

conductor; Robert Cundick, Roy M. Darley, and John Longhurst, tabernacle organists.

All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

President Kimball, it seems that voting has been unanimous in favor of these officers and General Authorities of the Church.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve will be our first speaker. He will be followed by Elder David B. Haight of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Elder Thomas S. Monson

Of the Council of the Twelve

Our hearts are touched by the beautiful singing of these precious Primary boys and girls. All of the children participating here this afternoon enjoy the privilege of associating once each week with others of similar age in the meetings of the Primary. There are, however, other children, equally as sweet and precious, who are not so fortunate.

Power of prayer

Some years ago while visiting the Australia Mission, I accompanied the mission president on a flight to Darwin to break ground for that city's first Latter-day Saint chapel. We stopped for refueling at the small mining community of Mt. Isa. There we were met at the terminal by a mother and her two children of Primary age. She introduced herself as Judith Louden and mentioned that she and her two children were the only members of the Church in the town. Her husband, Richard, was not a member. We held a brief meeting, where I discussed the importance of holding a home Primary session each week. I promised to send from Church headquarters the home Primary materials to assist them. There was a commitment to pray, to meet, to persevere in faith.

Upon returning to Salt Lake City, I enlisted the help of then-President

LaVern Parmley, and the home Primary materials were sent, along with a subscription to the *Children's Friend*.

Years later, while attending the stake conference of the Brisbane Australia Stake, I happened to mention in a priesthood session the plight of this faithful woman and her children. I said, "Someday I hope to learn if that home Primary succeeded and meet the non-member husband and father of that choice family." One of the brethren in the meeting stood and said, "Brother Monson, I am Richard Louden, the husband of that good woman and the father of those precious children. Prayer and Primary brought me into the Church."

The power of prayer again came to mind this past winter. I was on assignment many thousands of miles to the south in the beautiful city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. I paused by the historic Palermo Park, which graces the downtown area, and realized that this was sacred ground, for here on Christmas Day in 1925 Elder Melvin J. Ballard, an apostle of the Lord, dedicated all of South America for the preaching of the gospel. What a fulfillment to an inspired prayer is evident today as the growth of the Church in that land exceeds all expectations.

In that same park is a large statue of George Washington, the father of the United States and its first president. As I

observed the statue, my thoughts returned to another historic place where prayer played a vital role—even Valley Forge. It was at Valley Forge that this same Washington led his badly battered, ill-fed, and scantily clad troops to winter quarters.

Today, in a quiet grove at Valley Forge, there is an heroic-sized monument to Washington. He is depicted not astride a charging horse nor overlooking a battlefield of glory, but kneeling in humble prayer, calling upon the God of Heaven for divine help. To gaze upon the statue prompts the mind to remember the oft-heard expression, "A man never stands taller than when upon his knees."

Men and women of integrity, character, and purpose have ever recognized a power higher than themselves and have sought through prayer to be guided by that power. Such has it ever been. So shall it ever be.

Commanded to pray

In the very beginning, Father Adam was commanded, "Call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore." (Moses 5:8.) Adam prayed. Abraham prayed. Isaac prayed. Moses prayed, and so did every prophet pray to that God from whence came his strength. Like the sands slipping through an hourglass, generations of mankind were born, lived, and then died. At long last came that glorious event for which prophets prayed, psalmists sang, martyrs died, and all mankind hoped.

Christ taught how to pray

The birth of the babe in Bethlehem was transcendent in its beauty and singular in its significance. Jesus of Nazareth brought prophecy to fulfillment. He cleansed lepers, He restored sight, He opened ears, He renewed life, He taught truth, He saved all. In so doing, He honored His Father and provided

you and me with an example worthy of emulation.

More than any prophet or leader, He showed us how to pray. Who can fail to remember His agony in Gethsemane and that fervent prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39.) And His injunction: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." (Matt. 26:41.)

We remember His counsel: "When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. . . .

"But thou, when thou prayest, . . . pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6:5-6.)

This guiding instruction has helped troubled souls discover the peace for which they fervently yearn and earnestly hope.

Prayers are answered

Unfortunately, prosperity, abundance, honor, and praise lead some men to the false security of haughty self-assurance and the abandonment of the inclination to pray. Conversely, trial, tribulation, sickness, and death crumble the castles of men's pride and bring them to their knees to petition for power from on high.

I suppose that during the holocaust of World War II more of the people living on this earth paused to pray than at any other time in our history. Who can calculate the concern of mothers, wives, and children who pleaded for Almighty God's protecting care to be with absent sons, husbands, and fathers locked in mortal combat? Prayers are heard. Prayers are answered.

Heartwarming is the example of the mother in America who prayed for her son's well-being as the ship on which he served sailed into the bloody cauldron known as the Pacific theater of

war. Each morning she would arise from kneeling in prayer and serve as a volunteer on those production lines which became lifelines to men in battle. Could it be that a mother's own handiwork might somehow directly affect the life of a loved one? All who knew her and her family cherished the actual account of her sailor son, Elgin Staples, whose ship went down off Guadalcanal. Staples was swept over the side; but he survived, thanks to a life belt that proved, on later examination, to have been inspected, packed, and stamped back home in Akron, Ohio, by his own mother!

*I know not by what method rare,
But this I know, God answers prayer.
I know that He has given His Word,
Which tells me prayer is always heard,
And will be answered, soon or late.
And so I pray and calmly wait.*
(Eliza M. Hickock, "Prayer," in *The Best Loved Religious Poems*, ed. James Gilchrist Lawson, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933, p. 160.)

Prayer of faith

Well might the younger generation ask the question: "But what about today? Does He still hear? Does He continue to answer?" To which I promptly reply: "There is no expiration date on the Lord's injunction to pray. As we remember Him, He will remember us."

Most of the time there are no flags waving nor bands playing when prayer is answered. His miracles frequently are performed in a quiet and natural manner.

Some years ago while I was attending the Grand Junction Colorado Stake conference, the stake president asked if I would meet with a grieving mother and father whose son had announced his decision to leave his mission field after having just arrived there. When the conference throng had left, we knelt quietly in a private place—mother, fa-

ther, stake president, and I. As I prayed in behalf of all, I could hear the muffled sobs of a sorrowing mother and disappointed father.

When we arose, the father said, "Brother Monson, do you really think our Heavenly Father can alter our son's announced decision to return home before completing his mission? Why is it that now, when I am trying so hard to do what is right, my prayers are not heard?"

I responded, "Where is your son serving?"

He replied, "In Duesseldorf, Germany."

I placed my arms around that mother and father and said to them, "Your prayers have been heard and are already being answered. With more than twenty-eight stake conferences being held this day attended by the General Authorities, I was assigned to your stake. Of all the Brethren, I am the only one who has the assignment to meet with the missionaries in the Duesseldorf Germany Mission this very Thursday."

Their petition had been honored by the Lord. I was able to meet with their son. He responded to their pleadings. He remained and completed a highly successful mission.

Some years later I again visited the Grand Junction Colorado Stake. Again I met the same parents. Still the father had not qualified to have his large and beautiful family join mother and father in a sacred sealing ceremony, that this family might be a forever family. I suggested that if the family members would earnestly pray, they could qualify. I indicated that I would be pleased to officiate on that sacred occasion in the temple of God.

Mother pleaded, father strived, children urged, all prayed. The result? Let me share with you a treasured letter that their young son, Todd, placed under Daddy's pillow on Father's Day morning.

"Dad,

"I love you for what you are and

not for what you aren't. Why don't you stop smoking? Millions of people have . . . why can't you? It's harmful to your health, to your lungs, your heart. If you can't keep the Word of Wisdom you can't go to heaven with me, Skip, Brad, Marc, Jeff, Jeannie, Pam, and their families. Us kids keep the Word of Wisdom. Why can't you? You are stronger and you are a man. Dad, I want to see you in heaven. We all do. We want to be a whole family in heaven . . . not half of one.

"Dad, you and Mom ought to get two old bikes and start riding around the park every night. You are probably laughing right now, but I wouldn't be. You laugh at those old people, jogging around the park and riding bikes and walking, but they are going to outlive you. Because they are exercising their lungs, their hearts, their muscles. They are going to have the last laugh.

"Come on, Dad, be a good guy—don't smoke, drink, or anything else against our religion. We want you at our graduation. If you do quit smoking and do good stuff like us, you and Mom can go with Brother Monson and get married and sealed to us in the temple.

"Come on, Dad—Mom and us kids are just waiting for you. We want to live with you forever. We love you. You're the greatest, Dad.

Love,

Todd

"P.S. And if the rest of us wrote one of these, they'd say the same thing.

"P.P.S. Mr. Newton has quit smok-

ing. So can you. You are closer to God than Mr. Newton!"

That plea, that prayer of faith, was heard and answered. A night I shall ever treasure and long remember was when this entire family assembled in a sacred room in the beautiful temple which graces this square. Father was there. Mother was there. Every child was there. Ordinances eternal in their significance were performed. A humble prayer of gratitude brought to a close this long-awaited evening.

May we ever remember . . .

*Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.*

*Oh thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray.
(Hymns, no. 220.)*

He has taught us how to pray. That each of us will learn and live this lesson is my earnest plea and sincere prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Thomas S. Monson of the Quorum of the Twelve has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder David B. Haight of the Twelve.

Elder David B. Haight

Of the Council of the Twelve

The Savior, using every precious opportunity to teach his followers, was asked a provoking question. The disciples were wondering of their place. One asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. 18:1.) The

Lord probably held out his hand toward one of the little children in the group surrounding the Savior and drew the child to him. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."