

# *Gospel Concepts*

ROYDEN G. DERRICK

As I pondered what I should discuss with you tonight, I asked myself the question, "If I were you sitting where you are, and you were me standing where I am, what would I like to have you talk about?" I concluded that I would like you to talk about a principle that you understand now that you did not understand (but wish you had) when you were a student. That thought has prompted my subject this evening.

Years ago, Dr. Asael Woodruff, who at the time was the dean of the College of Education here at BYU, addressed the Sunday School General Board on the subject of concepts.

He told us about Johnny, who when born into the world had no concepts. Johnny walked down the street and it was raining. Someone said, "Johnny, this is rain." And thus, Johnny learned his first primary concept.

Soon the rain turned to sleet. Johnny was told, "This is sleet," and thus, he learned his second primary concept. Following that, Johnny experienced blizzard, wind, cold, heat, clouds, sun, and other meteorological phenomena, each of which for him was a new primary concept. Then he was told, "Now Johnny, you put all these things together and you have weather." This was Johnny's first secondary concept. As Johnny grew in understanding,

secondary concepts were combined to form higher concepts. His intelligence grew as his ability increased to put lower concepts together to form higher and higher concepts.

Until our family moved a few weeks ago, we had a neighbor who has become an expert at putting concepts together to form higher and higher concepts. You have probably heard of him. His name is Dr. Henry Eyring. He is considered by many to be the world's greatest physical chemist. He has received at least fifteen honorary degrees from universities throughout the world, and likely he has received more because he doesn't always tell his secretary when he is so honored, and she does the counting.

In addition, he has received twenty-eight distinguished honorary awards and medals. One of the most recent was the Wolf Award from the Israeli government, which is more coveted than the Nobel Prize because the selection is from a broader field and is made by an

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international body, which is considered to be more objective. Dr. Eyring has written more than six hundred scientific papers, which is ten times the number written by many distinguished scientists. His ability to produce meaningful papers is staggering.

Incidentally, he has consistently fulfilled his home teaching assignments each month over the years. When I was the high priests group leader in his ward, I held a home teaching report interview with him each month. I would schedule appointments on Sunday at twenty-minute intervals. One Sunday I scheduled an appointment at four o'clock with one of the high priests. He didn't show and later explained that his family had dropped in and he couldn't get away. At twenty after four, Dr. Eyring arrived to keep his scheduled appointment. We knelt in prayer before the report and then discussed each family without any extraneous conversation. We completed the report in fifteen minutes, and Dr. Eyring promptly said, "Will you please excuse me? I have four renowned scientists from Paris, France, waiting in my front room. They have come from France to visit with me, and I really shouldn't keep them waiting any longer than is necessary." That is the kind of man he is—great in the sight of man and great in the sight of God.

Intelligence is the ability to use knowledge effectively. To say that in another way, intelligence is the ability to put established concepts together and formulate higher concepts. Dr. Eyring has mastered the art of doing so in a most effective way, which has resulted in his making important contributions not only to basic research, but to applied research in various fields of endeavor for the benefit of mankind.

Did you ever realize that it is not men who rule the world, but it is concepts that rule the world. For example, let's take a look at the great American patriot, Benjamin Franklin. Mr. Franklin developed the concept of establishing a nation predicated upon the freedom of the

individual. Freedom of the individual was not a new concept, but to establish a nation predicated upon and committed to the freedom of the individual was. Ben Franklin convinced Thomas Jefferson and John Adams of the merit of the concept. They convinced the Continental Congress to adopt it, and they used it in writing the Constitution of the United States.

That concept outlived old Ben Franklin, and even today, two hundred years later, it is revolutionizing the world. It cost the British nation her colonial empire, but, with greatness in their veins, her people say, "Nevertheless, it was the right thing to do."

Several years ago, a Russian ship drew alongside a ship from the United States. A Russian soldier jumped aboard the U.S. ship and requested political asylum. The captain of the U.S. ship returned the sailor to the Russians. When the incident was reported in the United States, many of our leaders became irate because the United States captain had not upheld the concept of the freedom of the individual that is so deeply ingrained in our way of life.

One of the most effective ways to discern the intent of a person is to determine what concepts he espouses. Last October I received a telephone call from a former Utahn who is the administrative assistant to Chief Justice Burger of the United States Supreme Court. He said he had been assigned to host the chairman of the chief justices of the Soviet Union during a visit to the United States. He asked if arrangements could be made for Chairman Smirnov to tour the Church's Genealogical Library. You already know of his visit to this area. His first stop in Utah was here at BYU. He saw the well-mannered and well-groomed students with beaming faces and clear eyes, and he was impressed. I understand he spoke to you in this building, and, among other things, said, "You see, we are not monsters. We are humans."

That evening he toured the prison at the Point of the Mountain. It was family night.

Families from nearby communities are assigned to prisoners whom they visit regularly so that each prisoner can share the love of family life. The program has been so successful that the number who return to prison after their release is but a fraction of what it was before the program began. When Chairman Smirnov saw the children of the families run to the prisoners and give them a loving embrace, he thought it was staged for his benefit.

The next morning I met Chairman Smirnov in front of the Church Office Building. I asked what his reaction was to his visit at the prison. I soon found that he was the chief architect for the Soviet penal system. He gave a rather lengthy response, during which he said, "The family is weak, but the government is powerful." Concept number one!

Chairman Smirnov was an interesting person. Wherever he went he was the center of attention. He had a magnetic personality and a brilliant and well-disciplined mind. He was well informed and had the earmarks of one who had earned his high position.

We toured the Genealogical Library. As we were leaving he complimented us on its excellence. We responded that it was unfortunate we didn't have names from the Soviet Union in the Library. "No reason you can't get them," he said. We asked him if he would talk with the chief archivist of the Soviet Union. He was most agreeable.

The following day he was being hosted by a renowned family in Illinois. A friend of mine was in the group. Chairman Smirnov said to him, "If I had my way [and remember he had been to the BYU campus], I would force every man, woman, and child in the Soviet Union to become a Mormon [concept number two]—even at gunpoint [concept number three]."

Quite frankly, Mr. Smirnov, we're not so concerned about whether you look like a monster or a human, whether your nose is crooked or straight, or how you cut or part your hair.

But we are sincerely interested in what concepts you espouse.

- Do you espouse the concept of freedom of choice, or do you espouse the concept of force?

- Do you espouse the concept of government for the people, or people for the government?

- Do you espouse the concept of integrity, or do you believe that the end justifies the means?

- Do you espouse the concept of freedom of the individual, or the concept of enslavement?

- Do you espouse the concept of free agency, or do you seek to control the minds of men?

- Do you espouse the concept of a God-fearing society, or do you espouse the concept of a godless society?

You can usually determine how a man will react in a given situation if you know what concepts he supports.

One of the most difficult problems any government faces today is the temporal welfare of its people. In 1954, Sister Derrick and I attended the Second International Conference of Manufacturers in Paris, France. The effects of World War II were still evident in Germany, where some of us toured for ten days, meeting with industrial and government leaders.

We then met in Paris for three days and were joined by those who had toured other nations. A paper was drawn up, representing the conclusions of the conference.

I remember well two conclusions in particular:

(1) Governments have the responsibility to create a climate in which business can prosper, thus creating job opportunities so that people can feed themselves. (2) Governments cannot assume the responsibility for the temporal welfare of the people.

This is a concept that has not been accepted by the Western nations, and the result has been a major contributing factor to the current economic problems we face today.

In 1964, Dr. Daryl Chase, who at the time was the president of the Utah State University, and I were invited by the State Department

to go to Bolivia to establish a relationship between the people of Bolivia and the people of Utah. We arrived in La Paz, Bolivia, on 1 March 1964. A C-47 plane was made available to us, piloted by President Paz Estenssoro's personal pilot. We flew to various cities and were escorted in a van to the nearby villages on the Altiplano. After three weeks we returned home and began wondering what we could do to establish a meaningful program. We had many requests from the people of Bolivia for help. The problem was that they all wanted something for nothing, which we could not support.

Dr. Chase assigned his responsibility in the program to Dr. B. Austin Haws. Dr. Haws and I sat down one afternoon and established the criteria upon which the program should operate. We adapted the concepts of Church welfare for the Utah-Bolivia Partner's Program. For example, the program should operate both ways. We would learn from them, and they would learn from us. We would do nothing for them that they could and should do for themselves. We would do nothing that would tend to weaken character; we would not support a program that would develop dependency, but rather we would support those programs that result in self-sufficiency.

Dr. Chase arranged for Dr. Matthews, from the College of Southern Utah at Cedar City, to go to Bolivia under the USAID Program. He found that people were not shearing their sheep. He found that they were using them as status symbols and were making yarn only from the wool caught by barbed wire fences or plucked from the animal's backs. He taught them how they could shear their sheep and still have their sheep—something they never supposed could be done. He held sheep-shearing contests throughout Bolivia, which resulted in the shearing concept being quickly adopted. We raised \$1,500 and sent it to Dr. Matthews. He purchased prize sheep in Peru, brought them to Bolivia, and traded the 4-H Clubs' prize rams for the poor ones—first one for one,

then one for two, until he was trading one prize ram for four poor rams, at which time the trading became a self-sustaining concept.

We organized committees and sent our educational committee chairman to Bolivia to establish a school building program in the villages of Bolivia where the children had never before had the opportunity for an education. The minister of education agreed to furnish a school teacher for every classroom that was constructed under the program. The people of the villages did everything they could for themselves: they dug the foundations, baked adobe brick, poured the concrete foundations, laid the brick, and then stuccoed the walls. School children from Utah furnished funds to purchase the timbers and aluminum for the roofs and the wood for the doors and window frames. When the schools were completed, they contained from one to four rooms. They were attractive and of typical Spanish architecture.

One day I was invited to the McMillan Elementary School on 53rd South and 3rd East in Salt Lake City. I was advised that over a six-month period the students had gathered old newspapers, magazines, pop bottles, and rags to raise funds for the school building program. When I walked into the room there were five hundred students in the auditorium from five to twelve years of age. Every eye was riveted on me. They had worked for six months—and they had a real stake in this program. A short Bolivian skit was presented. Then they invited me to the podium and handed me a check for \$1,101.01 to complete a school in Bolivia. As I looked into the faces of those children, I couldn't hold back the tears, nor could I speak a single word. It was truly an emotional experience.

One day I was invited to the American Fork Junior High School. As Kay Allen and I entered the auditorium, the A Cappella choir began to sing the song, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be." A short

program ensued, and we were invited to the podium. A check for \$1,425 was presented to us to complete a high school in a Bolivian village. The students had earned the money by promoting a variety of projects. We thanked them. The student body then arose and with gusto sang again, "Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be." I thought I felt the timbers shake as they sang. Instead of those students spending their time creating problems for the community, they were spending their time helping their nation improve its foreign relations.

Last year, Sister Derrick and I visited Bolivia and participated in the dedication of the ninety-ninth school built under this program. This is but one example of the many programs that were instituted, all of which were consistent with the concepts of the Church welfare program. The success that came following these concepts resulted in the Utah program being an example for other states, and today that national program is the most successful self-help program in America.

The Lord knows all. He knows the pitfalls of unsound concepts. He also knows the results of sound concepts properly implemented.

We are advised to have a year's supply of food in our homes. Can you imagine the tremendous storage capacity we would have as a nation if every family in America were to follow that counsel? We could store in times of plenty, and we could consume in times of shortage, thus minimizing the problems created by supply and demand variations. Working together we could meet our needs in case of famine and shortages, problems with which other lands of the world are much more familiar than we are.

In 1974 there was an oil embargo. In Great Britain they depend on ocean transport for food. The grocery shelves were quickly emptied. Margaret Thatcher, who is not prime minister of England, announced that she was

prepared because she had food storage in her home. She was immediately criticized publicly because there was a law on the books against the hoarding of food. Can you see the fallacy in the concepts of men and the wisdom in the concepts of God?

The concept of the welfare system, which holds each of us responsible, first, for our own welfare; second, for the welfare of our family; and third, for the welfare of our neighbors, removes the waste, inefficiency, greed, and selfishness that plague our government welfare programs. The concept within the program of developing self-sufficiency builds self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-discipline, which puts us in the people-building business in a meaningful way.

If higher concepts are formed from and built upon unsound concepts, the pyramid has a weak foundation and will crumble. When it crumbles, it takes with it all the concepts it has supported, and the fall thereof can be great. The welfare program of our nation is based upon unsound concepts, which today are threatening us with economic disaster.

In the year of 1820, when the Prophet Joseph Smith received his first vision, the world believed that God was a spirit that filled the universe. Joseph Smith saw God, the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, and they were personages of flesh and bones. He saw that they had eyes to see, ears to hear, and voices to speak. They were not deaf, dumb, and blind as the world at that time imagined God to be. They spoke to Joseph in intelligent conversation. This is the same concept of God that the Bible teaches. In the book of Genesis we read, "And God said, let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." (Gen. 1:26-27; emphasis added.)

Following the Savior's crucifixion, he was resurrected and showed "himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen

of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

Man could not have been created in the image and likeness of God unless God has a body as we have. If Jesus Christ arose from the grave with a body and was seen for forty days thereafter with a body, isn't that a witness of his true nature?

This brings us to another point in our discussion of concepts. The Savior said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). How can we know the only true God when we have the wrong concept of what he is and what he looks like? Yet our eternal life is dependent upon our knowing him.

There is a very special concept the Lord has given us that all Latter-day Saint students should understand. It will improve your grades and bring you self-assurance as you come to understand and apply it. (Now you should be interested in that, shouldn't you?) It is found in section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants, verse 36. The Lord said, "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth."

The concept that the glory of God is intelligence is an important contribution that Joseph Smith made to the theology of the world. But there is much more; intelligence is light and truth. We might write a formula from that statement. Truth plus light equals intelligence, or  $T + L = I$ .

The Lord said, "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come" (D&C 93:24).

He also said,

*I am the true light and lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* [D&C 93:2; emphasis added]

*And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes,*

*which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;*

*Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.* [D&C 88:11–12; emphasis added]

And then he speaks of the reward for obedience:

*And no man receiveth a fullness unless he keepeth his commandments.*

*He that keepeth his commandments receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth and knoweth all things.* [D&C 93:27–28; emphasis added]

*For he will give unto you the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept* [D&C 98:12] *here a little, and there a little.* [D&C 128:21]

*And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.* [D&C 88:67; emphasis added]

And then the Lord said,

*Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.*

*And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.* [D&C 130:18–19]

Now I want to demonstrate to you one of the greatest concepts of all. Perhaps I could get one of you young men to help me. Will you [pointing to a young man on the first row] please come forward? What is your name?

"David Larson."

Brothers and sisters, this is David Larson. David, will you please read Genesis, chapter 1, verse 26, to the congregation?

"And God said . . ."

Who said?

"God said."

That's a pretty good source of information, isn't it?

"Sure is. 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.'"

In whose image?

"In God's image."

In God's image. Now read verse 27, will you please?

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.'"

"So God created man in his own image." Now you learned in elementary mathematics that if  $A = B$ , then  $B = A$ . Do you understand that?

"I think so."

Or in other words, if I said to you that ten pennies is equal to a dime, then I could say that a dime is equal to ten pennies, couldn't I?

"Sure could."

Now, if you were created in the image of God, that means you look like whom?

"Like God."

Like God. Now applying our little formula, if you look like God, who does God look like?

"Like me."

Now, I want you to stand over there where everyone can see you. Brethren and sisters, here is God's greatest creation. I want you to look at him closely. Do you notice that he has hair that grows. Isn't that remarkable? Barbers have been trying to accomplish that for centuries and have never yet succeeded. He has eyes that see; he has ears that hear. Isn't that remarkable? He has teeth that chew and a face that smiles, I think. Yes, he has. And he has hands that clasp and arms that hold—to which his girlfriend can attest. He has legs that walk, a heart that beats, and a nervous system that is the most delicate thing that has ever been created. And he has a brain that thinks. Man has created many marvelous things, but never has he created anything as marvelous as what you

see before you. God has withheld for himself the miracle of creating life.

Now, David, will you come back here by the microphone? I want to ask you some questions. How many temples do we have operating throughout the world? We won't count Tokyo because that comes the week after next. If I name them, you count them, will you?

"Sure will."

New Zealand; Hawaii; Oakland; Los Angeles; Mesa; St. George; Manti; Provo; Ogden; Salt Lake; Idaho Falls; Logan; Alberta, Canada; Washington, D.C.; London, England; Bern, Switzerland; and Brazil. Seattle isn't operating yet. How many do we have?

"Seventeen."

Seventeen, you say. Do we have any more?

"Those are the ones you counted."

David, what does it say on the front of the temple here in Provo?

"I'm not sure."

It says "Holiness to the Lord." And then it says something else. It says "House of the Lord." If I pass by where you live and said, this is David's house, one would conclude that this is where you live, would he not? David, will you please read D&C 97:15–17?

"'And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come unto it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God. But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples.'"

Now, do you believe what the Lord says?

"Yes, I do."

Do you believe what the prophets of God say?

"I do."

Do you believe what the Apostle Paul says?

"Yes, I do."

Then I want you to read what he says in First Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 16.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”

Now what do we mean by the Spirit of God? Let’s turn over there to the same author; he tells us what he means, starting with this verse:

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?” (1 Cor. 6:19).

How many temples are there, David?

“Many.”

Yes. Countless. So, the Spirit of God of which Paul speaks is the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost dwells within us. Now, will you please read chapter 3, verse 17?

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1 Cor. 3:17).

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Now what do we mean when we say “defile the temple of God”?

“Do anything that would disgrace.”

Yes. Now, may I say it in my own words?

“Sure.”

By taking things into our body that we should not take in; doing things with our bodies that we shouldn’t do; thinking thoughts we shouldn’t think; and speaking words we shouldn’t speak, we defile our bodies. Did it ever occur to you that there is no other way to sin? What does Paul mean when he says, “him shall God destroy.” It means his body will no longer be a temple of God. It means that when we defile our body, the Holy Ghost leaves our body and our body is no longer a temple of God—until we cleanse and purify it.

When the Holy Ghost leaves our bodies, oftentimes he leaves the door ajar—leaving it open for strange spirits to enter. Did you ever wonder why some people are so cantankerous? It’s the spirit within them.

Thank you so much, David.

Now let me mention a few more important concepts briefly. We have the concept of the Word of Wisdom. The Lord gave it to Joseph Smith 150 years ago. Now after all this time of abuse and ridicule, many periodicals today contain articles on the adverse effects that Word of Wisdom don’ts have on our bodies.

We have the concept of tithing. The Lord says concerning the payment of tithes, “And prove me now herewith, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” (Mal. 3:10).

Do you believe what the Lord says? He further said, “I the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise” (D&C 82:10).

I noticed an article in the editorial portion of the *Church News* that illustrates another conflict between concepts of man and concepts of God. A mother and her five children went grocery shopping. Pushing their cart from aisle to aisle, they all took part, apparently having a good time doing the shopping. Some wanted to buy one thing, others something else, but the list was in mother’s hands, and she kept everything under control. But a disturbed bystander looked disdainfully at the children and then assailed the mother with an intense verbal onslaught. “What right do you have in this enlightened day to have so many children? Don’t you know that a family should be limited to no more than two? What do you mean having so many children?” The mother, of course, was amazed, to say the least. She had no desire to debate with this angry stranger, so, turning away, she entered another aisle and left her assailant behind. But the incident started her on a serious line of thought. What if she had limited her family to two children? She looked at her two eldest. They were a boy and a girl. She was deeply grateful for them, but what of the other three? There were Susan and Jerry, the twins. As she looked at them and

contemplated their short five years in the family, her youngest child, Jenny, took hold of her hand. Jenny was the most affectionate of them all. If she were to do it all over again, knowing the children as she did, which of them would she have preferred to do without? The thought horrified her. Had she stopped with only two children, Jeanine, her loving little one, now but three years old, would never have graced their home. And neither would Jerry, a boy—every inch of him—and a good one. How could she ever think of being without Susan? There was a complete bond of love and fellowship among those children. They made a happy family circle. Then she thought of her husband and herself completing that circle. Would they wish to change it or reduce it if they could?

A good family is the highest expression of human life, more to be desired than riches or prestige or anything else the world has to offer. And why? Because it is the Lord's way. And did not the Psalmist say, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways"? (Ps. 145:17). But this bystander who assailed the little group in the grocery store, what of her point of view? It was man's way and reflected the philosophy of zero growth, completely contrary to the Lord's way. No wonder Isaiah, speaking under inspiration, said, "Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55:8).

So there are the two philosophies—the Lord's and man's. We have a choice. Which way shall we go? True Christians are under covenant to serve the Lord. Those covenants provide that we shall live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God. (See D&C 84:44.) His divine word provides that we shall enter honorable marriages, that we shall have children, that we shall rear them in faith and make every effort to save their souls. We are to conduct our family life in harmony with the gospel plan. We bring the commandments and the true gospel spirit into our homes, living them and doing to each other as we would be done to. When we live the gospel in the

home, we exclude the contentions that arise in some families as well as selfishness, cruelty, wrongful indulgence, and vulgarity. And as we live the gospel we bring into our homes the influence of the Holy Ghost as well as love, harmony, patience, consideration, and true worship that helps us to become like our Father in Heaven. Living the Christlike life within our home makes for the highest level of human existence. (See *Church News*, 13 Sept. 1980, p.20.)

Elder Marvin J. Ashton recently said concerning the payment of tithing and living gospel principles:

*How long has it been since you reflected upon the fact that active members of the Church do not have to pay for christenings; sacraments; baptisms; temple attendance; confessions; weddings; funerals; prostitution; mistresses; evilly-inspired magazines, books, tapes, and records; abortions; alimony; tobacco; beer; wine; champagne; drugs; tea; coffee; hard liquors of all kinds; court costs for defending misconduct; X-rated movies; and so on?*  
[Unpublished address delivered to General Authorities]

The Lord gave us a concept that is a very simple statement of conduct. It contains but three words: "Keep my commandments."

"If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)

If we keep his commandments, we accept and promote his concept and build on a solid foundation.

*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.*

*And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. [Matt. 7:24-27]*

*For if ye keep my commandments you shall receive of his fullness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace [until you receive a fullness]. [D&C 93:20]*

The concepts of men are too often made of sand. The concepts of God are eternal and everlasting. The pyramid of concepts upon which you build your life should be as the house that is built upon the rock that can withstand the rains, floods, and winds.

Have you heard the story of the wise old philosopher? One day a young man wanted to match his wits with a wise old philosopher. He said, "I'll take a bird in my hands and ask the old man if the bird is dead or alive. If he says

the bird is dead, I'll open my hands and the bird will fly away. If he says the bird is alive, I will squeeze my hands together and crush it to death."

And so he went to the top of the mountain where the wise old philosopher lived. "Old man," he said, "I hold a bird in my hands. Tell me, is it alive or is it dead?" And for a long moment the wise old philosopher looked deep into the eyes of the young man and then said, "That, my son, is up to you." And so it was. And so it is with you and me, it is up to us whether we build our lives on the concepts of men, or whether we build our lives on the concepts of God.

That our pyramid of concepts may be built on a rock with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.