

*Wednesday, April 6**Third Day*

but the spirit which has been present and which has touched our hearts. I do not remember all that has been said; I shall read the sermons when they are printed; but I have felt the spirit of the Church and its people who are building the kingdom of God, and in so doing are moving on toward the completion of the great plan of salvation laid out by the Father himself in the pre-existent state.

God bless us, keep us faithful and true, helpful in this great work, and may we be given the blessings of health and strength, the things we need to carry on this work, I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

Of the First Council of the Seventy

I humbly pray that I may enjoy the blessings of this hour. This has been a great conference in my personal life. I have greatly enjoyed the sessions that have taken place between the conference sessions, when great groups of friends have met on these lovely grounds. I purposely walked up to five or six groups to hear what might be the conversation and in all but one it reflected the preaching services. I rejoice in that.

APPRECIATION OF CONFERENCE

I want to express personally a word of appreciation for the centennial celebration of the Sabbath schools held Sunday evening. I was sitting by my grandson—a little fellow. When they opened the treasure box, he suddenly woke up and said, "Boy, this is now going to be good." I guess he was reflecting his grandfather's spirit. One letter from the box which Brother Royall read impressed me. Brother George Q. Cannon expressed the wish that he might be here when it was opened, and when I heard his grandson pray, I said in my heart, George Q. Cannon is here.

Also during conference time, when I visited the fine reunions of missionaries—two of which I attended—I saw two young men in one reunion meet after not having seen each other for years. They couldn't express their feeling in a handshake. They couldn't express it in words. They embraced as they met. It was beautiful to see. I went to another reunion where the place was crowded with returned missionaries, and I had another experience that greatly delighted me. Missionaries were chatting about their companionship in the missionary field, but their own tongue couldn't quite tell it, and away they went into the Maori tongue, the language of the people where they had labored as missionaries. These things have greatly impressed me: the great spirit of this occasion, the glorious sermons that have been uttered, the testimony of our President, and the narrative of his life which deeply impressed me.

"The welfare plan is here to stay." I love that sentence. I enjoyed the words of President McKay when he outlined the opportunities for quorums in the welfare work.

MISSIONARY SERVICE

And now, if I may have the inspiration of the Lord, I'll say just a word about our greatest duty. We have forty-two hundred missionaries—fine young men and women who are out in the mission field. As one of the things that you are taking home, I humbly appeal that it will be fastened upon your heart that we must hold that line of forty-two hundred missionaries. After the World War II this number grew up to five thousand. The mission presidents extended their missionary efforts, out into little Sunday schools, into little branches. They were pressed to put into service anyone, everyone, they could find. If we don't hold that extended line, then the Sunday schools and small branches will fold up. You who have had experience in missionary service know that if something isn't coming to feed and encourage these people that have accepted the gospel, although they have faith and hope in it, they require aid until they are established in the Church and until the priesthood of God can be conferred upon their leadership. I humbly pray that you will take with you an earnest desire to hold that line of glorious missionary service, for on this day when we celebrate the birth of the Church, we recall that the Prophet Joseph said, "The greatest duty we have to perform is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ." So may I, in just a few words, try to tie that in to our daily lives as we leave this conference, to do our part.

PREPARATION FOR SERVICE

On the lawn next to my home, a little fellow, four years old, was playing. His mother turned to me one day and said, "Brother Kirkham, there is our future missionary." Then I saw the little rascal go and pull his sister's hair; she started to cry; and I said, "Yes, he's the future missionary." Ruskin, the great English writer, has said, "Evil is good gone wrong. That's all it is." We must start somewhere down the line with little fellows, in our preparation for this missionary service. It is unfair to your boy to have him called suddenly, not having had your guidance and care in his preparation for missionary service. I appeal to you that you will see *that he is kept physically fit*; that he has a sound body. George Mayo of the great Mayo clinic said to me one day, "The place where spirit ends and body begins, or vice versa, I do not know. It's all together." We must see that our prospective missionaries are kept physically fit. One of the most interesting letters we received in our home was a letter from one of our boys who wrote from far-off Africa to his mother and said, "Mother, please tell me how to make 'Mormon gravy.'" So it is with

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many of your fine fellows who go out; they just try to keep themselves going on simple, plain foods since they have to do some of their own cooking. You mothers, show them how to make a stew. Show them to poach an egg; how to prepare a simple meal. Am I talking of spiritual things? Yes, for many a fine sermon and many a day of tracting have been spoiled because your boy was ill at ease physically.

Help him in his study. Recently I went to interview a young man for a mission. I found him in the field where he was plowing, and I saw one of the finest things I have witnessed in a young man's life. He was on the sulky plow, but near the front where he could constantly see it, he had fastened a passage of scripture with a clothespin. When I came up to greet him, I said, "What's this?" pointing to the paper. "Oh," he said, "ever since the bishop spoke to me, I have been studying the scriptures, Brother Kirkham." This young man was preparing so that when he arrives in his field of labor he may stand and defend his faith intelligently and be grateful for the suggestions of his father and mother.

Start to save now. What a lovely thing it is to know that through the war years and other years, these young men kept their savings that they might go on a mission. Start, after this conference, if you haven't already done so, with your son. "Here, son I'll put ten dollars away for a missionary fund, will you join me?" "Well, I'll put in a dollar," your son will say. He will do his share as far as he can. That's the practical thing, for in the Latter-day Saint Church the whole family goes on the mission, if we get the full benefits out of it.

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

May I say one other word? See *that the boy gets a chance to participate in the activities of the Church, especially the priesthood activities.* Here is a fine example. I went to visit a father one evening. He was a member of the bishopric. His boy had persuaded him to go to a basketball game with him, and all at once the telephone rang. The father turned to his son and said, "Son, I am sorry. There is a call." He named the sick person who had asked him to come to administer to him. "Well," the boy said. "what's the matter with my going with you?" "We'll see the last of the game, perhaps," and off went the father with his son to bless a brother who was sick, to stand by, if not to officiate in the administration. That's what we must do with our sons that they may rise to the glorious opportunities that are theirs later in the missionary world. Let them have the opportunity that is theirs later in the mission field. Let them have opportunities. Give them the chance. Save them from embarrassments.

HOUSE IN ORDER

Is your house in order, brothers and sisters? Are you ready if the Lord should call you or your son tomorrow? Have you trained your family that you can say to your eldest son, "Well, they've called me, son, to go on a mission." Will your son answer, "That's all right, father. Mother and I will get along all right, because you have trained us to do so?"

May God bless us that these ways may be ours. If they are, then let me read you what some young men have said to me as they reported their missions. Here are their words, I copied them from a report book:

I am at peace with myself. I know the way I want to go. Now I know the true way to happiness. I have learned to love all people. I have seen a life changed.

Then one boy said to me, making his report of his mission:

I heard a father bear his testimony in the mission field. He had had a serious sickness over a long period of time, and he bore his testimony in grateful appreciation to the Lord for his recovery, and then a miracle happened. His boy, his deaf son who hadn't heard a voice for fourteen years, arose and said, "I have heard my father's voice for the first time."

God bless us that we may prepare and do our part for the great days ahead in missionary service. May we be true to those we love that they may be a pride and a joy to us, to the Church, and to their Father in heaven, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

I sincerely trust, my brethren and sisters, that I might enjoy an interest in your faith and prayers.

This great conference has been a most impressive one. As I listened to the addresses of our beloved President George Albert Smith, President Clark, and President McKay, members of the Council of the Twelve, and all who have addressed us, and listened to the most inspiring music, the thought came into my mind, "Count your many blessings, count them one by one, and see what the Lord has done."

A BLESSED PEOPLE

We are a blessed people. We have the blessing of membership in the restored Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We enjoy a divinely authorized leadership who receive the mind and will of our Heavenly Father. We have the privilege of enjoying citizenship in a great republic. We have the privilege of associating with one