

ZION'S ADVOCATE

'And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and power of the Holy Ghost.' 1st Nephi 3:124

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OPEN THE DOOR—JESUS IS WITHOUT

"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 overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the churches." Rev. 3:20,22.

While it is true that this language was uttered to the churches of Asia, yet it is just as applicable to us today as it was to the people in that day. For the promises of God to his people are just as much in force with us as it was for them. For when Peter stood before them he made this statement, "for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord God shall call." Acts. 2:39. Therefore we can feel assured that if we open the door of our lives and let the gospel of Christ have access then will we be able to enjoy the presence of Jesus, and make Him a welcome guest in our midst. As we look around us today and see the confusion that exists in the world because of the refusal of the children of men to accept Jesus Christ, and so mold their lives after Him, it seems that it is time that those who are warned should warn their neighbors, for this is the day of God's vengeance when he will recompense fury to his adversary and require at the hand of every man an accounting for the use he has made of the talents that were entrusted to him. So it behooves us to reflect upon the use to which we have put the talent that God has given us. Some men go forth and do their best to magnify their calling and have something to show for what they have done, while others hide their ability by first one means and then another and have no increase to show as a result of their labors.

There are many ways by which men procrastinate their time and waste their talents, such as love of money, greed, and selfishness. Men who could be usefull in the building up of the Kingdom of God in the earth allow themselves to be carried away with the glory of the world with the result that burdens are heaped upon the shoulders of their associates that are grievous to bear. So it is that Jesus is standing at the door, seeking admittance. He has the remedy for our every ill, in sorrow he is our comfort. in trouble he is our friend, so why not open the door and let him

come in?

Why not clean house? Why not get things in order to receive him? For he has said, "verily I say, unto you, that I the Lord, will contend with Zion, and plead with her strong ones, and chasten her until she overcomes and is clean before me; for she shall not be moved out of her place. I the Lord have spoken it." D. & C. 87:8.

One of the places to start is to overcome the desire for the things of the world. For "no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye can not serve God and mammon." Matt. 6:24. And again, "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Jas. 4:4. "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." 1 Cor. 3:19.

When "the strong ones" of Zion, or those who are in charge of the work of the Lord seek to be on amiable terms with the world, then they are only incurring the wrath of God. We can not hold on to the church with one hand and to the things of the world with the other, for they by being so opposite and different from each other will naturally work in different directions, so that the operation of physical laws when a man stretches his arms to the utmost, he will soon be compelled to let loose of one or the other. So the issue is, will we serve God, first, last and all the time, or will we continue to seek after the things of the world? The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. The world has nothing to teach us that will help redeem Zion, except that we can learn from the lessons of the past that its ways and systems of doing things has brought confusion and chaos to those that followed blindly in her ways. It is well that we should have knowledge, but James says "if any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God," not to go to the world. Because of the many evil designs of the devil to destroy the souls of men we have in the world the systems that teach men to hold each other in bondage, and thus subvert the agency that God gave them.

Christ is at the door—arise and let him in, for he has said if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him," that He may teach you "in theory; in principle and in doctrine; in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth: the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you." Higher education? Yes, for he has said "Again I say,

hearken ye elders, (the strong ones of Zion with whom he is pleading) of my church whom I have appointed, ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put in your hands by the power of my Spirit, and ye are to be taught from on high." D. & Cov. 43:4. Where? At Yale, Harvard or Oxford? Yes, if it is to learn Psychology, Evolution etc., but if it is that which pertains to the kingdom of God on the earth and the salvation of the souls of men, then it should be in the school of the prophets, in the council of the elders of the church, through the medium of text book prepared by the church, for the church, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; for God has said that the wisdom of men should perish and the understanding of the prudent should come to naught, because he would perform a marvelous work and a wonder that would manifest his power as against the wisdom of the world.

Therefore all ye that love God, and would see the redemption of Zion, hearken to the council of God and give heed to his commandments, for Zion shall not be redeemed except by righteousness in all things. Come out of Babylon, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues, for she is full of loathsomeness and clothed with filth, and will soon come to her destruction as has been testified of by all of the prophets of God since the world began.

"COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST TO YOUR SOUL!"

This invitation is extended to all those to whom the burdens of life seem to bear heavily. It was made by Jesus Christ to the children of men that would become weary of the world and its confusion. Being the son of God he knew what the children of men needed. He knew that for hundreds of years they had been groaning and suffering under the stress of abnormal conditions that were destroying them, that were sapping the vitality and strength from their lives.

So when he extended this invitation to them it was meant to obviate the unbearable conditions of suffering humanity, and bring about his peaceful kingdom of equality and righteousness upon the earth. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden—a message, pregnant with hope, and anticipation of rest and eased burdens. Full of encouragement, something that was long sought for, now possible of realization. Backed by Him that is the giver of life, by Him that suffered and was to suffer all the passions, sorrows and cares of the world. One who knew from the experience of life itself what its burdens were. Is it not said in the Scriptures that "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation

perfect through sufferings." Heb. 2:9, 10.

Thus we see that the author and finisher of our faith, of which this message is the outgrowth, knew from experience what to offer to those who had had and would have similar burdens and cares. In another place in the scriptures one of the prophets of God spoke thus: "Return unto me, and I will return unto you." Still another place gives us this: "Thus sayeth the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls." Jer. 6:16. Now let us see what the rest of this wonderful message from the friend of suffering humanity has to say.

"Come unto me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls."

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matt. 11:28, 30.

Similar to a great many other invitations and messages sent out, in a way, isn't it; that is so far as its component parts are concerned. It tells by whom the invitation is given, the object of its being sent, and upon what condition the recipients of it should take advantage of it. Yes, it has all of this, but you say there is something else about it that gives it a distinction, and sets it apart from all other messages of its kind.

In the first place, it does not draw any distinction among men as to whom should have the privilege of enjoying the advantages that it offers, for does it not say all ye that labor and are heavy laden?—not part, not some certain class, not some certain few, but all—meaning the whole world if they would accept. In another place it says, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call." Acts 2:39., which gives us to understand that there is no individual excluded, no bounds to its time of acceptance, only that is to all, even as many as Lord God shall call, or have the privilege of hearing or receiving it.

This message is simply constructed so that the humblest need not misunderstand it, yet those who are among the most notable of the world need not be offended at the terms in which it is couched. It does not have anything written between the lines that would subtly give the man of low estate any offence, neither does the rich man have the advantage. It is to all men.

Now we might inquire, what does this invitation imply, what is the scope of its effects upon those that accept it and comply with its terms? That, my friends, is my object in presenting this matter before you in this way. You know, some people have the idea in their minds that the way Jesus gets people into his kingdom is to go and take them by force and compel them to do as he says. This is not true, for if he would do so, he would be violating one of the fundamental laws laid down by his Father that were given to perpetuate his kingdom upon the earth and insure liberty to the children of men; that is the free moral agency of man.

When he said, come unto me, he offered them

the opportunity to draw near him of their own accord because they could see the advantage by so doing. In another place he gives us a little more light upon the terms of this message. It is found in the book of St. John, 6:35. "And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth upon me shall never thirst." Now we see that by coming unto him that we shall obtain rest to our souls, we shall not hunger nor thirst.

This is further confirmed by the prophet Isaiah where he says:

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price.

"Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your souls delight in fatness. **Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live.**" Isa. 55:1, 3.

"Thus again we hear the terms of this message so clearly and simply expressed unto us by our Saviour, "Incline your ear, and come unto me; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. He that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Now let us incline our ear to this sweet pleading voice that is trying to succor us from the burdens and trials that we are daily enduring. Surely with such patient and loving persuasion we will not turn aside and refuse to learn of him what he wants us to believe in order that we might have life. Surely one who is meek and lowly as he, can teach us something that will lessen our burdens for us.

Didn't Paul, the scholar who had been educated at the feet of the great Gamaliel the perfect manner of the law, etc., Acts 22:3, bear this testimony concerning the Gospel of Christ when he was extending this same message at Rome: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land." Isa. 1:18, 19.

And I repeat again, come, let us reason together and see what the meek and lowly Nazerene has to teach us that will lighten our burdens, that will cause our souls to live, and was of such great worth that it attracted the attention of the learned Paul of Tarsus, and caused him to bear such great testimony as to its power of salvation.

Come, let us follow Jesus through the brief time that he was permitted to sojourn upon this earth among mortal man. Was he not meek and lowly? Did he not subject himself to all conditions, circumstances and environment that most of us pass through? Did he not taste of hunger, of thirst, of poverty, and riches? Did he have temptations, trials, and sorrow? I believe that he did,

and what a great victory he achieved: for he died that others might live.

Think of him coming into the world as the long looked for King of Israel who should reign upon the throne of his father David. One whose virtues the prophets had extolled. Isaiah, the prophet, said concerning him, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with justice from henceforth, even forever. (Isa. 9:67.)

This was what the Jews expected to see when Jesus came to them. They were prepared for the great and pompous entrance of the Great Prince of Peace into Jerusalem, with all the splendor and display of a king and monarch, but they had not paid attention to the prophets who had continually tried to get them to make preparation for his coming.

So when he came into the world, born of the humble virgin Mary, in a lowly manger, destined for this transitory state to be the son of a carpenter they would not receive him. No, he was the son of a carpenter, he was too lowly of birth to be a king. Yet from his youth he was gifted of God so that he could put at nought the wise men in the temple. He was able to teach them in-so-much that they were astonished at his sayings.

He was of such humble circumstances in life that upon one occasion he 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. Yet he communed with God, and was permitted to receive the vindication of his Father in Heaven as to his being the son that was sent, for a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Matt. 3:17. And again while all the rich and noble and learned were looking for his coming to be attended with great splendor and display, we find that the humble shepherds who were watching their flocks by night did not misunderstand the way he was to come; they had been shown undoubtedly because of their faith that he would come the way he did, so they were able to rejoice and glorify God upon that night when they saw the Star in the east and heard the angels sing, Peace on earth, good will to the children of men.

Again we find him upon the mount tempted by Satan with all his cunning, with all his guile, and influence, yet he had the power to resist him and cause him to depart from his presence. He endured persecution, he saw his disciples forsake and deny him, he made sacrifices for them, and finally to seal his testimony that he bore concerning the message that his Father gave him to deliver he was nailed to the cruel cross. he drank of the gall and vinegar not only literally, but from his experience with men upon the earth, and suffered death in order to provide a way by which our burdens would be made light.

(To be continued)

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NOTICE

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THE PRIEST

Brothers and sisters, I feel moved upon to have a short talk with you concerning the duties of my office and their relation to you. In the first place I wish to call attention to that part of the law of God that defines my duties. This will be found in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Commandments, paragraphs thirty-six and thirty-seven, which is as follows:

"The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort and baptise, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and also to attend to all family duties.

"And ordain other priests, teachers and deacons, and take the lead of meetings, but none of these offices is he to do when there is an elder present, but in all cases is to assist the elder."

Thus we have the duties of my office defined in the revelations given to the church.

The part of my duties that I wish to talk with you about most particularly is found in the first verse, that requires me to visit the homes of the saints and see that family prayer is held and that members exercise this gift to the best of their ability. Prayer is a wonderful thing, if we would only cultivate it more. It is the means by which we are able to approach the throne of God and obtain his favor. By the prayer of faith we can overcome the world, and undo the heavy burdens. Therefore we should not neglect so great a privilege to approach our heavenly Father.

The other day I heard a member of the Ote Indians say, "that as I look around me I can see countless members of my people, but when I close my eyes and pray, it seems as though I stand in the presence of God alone." How much better could the spirit of prayer be illustrated? We should try to get ourselves in condition, so that we can feel the same nearness and confidence to Him we do when we approach our earthly parent, and more so for He is the father of all.

Some people say that they can not pray.

That they can not express themselves like they would like to, but that should not be an excuse to a latter day saint, for we should know that it is through this means that God pours out his spirit when we pray to God for help and blessings that upon us. Then too, the scriptures are plain as to the proper mode by which we should proceed. First, we should not pray to make a show before the world, but that we might receive the blessings of God. Second, we must have within us the proper love for God and all of his creatures, or else our prayers are of no avail. Therefore we should search the scriptures diligently that we learn our duties in this respect.

Christ taught his disciples to pray after this manner, "And 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; Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward.

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

"But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what ye have need of, before ye ask him." Math. 6:5, 8. Again we are to pray for our enemies and those who despitefully use us, and this too with a spirit of forgiveness in our hearts, for if we do not forgive others their trespasses against us, our Father who is in heaven will not forgive us; for he has said ye shall forgive all men and I will forgive whomsoever I will. Let us then try to have the proper spirit in our hearts when we pray.

We are taught to pray over our families, our flocks, herds and barns, in fact, we should not neglect to call upon God to bless us in every walk of life, for if He be for us, who can be against us?

It is said that if any man is afflicted let him pray, and that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, let us cultivate this gift to the best of our ability, that we may pray vocally and in secret wherever it is necessary to call upon the Father, and if we do it with the right motive in our minds, with the spirit of God in our hearts and through much faith, then shall we see more peace and happiness in our lives than ever before.

Now there are many places that will help us to come to a more definite understanding of our duties in the scriptures that are too numerable for me to quote, but I want to exhort you to search the scriptures for they contain the gospel of Christ with all the ordinances thereof.

Therefore may God add his blessings to you and help you become a bright and shining ray of sunshine and cheer in your community as a result of this little exhortation, is my prayer.