

same twenty-ninth chapter starts out like this: He said, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt [that was Jerusalem—that is where David dwelt]! add ye year to year [meaning coming generations]; let them kill sacrifices. And it shall be camped about and it shall be unto me as Ariel" (see Isa. 29:1-3.) In other words, not only did Isaiah see the destruction of the great city of Jerusalem, but he also saw the destruction of another great center here in America eleven hundred years after he made that prophecy. We read of that destruction in 2 Nephi 26 and 27, just like when he described the destruction of Babylon a hundred and seventy years before it was destroyed when he said it should never be rebuilt (see Jer. 50:9-13).

Now he said in that chapter that the wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their

prudent men shall be hid. There are so many things that have transpired in this day that the wise men of this world cannot understand. I haven't time here today to enumerate any more to you, but my heart is full of gratitude to my Heavenly Father and full of testimony by the Holy Spirit of the divinity of this work, and I bear that testimony to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

Elder LeGrand Richards, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Gene R. Cook, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

## Elder George P. Lee

Charles Dickens once wrote: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, . . . it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, . . . we had everything before us, we had nothing before us" (*A Tale of Two Cities*, New York: Washington Square Press, n.d., p. 3).

### Current world conditions

This description of a period of time in his day reminds us of some of the conditions of our day. We live in a great age of miracles and wonders. We have a higher standard of living and more education than any generation of the past. We enjoy the greatest comforts and the finest luxuries. We have more goods and better services than any other people have ever had. Our nation is the most

prosperous and powerful ever known. Indeed, this is the best of times.

But this is also the very worst of times. We are confronted by bigger problems and greater dangers than man has ever faced before. Delinquencies, crime, destructive wars, immorality, and other sins are scoring new highs. Serious disturbances are taking place in nature. We constitute the most wicked age.

The most important responsibility that the Lord has ever laid upon us is that of making the best and the most of our lives. If we make the worst of times the best of times, we will be going directly toward heaven, but if we make the best of times the worst of times, we will be going backwards. We all know and are quite aware of the Lord's miracles, teachings, and doctrines. We know of his example; yet sometimes we live far away from that ex-

ample. We live in the very best of times, yet we may be far from living his teachings and doctrines.

### **Need for divine guidance**

The scriptures clearly compare our day with the days of Noah, when the people of his time brought destruction upon themselves. It must be clear to each of us that the problem then and now is our poor relationship with the Lord. From the very beginning the Lord has tried to get man to follow divine counsel aimed at peace, prosperity, and happiness for all of us. Unfortunately, man's responses to his efforts have almost always been negative, and we continue to follow our own devices and wisdom in leading each other astray.

Jeremiah wrote, "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord" (Jer. 17:5).

Both our past and our present prove that of ourselves we lack the ability to solve our own problems. More than anything else and more than ever before, we need direction from the Lord. Jesus diagnosed our problems when he said: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," (Matt. 15:7-9.)

Again he said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me" (John 7:16).

His divine instructions gave us all the answers to any problems that might confront us. But his doctrines and teachings did not go over very well with the people in his time, nor are they going over very well in our time. They fell on deaf ears. Many people in his time, like many of us

who live in this the dispensation of the fulness of times, chose to follow the false doctrines of man. This program of substituting the doctrines of man for those taught by the Lord has been very harmful and extensive.

Today in America, it is against the law to talk about God in the schools of some states. In these schools, one must not read the Bible, one must not sing Christmas carols, and prayer is prohibited because someone's sensibility might be offended. Atheism may be taught in the schools, but not the word of God.

### **Many seek "religion of convenience"**

The sin and evil that the Lord came to free us from are, in many places, now running unchecked in many places throughout our nation and the rest of the world. Crime is at an all-time high. Sin is at an all-time high. Immorality, among the youth and the adults, is at an all-time high. Jesus came as our example. He lived a sinless life and furnished us with a working model of righteousness. His simple message was "Follow me" (Luke 9:59). He asked us to follow him in his teachings, to follow him in his righteousness, and to follow him in his love for others. Unfortunately and sadly, many have not followed him; rather, they have followed those who could find no room for his teachings, his miracles, or his doctrines. Many have made no room for him because their lives are loaded down with sin and pleasures. Others have made room for their physical comforts; they have made room to expand their educational opportunities; but they have crowded him out. Some have made room to work more hours to accumulate material possessions; still others have made room to multiply their luxury and increase their leisure time and have made room for more sports and

entertainment, but they have made no room for him. They have made room for many violations of the Sabbath day, but they have made no room for the Savior of the world—our Redeemer and Master.

Today the Lord is pleading with us through the spoken word, through the scriptures, through the Spirit, through his prophets, through the witness of faithful parents, friends, and teachers; but we still have no room for him. We have no room for his teachings and doctrines because most of us are looking for a religion of convenience—one that takes no time, costs no money, requires no effort, and fits our lives without any required changes. It is no wonder the Lord said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

### **The Lord's answer**

As we watch our government hopelessly grapple with the mighty problems of the day, perhaps we should take a look at the way the Lord would handle the problems of our day. The world in general works on the effects and results of the problems, while the Lord zeroes in on the roots and the causes. The Lord advocates preventive measures, while man attacks the problems after they have arisen. Man's answer to crime is better law enforcement, bigger and better locks on doors, bigger and better prisons, bigger and better rehabilitation, and bigger and better arms and weapons. But the Lord's answer is to love your neighbor as yourself and do good to others as you would have them do to you.

Man's answer to poverty is public welfare through food stamps, loans, guaranteed income, publicly financed housing, and other things. The Lord's answer is to teach self-reliance, to help people help themselves. Man's answer to the problem

of immorality is birth control pills, homes for unwed mothers, venereal disease clinics, sex education, and divorce counselors. The Lord's answer is to teach the virtues of chastity, love, and purity. The Lord's approach to problems and his approach to resolving them probably would not make headlines or the six o'clock news; but nevertheless, his approach would solve our nation's problems as well as the world's problems, and it would revolutionize our world.

Paul tried to teach the Ephesians how to be good Christians and good people. The lesson is also a good one for us. He said: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

"Put on the whole armour of God. . . .

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

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Eph. 6:10-11, 14, 17.)

This is not only great counsel for all of us, but it is also a great success formula. It is a great philosophy of life which all of us need if we are to become bigger than the problems to be solved in our day. Man's attempts to solve his problems by legislation, bribery, force, or education have always failed. All of his problems could easily be solved by a return to the true religion of Christ. As members of his true Church, we should lead the way in fighting for God and country, for law and order, for health and strength, for industry and courage, for truth and righteousness, and for each other.

### **Know the Savior**

We need to take the time to worship, to meditate, and to develop a more personal relationship with the

Lord. We need to get acquainted with his teachings. We need to fill our hearts with the things of the Spirit. We need to be more practical and to begin to think today what Jesus thought. We can fill our minds with our Heavenly Father's purpose and our hearts with an understanding of his ways. We can open the door of our soul and make room for the Savior to come in. The door of our heart can still be opened from within. Our invitation to the Lord to enter our hearts must come from the inside. The inspired counsel from the prophet Job should be ringing in our ears. He said, "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace" (Job 22:21).

The Lord is still saying to us as he did in his time when he declared: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

## Elder Gene R. Cook

### Miracles among the Lamanites

My family and I are presently living in South America among the Lamanites—the children of Lehi, the people of the Book of Mormon, a people of great promise. For a number of years we have been witnesses to spiritual miracles among that people:

1. We have seen thousands converted to the Lord who had his law put into their minds and written in their hearts (see Heb. 8:10).

2. We have seen them organized into numerous stakes of Zion.

3. We have truly seen them "blossom as the rose" as prophecy has been fulfilled through them (see D&C 49:24).

(Rev. 3:20-21.)

My prayer, my brothers and sisters, is that we will make the most of times the very best of times by making room for the Redeemer of the world in our personal lives. I testify that he is the living bread which came down from heaven. He is the promised Messiah and Savior of the human race. He is the eternal judge of the souls of men and conquerer of death and sin. He is our deliverer. He is our all because he gave his all for us. He is our salvation from sorrow and sin. He is Jesus the Christ! He lives! In his name, amen.

### President Marion G. Romney

Elder George P. Lee, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder Gene R. Cook, also a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy. He will be followed by Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

4. We have literally seen the Lord perform miracles among them by their faith.

Why should that be so? Why are changes in that people occurring so dramatically? The title page of the record their ancestors gave to the world, entitled the Book of Mormon, indicates that the book was "written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel." In the last chapter of the book, the prophet Moroni gives to the Lamanites farewell instructions, a portion of which contains the conditions on which individual testimonies of the truth may be obtained. The record is for all men, but from cover to cover the book is filled with prophecies concerning the Lamanites, indicating "that the