

## PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

*Second Counselor in the First Presidency*

## THE NEED OF THE WORLD FOR TEACHINGS OF THE SAVIOR

Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him." (Mark 16:6.)

Thus wrote Mark concerning the greatest event in the history of mankind. Throughout the Christian world today the resurrection of Jesus Christ is being celebrated. Perhaps never before was there a greater occasion or need for the world to consider and to apply the teachings of the Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Declarations recently made by one or two rulers of nations indicate the unrest, political upheavals, the tendency to barbarism, in which "might makes right." These things are in direct opposition to the life and teachings of him whose resurrection from the grave is being celebrated today.

One man recently said: "We must arm. The watchword is this: More cannons, more ships, more airplanes, at whatever cost, with whatever means, even if it should mean wiping out all that is called civil life."

"When one is strong one is dear to one's friends, and feared by one's enemies. Since prehistoric times the shout has come down on the wave of centuries and the series of generations, 'Woe to the weak!'"

Only twenty-five years ago such mad doctrine cost the lives of nine million men. Commenting upon that holocaust a recent writer says: "Why in the name of reason and sweet mercy, had this iniquitous bedlam come to pass?" And then he answers: "The question is not new, yet it struck at me with fresh relentless force, and across my mind flashed the endless explanation advanced by human ingenuity, the talk of economic stress, of boom and slump, of unemployment and the rest; of the rise and fall of nations; the need for colonies; the survival of the fittest; the whole bag of tricks. How fatuous, how futile they all seemed! For it was clear, acutely clear. There was only one reason, one basic explanation: MAN HAD FORGOTTEN GOD! Millions now living were blind and deaf—dead indeed to the knowledge of their Creator. For countless human souls that name was nothing but a myth. For others, an inherited tradition to which lip service must be paid. For others a convenient oath, For others bland hypocrisy."

And so I say today the line is sharply drawn between the teachings of Christ to love the Lord thy God with all thy might, mind, and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself, and the proclamations and practices of autocrats, who with radical disrespect for men, and the human ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, "relegate to the limbo of old superstitions, God, the soul, and moral law."

To all who accept Christ as the Risen Lord, there can be no question

as to the error of the doctrine that "Might makes Right," that all who are weak must yield to those who are strong, or that any man possessing either political or financial power has the right to use human beings as mere things or chattels to be disposed of as any other pieces of property.

#### CHRIST'S APOSTLES WITNESSES OF THE RESURRECTION

So let us ask ourselves, and ask sincerely, is it a fact that the crucified Jesus did appear after his death as a resurrected being? Accept this as an actuality and you have at least presumptive evidence of the truth of his teachings regarding the sacredness of the individual as a child of God.

That the literal resurrection from the grave was a reality to the disciples, who knew Christ intimately, is a certainty. In their minds there was absolutely no doubt. They were witnesses of the fact. They knew because their eyes beheld, their ears heard, their hands felt the corporeal presence of the risen Redeemer. Of the value and significance of such nearness and intimacy Beverly Nichols, author of "The Fool Hath Said," writes:

The authors of the epistles were within hailing distance, historically, of Christ; at any rate, when their ideas, which they afterwards transmitted to paper, were formed, the winds had hardly had time to efface the sacred print of his steps in the sands over which he walked. The rain had hardly had time to wash away, with its callous tears, the blood from the rotting wood of the deserted cross.

Yet these men knew—I can't go on using the word 'believe' which is far too vapid and colorless—that God had descended to earth in the shape of a certain man, that this man had met an obscene and clownish death, and that the grotesque mode of his dying had redeemed mankind from sin. They knew, moreover, that he had risen from the dead on the third day and ascended into heaven.

Nearness to the event gives increased value to the evidence given by the apostles. A deeper value of their testimony lies in the fact that with Jesus' death the Apostles were stricken with discouragement and gloom. For two and a half years they had been upheld and inspired by Christ's presence. But now he was gone. They were left alone, and they seemed confused and helpless. Only John stood by the cross. Not with timidity, not with feelings of doubt, and gloom, and discouragement, is a skeptical world made to believe. Such wavering, despairing minds as the Apostles possessed on the day of the crucifixion could never have stirred people to accept an unpopular belief, and to die martyrs to the cause.

"What was it that suddenly changed these disciples to confident, fearless, heroic preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? It was the revelation that Christ had risen from the grave. His promises had been kept, his Messianic mission fulfilled."

On this point Spurgeon says: "On the evidence of these unprejudiced, unexpected, incredulous witnesses, faith in the resurrection has its impregnable foundation,

I urge the youth of the Church, students particularly, carefully to consider the testimony of these eye witnesses, whose honesty is not questioned even by skeptical criticism.

#### MARK'S TESTIMONY

The first of these to record his testimony is the one from whom I quoted in the text—Mark—who undoubtedly was in the presence of the Savior when Mark was a boy in his teens. We have no evidence that Mark joined the Church while the Savior was on the earth. Undoubtedly the Savior was in Mark's home. Mark was probably the youth who rushed into the garden of Gethsemane and warned Jesus that the soldiers were coming. At any rate we are justified in assuming that he was acquainted with the Master.

Mark does not himself recount any appearance of the risen Lord; but he testifies that the angel at the tomb announced the resurrection, and promised that the Lord would meet his disciples. From Mark we hear the glorious proclamation of the first empty tomb in all the world. For the first time in the history of man the words "Here lies" were supplanted by the divine message "He is risen." No one can doubt that Mark was not convinced in his soul of the reality of the empty tomb. To him the resurrection was not questionable—it was real; and the appearance of his Lord and Master among men was a fact established in his mind beyond the shadow of a doubt. To the proclaiming of this truth he devoted his life, and if tradition can be relied upon, he sealed his testimony with his blood.

Another who records the testimony of eye witnesses was Luke, a Gentile, or, as some think, a proselyte of Antioch in Syria, where he followed the profession of physician. (Col. 4:14.) Even some of his most severe modern critics have placed him in the first rank of an historian, and his personal contact with early apostles makes his statements of inestimable value.

What he wrote was the result of personal inquiry and investigation, and was drawn from all available sources. Particularly he interviewed and recorded the declarations of those "who from the beginning were eyes witnesses and ministers of the Word." He avers that he "accurately traced all things from the very first," so that he might "write them in order." This means that Luke obtained the testimony of these "eye witnesses" directly from themselves and not from previous narratives.

According to all trustworthy testimony, we have the Gospel of Luke as it came from his hand. In chapter 24, Luke testifies to the divine message:

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.

With equal assurance as to their accuracy we can accept his statements and witness in regard to Peter's and Paul's and other apostles' testimony regarding the resurrection. "To whom also Christ 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." Who can doubt Luke's absolute confidence in the reality of the resurrection?

It is true that neither Mark nor Luke testifies to having personally seen the risen Lord, and therefore, some urge that their recorded testimonies cannot be taken as first hand evidence. That they do not so testify, and yet were convinced that others did see Him, shows how incontrovertible was the evidence among the apostles and other disciples that the resurrection was a reality.

#### PAUL'S TESTIMONY

Fortunately, however, there is a document which does give the personal testimony of an eye witness to an appearance of Jesus after his death and burial. This personal witness also corroborates the testimony not only of the two men whom I have quoted but of others also. I refer to Saul, a Jew of Tarsus, educated at the feet of Gamaliel, a strict Pharisee, and before his conversion a bitter persecutor of all who believed in Jesus of Nazareth as having risen from the dead.

And now in the oldest authentic document in existence relating or testifying to the resurrection of Christ, we find Paul saying this to the Corinthians:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.

In addition to the ancient apostles we have the testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith who gives in an unequivocal description the following stirring testimony in relation to his first vision:

There was a light, and in that light I saw two personages standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said, pointing to the other: "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

Later, as President Grant quoted in his opening address of this Conference, the Prophet gives added evidence as follows:

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father.

\* \* \* \* \*

That he came into the world, even Jesus, to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world, and to sanctify the world, and to cleanse it from all unrighteousness; \* \* \* that through him all might be saved whom the Father had put into his power and made by him.

## LATTER-DAY SAINT BELIEF

Thus the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands with Peter, with Paul, and with James, and with all the other apostles in accepting the resurrection not only as being literally true but as the consummation of Christ's divine mission on earth. Other great religious leaders among the nations of the world since history began have taught virtue and temperance, self-mastery and service, obedience to righteousness and duty; some have taught a belief in one supreme ruler and in a hereafter, but only Christ broke the seal of the grave and revealed death as the door to immortality and eternal life.

If Christ lived after death, so shall men, each one taking the place in the next world for which he is best fitted. Since love is as eternal as life, the message of the resurrection is the most comforting, the most glamorous ever given to man; for when death takes a loved one from us, we can look with assurance into the open grave and say, "He is not here," and "He will rise again."

Resurrection and Spring are happily associated, not that there is anything in nature exactly analogous to the resurrection, but there is so much which suggests an AWAKENING thought. Like the stillness of death Old Winter has held all vegetable life in his grasp, but as Spring approaches the tender life-giving power of heat and light compels him to relinquish his grip, and what seems to have been dead comes forth in newness of life, refreshed, invigorated, strengthened after a peaceful sleep.

So it is with man. What we call death Jesus referred to as sleep. "Lazarus sleeps," he said to his disciples. "The damsel sleepeth," were his comforting words to the bereaved and sorrowing parents of a little girl. Indeed, to the Savior of the world there is no such thing as death—only life—eternal life. Truly he could say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live."

With this assurance, obedience to eternal law should be a joy, not a burden, for life is joy, life is love. It is disobedience that brings death. Obedience to Christ and his laws brings life. May each recurring Easter emphasize this truth, and fill our souls with the divine assurance that Christ is truly risen, and through him man's immortality secured, and may the day soon dawn upon the world when the manifestations of brute force and false ideals that might makes right be supplanted by the charitable, peace-loving spirit of the Risen Lord! I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

---

The Choir sang an anthem, "Inflamatus," (Margaret Stewart Hewlett, soloist).

Elder Scott B. Brown, President of the Weiser Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock.