

Saturday, October 1

Second Day

who were strong in purpose and in faith. They left us a noble heritage.

Today's problems are, in many respects, different from those confronting our pioneer forefathers. However, our problems are as real and important to us as their problems were to them, and it requires great strength and faith on the part of men, women, and children to successfully meet today's challenges.

We should consistently study the gospel, as it teaches us in simple terms how to develop this strength. These gospel principles are eternal. As we apply them in our lives, we are able to meet our challenges with purpose, faith, and vision, as did our forebears, and become strong instruments in the hands of the Lord in building the kingdom. Yes, as we do our part, the Lord will make us equal to the tasks that lie ahead.

I am grateful for my knowledge that God lives and that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer, that the gospel in its fullness was restored to earth

through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and that we have a great Prophet at the head of the Church today, our beloved President David O. McKay. May the Lord bless and sustain him as he continues to inspire us and give us strength.

In October 1831 the Lord through revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith said to William E. M'Lellin, "... he that is faithful shall be made strong in every place; and I, the Lord, will go with you." (D&C 66:8.)

Each of us has this same assurance: As we are faithful we shall be made strong in every place, and the Lord will go with us. May this be our great desire and blessing I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith:

We have just listened to Elder Franklin D. Richards, Assistant to the Council of the Twelve.

We shall now hear from Elder Alma Sonne, one of the Assistants to the Twelve.

Elder Alma Sonne

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

My brethren and sisters, I have just read the autobiography of Elder John A. Widtsoe in a book called *In a Sunlit Land*. I read from Chapter 15, entitled "Apostleship":

Testimony of John A. Widtsoe

"Since my boyhood I had known the restored gospel to be true. In my college days I had subjected it to every test known to me. Throughout my life it had made the days joyous. Doubt had fled. I possessed the Truth and understood, measurably, the pure and simple gospel of Jesus Christ.

"I had studied the gospel as carefully as any science. [And please remember that Brother Widtsoe was a scientist in his own right, so regarded in this country and across the sea in Europe.] The literature of the Church I had acquired and read. During my spare time, day by day, I had increased my gospel learning. And I had put gospel truth to work in my

daily life, and had never found it wanting.

"The claims of Joseph Smith the Prophet had been examined and weighed. No scientific claim had received a more thorough analysis. Everywhere the divine mission of the latter-day prophet was confirmed.

"The restored Church has been compared with other churches. Doctrine for doctrine, principle for principle, organization for organization, the churches had been placed side by side.

"Compared with the churches of the world, the Church of Jesus Christ, as restored through Joseph Smith, stood like a field of ripening grain by the side of scattering stalks."

This was John A. Widtsoe's testimony, given to the world a short time before he passed on. It was based on investigation, research, and prayerful study.

Dr. Widtsoe was not deceived. He had not only "weighed and examined"

the claims of the Church; he had also introduced the saving principles into his life, as suggested by the Savior, when he said:

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

Do the will of the Father and know the truth

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:16-17.)

This teaching is sound and logical.

Those who live the gospel and introduce it into their daily lives will find no reason to deny its power to save and uplift mankind. The gospel teaches that life after death is a reality. There is a spirit world. The antediluvians were there when Jesus taught the gospel among them.

It is a place of reunion when mortal life is ended. We will meet our loved ones there, and I believe we will recognize them and mingle with them. Death is not the end. It is a forward step in the program to bring us back to God, who is our Father.

Knowledge of truth grows with constant study

I was 16 years old when I first read the Book of Mormon. Each time I have read it since then, it has been more appealing, more satisfying, and more reassuring about the mystery of life and death and the purpose and objective of our sojourn in mortality.

The gospel plan is in operation in the world. It is being presented as it was 1,900 years ago, with similar results and manifestations.

From the beginning to the end, the Book of Mormon, which is at your disposal and mine, is a builder of faith in the true and living God and in his son, Jesus Christ. All of us need to strengthen our faith. It has given to the world a clearer concept of the Savior, his mission, and his position in the eternal plan to save and exalt God's children. Nothing has been brought forth during my life that has weakened my faith in that divine plan and in the story told by Joseph Smith the Prophet.

Slowly, but surely, prejudice and antagonism are breaking down, and the light of God's truth is penetrating the dark places of the earth. The criticism and bigotry of the past are melting away, and the purifying and ennobling power of the restored gospel is touching the hearts of humanity.

Today, 12,000 missionaries are inviting people everywhere to investigate the gospel message as thoroughly and carefully as did Elder John A. Widtsoe. He left no stone unturned to determine its validity and divinity.

Who will evaluate this great man's power and influence as a missionary in Europe and elsewhere? His literary contributions are tremendous, and his sermons and writings on gospel themes would fill volumes.

A progressive religion

The Church presents a progressive religion. We are constantly moving to higher ideals. We existed before we came to earth. Our future life is inseparably connected with this life here on earth.

Those who destroy the divinity of Christ must also contend with and destroy his servants, like Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles; like the Book of Mormon, which is a witness to all men that Jesus is the Christ. The Apostle Paul provides the same convincing evidence as the Book of Mormon that Christ lived, that he died on the cross, and that he rose from the dead. Paul heard the voice of the Redeemer; he was baptized for the remission of his sins and became a messenger of life and salvation to the Jews and the Gentiles. This great man, a servant of God, as was Dr. John A. Widtsoe, has given purpose and significance to your life and mine. His message was from God, and God enlightens this world through the prophets whom he has chosen.

May our hearts go to God. May we be true and faithful and devoted to our sacred covenants, and may we do our part to build up his kingdom upon the earth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.