

Sunday, April 5

Second Day

**President David O. McKay:**

We shall now hear from Elder Clifford E. Young, Assistant to the Council

of the Twelve. Brother Young will be followed by President Oscar A. Kirkham, of the First Council of Seventy.

**ELDER CLIFFORD E. YOUNG***Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BRETHREN AND SISTERS, may I express to you my deep gratitude for the privilege of attending this conference.

The opening, impressive address of President Clark to which we have just listened has stimulated our faith and given us renewed hope, and I therefore trust that I shall say nothing to detract from it, for I have in my heart on this occasion to say only that which will add to the spirit of this glorious day.

There are one or two things that come to my mind as I contemplate the mission of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ: things that apply to us in our daily lives. You will remember that as the Savior hung on the cross, his suffering was such that he sweat great drops of blood, yet he offered that memorable prayer, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.)

A few days after the Savior had ascended into heaven, Peter and John went to the temple to pray. It was the ninth hour of the day, and as they entered the temple, they noticed a beggar, one who was brought to the temple everyday to ask for alms. He had been afflicted from his birth, and was unable to walk. Peter seeing him said,

... Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. (Acts 3:6-8.)

This incident created quite a sensa-

tion because later on multitudes followed Peter and John seeking to know more of the power by which this great miracle had been performed. And then Peter, recognizing that some of the very throng were those who had participated in the crucifixion said to them:

"And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." (*Ibid.*, 3:17.) We read that there were rulers with the multitude at the crucifixion. "I know that through your ignorance ye did it," is what Peter said to them; thus in accord with what the Savior had said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34.) Then Peter went on to say:

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21.)

This is an impressive lesson. It is a lesson to you and me, who have been made partakers of the truth. Much is expected of us, because we know. Jesus made it clear. Peter made it clear that in cases of ignorance, the Lord would be merciful, and kind, and just, but with those who know and who have the responsibility, it is a different matter. It is knowledge that brings responsibility.

I remember one occasion when President Grant attended one of our Alpine Stake meetings where at that time I was presiding. We called all the priesthood together and had invited members

of the Church who had been indifferent to their responsibilities, and during that meeting President Grant made a characteristic talk on the Word of Wisdom. At the close of the meeting, one of the brethren remarked that he thought President Grant was rather harsh in his appeal for Latter-day Saints to keep the Word of Wisdom. I told Brother Grant of the comment, and he replied, "I was not talking to the outsiders, I was talking to you, to Latter-day Saints who know better." I repeat, it is knowledge that brings accountability.

And so we have this lesson. The Lord is merciful and just and kind because he recognizes that there is a difference in degree, that his children are not all reared under the same environment. Some come from good homes, from Latter-day Saint homes, where they have been taught the truth and where they know, or should know, the truth. Others have come from broken homes, where there is some question in their minds as to the divinity of this work and where there is a lack of understanding of the truth and of its great power. To them the Lord is merciful and kind. That is illustrated beautifully in the story of Jonah. You will remember that the Lord had told Jonah to warn Nineveh, and he had failed in his responsibility. He thought he knew better than the Lord, and finally, after a serious experience on the sea, and being cast up on the shore by a great fish, the Lord appeared to him again and said, "Now, Jonah, you do as I told you to do." And this time Jonah went to Nineveh and warned the people that if they did not turn from their evil ways they would be destroyed. He did not understand that there was an opportunity to repent. After preaching to the people he went over on the side of a hill and sat under a gourd which the Lord had caused to grow up to protect him from the sun. By and by the gourd wilted, and as Jonah waited and the city was not destroyed, he sulked and felt sorry for himself and

the gourd. Then the Lord came to him again and said,

. . . Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night:

And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand. (Jonah 4:10-11.)

And so I say, my brothers and sisters, the Lord knows and understands the hearts of the children of men. He knows our intent, our desires, and he also knows what is expected of us. And we should know what is expected of ourselves. In harmony with this thought, I would like to read a statement that was made by Elder Albert E. Bowen from this pulpit about two years ago. He said, "The measure of a man's achievements lies not altogether in where he gets to. You have to have regard for the place from which he started; and the degree of his advancement, though he has not reached so high a place as one of his fellows, may be greater because of the handicap of the position from which he set out."

We do not all start from the same source.

Another thought in connection with this seems to me to be fundamental to repentance. The Lord has said that it is his glory and his work to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of his children. We know from our earthly experience how our hearts are drawn toward our children, and the great love and compassion we have for them even in their weaknesses. How great must be the compassion and love of our Heavenly Father for us, his children! He does not condone sin, but he exercises mercy for his children. He knows their weaknesses, and because of this understanding he exercises justice and mercy in connection with the operation of his divine law.

There is another matter to which I would like to call attention. I can only touch on it briefly. It is a mat-

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ter, however, that emphasizes the need on our part of an understanding heart toward our children and also impresses us with this fundamental doctrine of the Church of eternal life, of living again. We have a glorious privilege given to us through the restoration of the Holy Priesthood by which we are permitted to go to the temples of the Lord and we may officiate in holy ordinances where parents may be sealed with their children for time and all eternity. Have you ever stopped to think what this connotes, my brethren and sisters? It is eternal life. The very gift that was made possible on that first Easter morning through Jesus Christ, that we may live again, that we shall not only live, but that we shall also have those whom we love who are dearer to us than life itself. Think what that means. That is another of the blessings that have been vouchsafed to us through the ministry of Jesus Christ.

In this connection we as parents have an obligation to our children to help them to prepare for these blessings. I sometimes think we are a little lax in not better preparing our children for the responsibilities of temple marriages. I think bishops could do much in that field, in helping our young people to prepare for this great responsibility so that they will have understanding hearts and will appreciate the great blessings of going to the house of the Lord and making holy covenants that will preserve them and their families forever. If all the young people of the Church could be impressed with the importance of temple marriage, with all the sacredness that goes with it, the keeping of covenants, the preservation of love and virtue in every home, it would indeed be one of the greatest factors in banishing hatreds, in eliminating broken homes and all the sorrows incident thereto. It would ultimately bring peace to the world. This is another of the great blessings that come to you and me through the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Now one closing thought—my grandmother on my mother's side was a

Quaker. She joined the Church in Westchester, Pennsylvania and with her family immigrated to Nauvoo. After the martyrdom of the Prophet she was among those who moved out to Winter Quarters and then came west in 1847. I like to think of her as one of those of the "Last Wagon" that President Clark so beautifully speaks of in his book. Before her death she lived with my mother, and I remember on one occasion as we sat around the old fireplace, Grandmother seemed to be conscious of the fact that she would not be here very long. She had a strong testimony and a very deeply rooted faith. She had no fear of death. She seemed to realize fully that it was merely the passing from this life to the other side. After discussing some of the blessings of the gospel and expressing her gratitude that she and her family had been made partakers of its blessings, she remarked to my mother in her typical Quaker style, "Ibbie, when I am gone, thee must not come to the cemetery. I will not be there." I could not quite understand it then, but I do now. Reference has already been made to the statement of the angel to the women at the tomb of the Savior, "... Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5.) And I repeat, why seek ye the living among the dead? We will not be there. That's the message of hope we are speaking of and thinking of today. Our spirits are eternal. They do not die. It is the cloak that covers our spirits that we lay aside. I know, brothers and sisters, that we do not understand the processes, but that does not change the eternal truth.

Every day we learn of great discoveries that are being made—the work of the astronomers, the galaxies that are being discovered—millions of them, beyond number. This scientific age is an age of miracles, and when we contemplate them, we cannot help thinking how presumptuous of us to question the miracle of being able to lay this body away, the cloak of our spirit, but that our spirits may continue to live. I

repeat again, we will not be there because our spirits are immortal! Some day we will come back just as the Savior came back; and our bodies will be healed through the great natural processes; our spirits will again enter them; and we will become living souls. That does not mean we will live again; we have lived all the time, just as the Savior while his body was in the tomb, was preaching to those spirits in prison.

We will have responsibilities. But let us not forget that at the cemetery we are not there. I do not want to

detract from the sacredness that you feel in your heart as you go to the resting place of those whom you love, not that at all. But, brothers and sisters, there is something far and beyond it all. As Jesus was the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and lived again, so we live again eternal lives, and we will continue to live.

May God help us to appreciate this and sanctify to our good the lessons learned from this great Easter day, I pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### ELDER OSCAR A. KIRKHAM

#### *Of the First Council of the Seventy*

**I** HUMBLY pray that the Lord will bless me this Easter morning. This is truly a great day when we contemplate what is happening across the earth. In ten thousand churches, on a thousand hilltops, everywhere, men and women are declaring their faith in the divine mission of Jesus Christ. We of the Latter-day Saint Church join our voices happily with the multitudes that declare their faith in God.

One of the most striking expressions of the Savior is, "He went about doing good." With my life's work with youth, I have constantly been reminded that I must be practical. Youth lives in action, in doing. "He went about doing good."

I read also these words from Psalm 27:11: "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path." Recently in a small village in Nevada, I was called to dedicate a small, lovely chapel. The story was told by the bishop of how they had a great struggle to raise the money and do their part. He said, "The time came when we had to get the last five thousand dollars to do our part." He went before the people and literally, not figuratively, but literally took off his coat, and said, "I will not put on my coat again, with the Lord's help, until we have raised our part." And he went forward, and his family was with him. And then I saw the joy of the accom-

plishment. My heart was thrilled. People came from distant states. They rode down the valley from everywhere to be with their friends and neighbors, and when it was all over, a delightful thing happened. Although an appointment called me to hurry away to a neighboring city, as we looked back from the car window, we saw the crowd was still there, shaking hands with neighbors and friends, enjoying the loveliness of the occasion and the spirit of their accomplishment.

May we also "take off our coats," to do our part in this hour of challenge and opportunity. May I suggest one or two simple things, plain things, as David said in the Psalms, which are also the teachings of the Latter-day Saint Church?

*Help someone in need:* Rushing from one city to another to escape bombing not long ago, people by the thousands were trying to find a way to safety, in one of the cities of China. All at once in the rush the crowd crossing the bridge stopped, for someone was holding up the traffic. It was a boy. He could not cross the bridge. He heard the cry of a child that had fallen. Quickly he went to help—to help someone in need. When the child was made safe, he again hurried on his way.

Did you read the other day that on Baldy Hill fifteen American soldiers were