

on the earth. They are here now. They sit here before you. Unitedly and as one voice, they testify of him and for him. They testify to you and for you, and their testimony is true.

God is no longer a remote being; he is here among us by his Holy Spirit. The Savior is no mythical person. He is a great reality and he lives. He too is here among us by his ordained representatives, the apostles and prophets.

May we have the good sense to listen to these inspired men. May we be humble enough to accept their guidance.

May we accept the invitation of

the Savior to learn of him and to do so through the righteous men he has raised up today for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying of the body of Christ. For this I humbly pray, in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Mark E. Petersen, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, also a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

President Wilford Woodruff

President Wilford Woodruff once had a remarkable experience to which I would like to refer. He first publicly mentioned the incident at general conference in October of 1880. Sixteen years later he gave further details in a discourse delivered at the Weber Stake conference, and his remarks were published in *The Deseret Weekly*. In the 1880 conference President Woodruff told of dreams he had after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith in which he conversed with the Prophet many times. He then related another dream in which he talked with Brigham Young, and this is what he said about it:

"I saw Brother Brigham and Brother Heber ride in [a] carriage ahead of the carriage in which I rode when I was on my way to attend conference; and they were dressed in the most priestly robes. When we arrived at our destination I asked Prest. Young if he would preach to us. He said, 'No, I have finished my testimony in the flesh I shall not talk to this people any more. But (said he) I have come to see you; I have come

to watch over you, and to see what the people are doing. Then (said he) I want you to teach the people—and I want you to follow this counsel yourself—that they must labor and so live as to obtain the Holy Spirit, for without this you cannot build up the kingdom; without the spirit of God you are in danger of walking in the dark, and in danger of failing to accomplish your calling as apostles and as elders in the church and kingdom of God. And, said he, Brother Joseph taught me this principle.' "

(*Journal of Discourses*, 21:318.)

President Woodruff then went on to say of that experience, as he spoke at the Weber Stake conference, essentially what I want to say today: "Every man and woman in this Church should labor to get that Spirit. We are surrounded by these evil spirits that are at war against God and against everything looking to the building up of the kingdom of God; and we need this Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome these influences." (*Deseret Weekly*, 7 Nov. 1896, p. 643.)

Missionary Experiences

Continuing his discourse, President Woodruff told of his missionary experiences. He said: "In the time of the apostasy in Kirtland . . . the Spirit of God said to me, 'You choose a partner and go straight to Fox Islands.' Well, I knew no more what was on Fox Islands than what was on Kolob. But the Lord told me to go, and I went. I chose Jonathan H. Hale, and he went with me. . . . Through the blessings of God I brought nearly a hundred from there up to Zion, at the time the Saints were driven out of Missouri into Illinois.

"So it has been all through my life. If I have undertaken to do anything, and the Lord has wanted me to do something else, He has had to tell me. When we were sent to England, we were sent by revelation. I went into the Staffordshire potteries with Brother Alfred Cordon. We were doing a splendid work, baptizing almost every night, and I thought it was the finest mission I ever was on. I went into the town of Hanley one night, and attended meeting in a large hall, which was filled to overflowing. The Spirit of the Lord came upon me and said that that was the last meeting I should hold with that people for many days. I told the people that that was the last meeting I should be with them. After the meeting, they asked me where I was going. I told them I did not know. In the morning I asked the Lord what He wanted of me. He merely said, 'Go to the south.' I got into the stage and rode eighty miles. The first man's house I stopped at was John Benbow's in Herefordshire. In half an hour after I entered the house I knew exactly why the Lord had sent me. There was a people there who had been praying for the ancient order of things. They were waiting for the Gospel as it was taught by Christ and His Apostles. The consequence

was, the first thirty days after I got there I baptized six hundred of those people. In eight month's labor in that country I brought eighteen hundred into the Church. Why? Because there was a people prepared for the Gospel, and the Lord sent me there to do that work. I have always had to give God the glory for everything good that has happened to me; for I have realized by what power it came." (*Deseret Weekly*, 7 Nov. 1896, p. 643.)

President Woodruff concludes with these words: "I refer to these things because I want you to get the same Spirit. All the Elders of Israel, whether abroad or at home, need that Spirit. . . . This is the Spirit that we must have to carry out the purposes of God on the earth. We need that more than any other gift. . . . We are in the midst of enemies, in the midst of darkness and temptation, and we need to be guided by the Spirit of God. We should pray to the Lord until we get the Comforter. This is what is promised to us when we are baptized. It is the spirit of light, of truth, and of revelation and can be with all of us at the same time." (*Deseret Weekly*, 7 Nov. 1896, p. 643.)

Developing spirituality

Developing spirituality and attuning ourselves to the highest influences of godliness is not an easy matter. It takes time and frequently involves a struggle. It will not happen by chance, but is accomplished only through deliberate effort and by calling upon God and keeping his commandments.

The Apostle Paul spent much of his life teaching and encouraging spirituality in the then far-flung missions of the world. He frequently used terminology from the sports, games, and athletic contests. He said that a Saint successfully keeping the commandments is like an athlete

winning his contest; that comparable degrees of training, exertion, obedience to the rules, self-discipline, and the will to win are involved. To the Corinthians he wrote words, which paraphrased, are to this effect: "You know (do you not?) that at the sports all the runners run the race, though only one wins the prize. Like them, run to win! Now every athlete goes into strict training. They do it to win a perishable wreath, but our wreath will last forever. For my part I run with a clear goal before me." (See 1 Cor. 9:24-26.)

Along this same line he said to Timothy, his beloved young friend and missionary companion:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only; but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Tim. 4:7-8.)

Taking the athletic contest to what was in ancient times the ultimate experience—a hand-to-hand battle to the death—Paul wrote this statement regarding such physical combat:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to

quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. 6:11-18.)

The Prophet Joseph Smith did not speak in such athletic or military terms, but he has given us perhaps the clearest statement of all on the need to become spiritual as well as the time and patience which we must recognize are part of the process. The Prophet Joseph Smith said: "We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker, and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment." (*History of the Church*, 2:8.)

Capitalize on our strengths

Part of our difficulty as we strive to acquire spirituality is the feeling that there is much to do and that we are falling far short. Perfection is something yet ahead for every one of us; but we can capitalize on our strengths, begin where we are, and seek after the happiness that can be found in pursuing the things of God. We should remember the Lord's counsel:

"Wherefore, be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out

of small things proceedeth that which is great.

“Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.” (D&C 64:33-34.)

It has always been encouraging to me that the Lord said it is the “willing and obedient [who] shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.” All of us can be willing and obedient. If the Lord had said the perfect shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days, I suppose some of us would be discouraged and give up.

The Prophet Joseph said, “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 the commandments of God.” (*History of the Church*, 5:134-35).

The place to begin is here. The time to start is now. The length of our stride need be but one step at a time. God, who has “designed our happiness,” will lead us along even as little children, and we will by that process approach perfection.

Spiritual growth

None of us has attained perfection or the zenith of spiritual growth that is possible in mortality. Every person can and must make spiritual progress. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the divine plan for that spiritual growth eternally. It is more than a code of ethics. It is more than an ideal social order. It is more than positive thinking about self-improvement and determination. The gospel is the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ with his priesthood and sustenance and with the Holy Spirit. With faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and obedience to his gospel, a step at a time improving as we go,

pleading for strength, improving our attitudes and our ambitions, we will find ourselves successfully in the fold of the Good Shepherd. That will require discipline and training and exertion and strength. But as the Apostle Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Philip. 4:13).

A modern-day revelation makes this promise: “Put your trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously; and this is my Spirit.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy;

“And then shall ye know, or by this shall you know, all things whatsoever you desire of me, which are pertaining unto things of righteousness, in faith believing in me that ye shall receive. (D&C 11:12-14.)

May we follow the counsel to so labor and so live as to obtain the Spirit of God, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Marion G. Romney

We have just listened to Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

The congregation and choir will now join in singing, “Redeemer of Israel.” After the singing, Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, will speak to us.

The congregation and chorus sang the hymn, “Redeemer of Israel.”

President Romney

Elder Royden G. Derrick, a member of the First Quorum of the