

## ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

*Of the First Council of the Seventy*

It is a blessing to have such a fine demonstration as was just now given by the choir and their leader. When a man is left without accompaniment, it is important that he does get the right pitch, and then how glorious it is for one to feel when one starts to do his best, there comes the strength of a great organ.

I do humbly pray that the Lord will be with me and bless me.

## NEED OF LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING

I recently had the pleasure of filling a number of assignments in the East, and I am deeply impressed with one or two simple, yet I feel, great needs. I feel sincerely that among us, as well as among other people we need greater understanding and love of all people.

I once had the privilege of filling an assignment with President Anthony W. Ivins. One of the things that was on the itinerary was a special meeting with a brother who had been in error. When we arrived at our destination, we sat with the president of the stake. President Ivins began to talk and said: "You know, I was coming here, some time ago, and I had an automobile accident and 'Charlie' was the man that stopped to help. Many other cars went by, but he was the man that stopped and stayed with me until my car was running again. Do you remember when that fire broke out down in the valley? The first man there was Charlie, and I remember he was the last man to leave. And a few days later when they started subscriptions to help build that home, I noticed that Charlie was on the top of the list."

The president of the stake now broke in and said: "Say, President Ivins, do you want us to consider this man's conduct?"

"Well, what do you think about it?"

No more was said, but that afternoon in the congregation of the Saints there Charlie was sitting. What a lovely thing really to have understanding and a love of people.

## THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

I want to say a word about the Russian people. I had the good fortune when I was studying in Berlin to live for about a year with a young Russian. He was a great fellow. I did not understand him at first, but he came home one day, and in his enthusiasm he grabbed me and said: "Well, let's go up town. I sold a painting today for four hundred marks."

And we went. When we came back, he placed on the table what remained of his money, and he said: "I want to share this with you."

I think of Tolstoy, a great Russian, who paid one of the loveliest

compliments to the life of Christ and his teachings that I have ever read.

I was never so deeply impressed in the great temperance movement as when I heard in Berlin, one night, Gorky's great play, *Nights' Lodging*, an appeal for temperance. And let me say one word about this play, for it was so great in its simplicity.

The scene was an inn. People were waiting for the coming of a great personality. Finally he arrived, and they applauded him and applauded him and asked him to stand and give them a message. He seemingly had done this many times, at the inn, and he sprang upon the table. He had been drinking, but he started out with his lines. His eloquence was impressive; then, all at once the actor's mind seemed to go; his memory was gone. And all that was done to tell the story was that from his pocket a flask fell and broke upon the floor. Three bells tolled, and the play was over.

I think of Shostakovich, a young Russian in Petrograd, (now Leningrad). When the enemy came, he bravely fought, and after it was over he wrote his great Seventh Symphony which many of the world's critics have said is one of the greatest realistic movements in all the world. I stood with thousands of young men in southern California, a few years ago, out in the desert when the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra played this great symphony. It so thrilled these young men that many climbed up telephone poles that they might see the orchestra, and thousands stood for an hour and fifteen minutes with rapt attention to hear this great music.

Yes, these are voices of the Russian people. I agree that in the Kremlin there are unworthy men to represent them. The papers flood us with the story, but some day out on the plains of the Ukraine, way back in Siberia, our men shall be knocking at doors and bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ.

A moment ago I shook hands with Elder Anastasiou, one of our faithful members, a Russian by birth. We must differentiate between the present leaders and the people. We must love all peoples. That is one of the high purposes of the priesthood of God and the message of our Church as our people go into the world to preach the word of God.

#### STAND FOR THE RIGHT

I wish to make one other appeal. May God bless us that we may ever know the right and courageously stand for it. One personal application of this principle! I had the pleasure of setting apart a member of the presidency of the Texas-Louisiana Mission. After the ordinance was performed, I asked the brethren if they had something they would like to say, and one of the men, one of the leaders in that mission, said: "One day I sat in a barber shop chair, waiting. The barber took a towel as was his custom and threw it over my face. I reached to straighten it. I felt the cigars in my pocket. I

had been seriously thinking about what I had heard about the gospel of Jesus Christ and that moment there flooded through my soul the spirit of courage, and I said: 'Let this be the day.'" And he smoked no more. To know what is right and courageously stand for it, this is our opportunity.

I met just last week, in New York, a splendid Christian gentleman whom I have known through the years. He has spoken in this Tabernacle, Dan Poling. He is just home from the great conference of religious leaders at Amsterdam, Holland. He said:

"You know, Kirkham, to summarize that whole thing, there are two words that stand out, as I have also visited Berlin and other places of Europe. These two words are 'courage' and 'calm.'"

I have thought a great deal about that, "courage" and "calm."

"Probably the outstanding address," said Dan Poling, "that was made at that conference was by John Foster Dulles, adviser to Secretary Marshall, now in Paris."

Let me read you just a few words of Dulles as reported by Dan Poling, as given to the religious leaders of the world:

He warned that if their religious sessions resulted merely in theological definitions it would be a colossal failure. He spoke for peace but with words of dynamic realism.

Yes, may God preserve ever among us, throughout the earth, men who know the right and have the courage to stand for it, and may ever preserve the dignity of personality, and the strength of the voice of the people.

#### FAITH IN GOD

And finally, may God give us that other great need, faith in him. I read these words from the immortal Lincoln, which I treasure:

If it were not for my belief in an overruling Providence it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications of affairs, to keep my reason in its seat, but I am confident that the Almighty has his plans and will work them out, and whether we see it or not, they will be the wisest and the best.

In closing I bear my testimony to the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith. I never bear this testimony but what I feel in my heart I have done something worthy and lovely. God bless us that we may love all peoples, that we may know the right, then courageously stand for it, and may we continue in our faith in God and in the divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President George Albert Smith:

We have just listened to Elder Oscar A. Kirkham of the First Council of the Seventy, following him will be Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve, and following Brother Petersen will