

Elder Eldred G. Smith

Patriarch to the Church

In the heavens, before the earth was formed, the plan of this earth life was explained to all of us. We were then but spirit offspring of our Father and Mother in heaven.

We all learned then that through this earth life experience we would have the opportunity of going through the same type of experiences they had done and so become as they are.

The records tell us that we all shouted for joy at this glorious news.

We also learned that to attain such lofty goals, we would have to be found true and faithful in all things and withstand the trials and tests which would be put upon us by Satan. In spite of all the warnings, I'm sure we were still anxious to come to this earth.

Adam and Eve

Adam and Eve were the first to come. They were given their free agency without the capacity of knowing right from wrong until after they had partaken of the fruit of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil. . . ." (Moses 3:17.)

In consequence thereof, the Lord declared to Adam: ". . . cursed shall be the *ground for thy sake*. . . ." (Moses 4:23; italics added.) We often hear it said that Adam was cursed because he partook of the forbidden fruit. The record says "the ground" was cursed, not Adam. Then the Lord added "for thy sake." This means for his benefit; also for your benefit and mine.

Adam and Eve had been in a state of stagnation: no progress—no growth—no reproduction. Without a change, they would have remained in that state forever. It was necessary for a change to take place. This change meant that Adam and all his posterity would have to *work* and overcome obstacles to provide the necessities of life.

After Adam and Eve were driven

out of the Garden of Eden, an angel of the Lord came and explained to them the gospel plan. He explained the plan of life and salvation. He told them of a Savior who would come and redeem all mankind so that all could return to our Father in heaven.

In the Book of Moses we read: "And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient." (Moses 5:11.)

The bitter and the sweet

Modern revelation tells us: ". . . it must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet." (D&C 29:39.)

So it is with us today, we must also have the bitter in order to know the sweet. Sometimes some of us think we have the bitter and not enough of the sweet. This is normal. We all have our trials of life to *strengthen* us. Each thinks he has the hardest or most severe trials. It may be that they are the most difficult only because they are the hardest or most difficult for you. The diamond is enhanced and made more valuable with polishing. Steel is made harder and more valuable through tempering. So also opposition builds the character of man.

Meeting opposition

All progress is made by overcoming an opposing force. Lehi said to his son Jacob: "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. . . ." (2 Ne. 2:11.)

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

"God . . . shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain." (2 Ne. 2:2.)

Opposition, then, is good for us as long as we don't seek it for opposition's sake.

This reminds me of one of President Lee's favorite sayings: "It's all right to pull the cow out of the mud on Sunday, provided that you don't push him in on Saturday night."

Henry Kaiser, of the steel industry, said that if you want to find who your leaders are, load them up with work, pour it on. You'll then find who the leaders are.

It may be that's just what the Lord does with us. He too is trying to develop leaders.

I remember a brass plaque I had on the wall in my room when I was much younger. It depicted a tramp going over the top of a fence. A piece out of the seat of his pants was missing. A bulldog was in close pursuit with the missing piece of pants in his teeth. The verse read:

*"Tis easy enough to be pleasant
When life goes by with a song,
But the man worthwhile
Is the man who can smile
When everything goes dead wrong."*

Helps in overcoming

God would be very unjust if he were to turn Lucifer loose to tempt man without giving him help to overcome. God will not permit Satan to have power over you, to tempt you beyond the strength He will give you if you will *seek* and accept His help.

In the beginning, an angel of the Lord taught Adam and Eve. He instructed them in all things so they would know the will of the Lord.

I think it is the same today. We must study the scriptures, learn what God's plan is for us. We must learn the consequences of obedience and

disobedience. He has provided prophets and teachers in each dispensation to teach us God's will concerning us. He has provided us with scriptures—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and modern-day revelations. He has restored the gospel with the fulness of the priesthood. He has given us the Holy Ghost to reveal to us the will of the Father and the Son and to enlighten us in all truth. He has given us temples and the keys to officiate in the ordinances thereof.

The Prophet Joseph Smith has said: "God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now;

"Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory." (D&C 121:26-27.)

This means that even our forefathers came ahead of us for our benefit, with a promise we would render a service to them.

Yes, the Lord will help us, if we do our part. We must do something more than just resist Satan. We must render service to our fellowmen. Are you doing your part?

Blessings for the individual

God has said: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

Remember that this world was created and all the development and the progress on this earth from Adam till now have been primarily for *you* as much as anyone else.

Christ came to atone for *you*.

The gospel was restored for *you*.

The Lord will answer *your* prayers.

God is mindful of *you*, for *you* are a son or daughter of God.

It is true—each has a different life

to live and a different task to fill. Some tasks may be more important than others, but you—a son or daughter of God—are just as important to God as anyone else.

I think the song written by William Clayton is as important for our encouragement today as it was to the pioneers.

*"Come, come, ye Saints, no toil nor labor
fear;*

But with joy wend your way.

*Though hard to you this journey may
appear,*

Grace shall be as your day.

'Tis better far for us to strive

Our useless cares from us to drive;

Do this, and joy your hearts will swell—

All is well! All is well!

*"Why should we mourn or think our lot
is hard?*

'Tis not so, all is right.

*Why should we think to earn a great
reward,*

If we now shun the fight?

Gird up your loins; fresh courage take;

Our God will never us forsake;

And soon we'll have this tale to tell—

All is well! All is well!"

—Hymns, no. 13.

May the Lord bless each one of you to accomplish your goal in life, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Eldred G. Smith, Patriarch of the Church.

The congregation and the choir will now join in singing, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

After the singing Elder William H. Bennett, Assistant to the Twelve, will address us.

The congregation sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

President Lee

Elder William H. Bennett, Assistant to the Twelve will now address us. He will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle of the First Council of Seventy.

Elder William H. Bennett

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve

At one of the stake conferences to which I was assigned, a home teacher was invited to be a speaker at the general session on Sunday morning. He began by telling about a man who accidentally fell into the waters of the Niagara River some distance above the falls. As he was carried downstream by the current, he called out repeatedly, "Which way to shore? Which way to shore?" There were people along the banks on both sides of the river who saw and heard this man but they were slow to act. They noticed that he could swim and was keeping himself afloat, so they concluded that he was engaged in

some kind of a publicity stunt and gave him no further attention. However, when he reached the point where he was precariously close to the falls some of the people along the banks went into action and tried to get ropes to him to pull him from the water. But they had waited too long and he went over the brink of the falls and was killed. When his body was recovered and identification made, the horizons of those along the banks of the river were pushed back and their understandings improved and increased. Yes, the man could swim, but he could not swim with purpose or direction because he was blind.