modern revelation, he gave us the formula by which we should live in order to be supremely happy. He declared: "For you shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God." (D&C 84:44.)

By so doing, men do not offend

other men, nor do they offend God, but live in perfect harmony and peace with each other at all times. Kindness and love predominate in all their actions. Constantly they do unto others as they desire other people to do unto them. In fact, the measure of a people's happiness comes in proportion to the amount of love they have in their hearts for their fellowmen. Also, those righteous people love God with all their hearts, might, mind, and strength. The men and women who have most nearly complied with God's commandment to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from" his mouth know the joys and sweetness derived therefrom. (See D&C 84:44.) By living this way, they have attained the condition described by the poet James Russell Lowell. To quote:

"Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it."

(James Russell Lowell, "The Vision of Sir Launfal," *One Hundred and One Famous Poems*, Chicago, 1958, p. 18.)

Satan however, has never exerted more influence among the children of men than he is exerting throughout the world today to bring about sin and misery and the destruction of the human race. Wars, strife, hate, greed, selfishness, and all sorts of evil exist everywhere. Crime is on the increase throughout the nation, especially among the youth. Murder, adultery, robbery, traffic in drugs, and numerous other crimes are reported daily in the newspapers.

Evil expressed in myriad forms

The world is in such a condition today that evil is oftentimes presented on television and radio, in the movies, in books, magazines, and newspapers as if it were virtue and good. An author recently wrote:

"No one can read and savor the kind of printed material, pictures, and shows which present lurid and sordid aspects of life and remain pure in thought and mind." ("Defining Obscenity," *Destiny*, Vol. 37 (1966), p. 150.)

Attitudes toward homosexuality have been liberalized in England, and in many cities in the United States some lawmakers, clergymen, and social leaders are clamoring for a liberal attitude in our land.

Violent race riots have occurred during recent years throughout the United States. Both white leaders and Negro leaders have been responsible for stirring up social conflicts through hate tactics. The love that Jesus Christ established as the basic element in Christianity seems to have vanished from the hearts of many people. That some are trying to replace love with a satanic doctrine is evidenced by one of its leaders: "Down with love of one's neighbor. What we want is hate. Only then shall we conquer the universe."

The spread of poisonous hate, strife, and internal conflicts has also gone into college campuses, with the result that some—even though a small minority—of the youth of our land are engaging in rioting and defiance of law. The most drastic case yet to occur was at the University of California at Berkeley. Here even some of the professors participated.

One hundred thirty-three years ago the Lord said to an American prophet, ". . . tobacco . . . is not good for man." (D&C 89:8.) Doctors and scientists now maintain that cigarettes are the principal cause of many deaths from cancer, especially of the lungs, throat, and mouth. Thus modern scientists have sustained the word of the Lord.

Word of Wisdom warning against evils and designs

Since members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accept the Word of Wisdom as a law from God to the Church, this law comes within the spiritual realm of their lives, and so the spiritual effects that tobacco has upon church members may be more disastrous than the physical damage. The use of tobacco helps to drive away the Holy Ghost and deprives one from the ordinances of the priesthood and thus from exaltation.

The devil has never found a better tool in the history of the world to destroy the happiness of human beings than liquor. It is a companion of prostitution, an associate of gambling, a friend of murder, robbery, poverty, and divorce. In fact, liquor is a companion of all the bad and sordid things one finds in life. Of course, with all of these evils come unhappiness, sorrow, regret, and grief. The use of liquor, then, results in the opposite of joy. As an ancient prophet declared: ". . . wickedness never was happiness." (Al. 41:10.)

God's laws express His love for us

God is our Father. We are his spirit children. He placed us here upon this earth and gave us the privilege of parenthood. He gave us the divine laws by which our earthly parenthood should operate: namely, the laws of love, purity of heart, chastity, celestial marriage, and family life.

The greatest joys in all of life and throughout all of eternity come in connection with the love that husbands have for wives, wives have for husbands, children have for parents, and parents have for children. The service and sacrifices that each member of the family renders to each other member are the jewels of which the joys of life are made. In fact, all the experiences of home life when lived according to God's plan bring supreme happiness into the hearts and lives of righteous family members.

As a final reward, the Lord promises that righteous people who are sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise will eventually come back into his presence and receive eternal life.

One of the most terrible counterfeits of happy family life is sexual immorality. Some people who desecrate the fountain of life by committing adultery have grief enter their hearts. The guilt of conscience oftentimes is almost unbearable. The adulterers, the whoremongers, and all who are impure in heart lose their ability for full, complete, and pure love and appreciation of the finer things of life. Their lives become filled with sorrow and shame, and if they do not repent,

eventually in the world to come they will be banished from the presence of God.

Let us quote from the prophets of the Lord on this subject. An ancient American prophet named Alma said to his son, Corianton, who had committed adultery:

"Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?" (Al. 39:5.)

From the positive viewpoint, Paul's admonition is excellent. He wrote: "If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on the things which are holy and right and pure and beautiful and good." (Phil. 4:8, as translated by A. B. Phillips.)

In modern revelation, the Lord declared:

The peace of walking "uprightly before God"

"Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distill upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

"The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth. . . ." (D&C 121:45-46.)

Our Savior declared to a modern prophet: ". . . he who doeth works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

"Let virtue garnish thy thoughts"

The peace spoken of by the Lord in this modern revelation is the peace that results from a clear conscience. It is that peace which comes when one stands void of offense against God and man. It is that peace which Christ promised his ancient apostles. Paul wrote to the Philippians: ". . . the peace of God, . . . passeth all understanding. . . ." (Phil. 4:7.)

Paul also described accurately the peace and happiness of the righteous person when he defined the fruit of the Spirit. To quote:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance . . ." (Gal. 5:22-23.)

The blessedness of obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ

If all people would accept and live the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, their hearts would throb with a sweet peace, a divine love, and an exquisite joy. Thus all covetousness, hate, greed, envy, stealing, lust, adultery, whoredoms, strife, riots, war, and all other sordid and evil acts would cease. Men would love God and man with all their hearts. A perfect condition of peace and righteousness would prevail throughout the world. The King of kings could come and reign. The only hope for this wicked world, therefore, is for its people to repent and accept and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Time and time again, the ancient American prophets declared that at the resurrection righteous people will rise from their graves into a state of everlasting happiness. Paul, the ancient apostle, described it this way:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9.)

These statements are exactly in accordance with the words in Ecclesiastes:

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (Ecc. 12:13-14.)

Let us live in such a way that we shall have inward peace and exquisite joy in such abundance that it passeth our understanding, and let us at all times give God the honor and glory for all the blessings we receive, I humbly pray. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Milton R. Hunter of the First Council of Seventy. Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve will be our concluding speaker this afternoon.

Elder Richards.

Elder LeGrand Richards Of the Council of the Twelve

It is a great pleasure, brothers and sisters, to share this wonderful conference with you. I love the Latter-day Saints. I appreciate your kindness to me as I travel to your stakes and some of the missions, and it is a glorious thing to meet you as you come here in our midst to attend this conference.

In President McKay's inspired talk this morning, after outlining some of the advantages that we have in the day in which we are privileged to live, he said, "It is a joy to live in this age." I have thought a lot about that, and I think that we all feel that way about it. And then I thought, it is not only a joy, but it is also a responsibility to know what we know.

We have listened here this afternoon to these wonderful testimonies of the brethren and have thought of the marvelous things the Lord has done in restoring his truth. Think of our responsibility! As Jesus said, "... For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. . . ." (Luke 12:48.)

To gather together all things

I think of the words of the Apostle Paul. He, like most of the prophets, saw the latter days, the days in which we are privileged to live, and he saw the marvelous things that the Lord would accomplish in our day. He said that the Lord had revealed the mystery of his will unto him. (See