

## SECOND DAY

### AFTERNOON MEETING

Conference reconvened Sunday afternoon, April 5, at 2:00.

The Tabernacle Choir furnished the choral numbers for this session.

President McKay called the meeting to order promptly at the scheduled time by making the following brief statement:

**President David O. McKay:**

Members of the Church are convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah in the fifth session of the 123rd Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These services are being broadcast in the Assembly Hall and in Barratt Hall over a loud-speaking system and by television. The proceedings will be broadcast also over Station KSL, Salt Lake City, and over the stations named in the first session of this Conference, and named this morning, stations in California and Nevada.

The music for this session will be rendered by the Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of J. Spencer Cornwall, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ.

We shall begin this service by the Tabernacle Choir singing, "Sing Unto God."

The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Martin E. Christensen, President of the Mill Creek Stake.

The Tabernacle Choir sang a selection: "Sing Unto God."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder Martin E. Christensen, President of the Mill Creek Stake.

An anthem, "The Twenty-Third Psalm," was sung by the Tabernacle Choir.

**President David O. McKay:**

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon. He will be followed by Elder Alma Sonne.

### ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

#### *Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**AY I read again the beautiful words which have just been sung to you by our wonderful choir.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell

in the house of the Lord for ever. (Psalm 23.)

That is a great testimony. I am grateful that the choir sang this number, giving this testimony of the psalmist because this has been a conference of testimonies—testimony after testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, testimony after testimony to the goodness of the Lord our Father to all men who will follow him and really make him their shepherd. People who thus follow him, testify anew day by day indeed that the Lord is their shepherd; they shall not want and say, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

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I remember also that this choir has sung words from Isaiah, "All we like sheep have gone astray." (Isa. 53:6.) And then I remember this beautiful story of the Savior:

How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. (Matt. 18:12-14.)

The work of the Church is a work of conversion. This has been well demonstrated by the testimonies and the wonderful addresses which have been given here, and by the appeals which have been made for further conversions. We seek for conversion of ourselves, of our children, and of all mankind who will listen to us—conversion to the point where we and they will be willing to accept the teachings and commandments of the Lord our Savior and by following them work out our salvation. As the Lord says here, ". . . it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." (*Ibid.*, 18:14.)

But in spite of all the work that is done in the Church in the way of conversion and teaching, and so much wonderful work is done, there are some instances where people go in reverse and fall away. Sometimes they accept the teachings of false leaders and false teachers who lead them astray.

Often I have asked myself why it is that some people apostatize from the truth. I have never believed that a person falls away suddenly, all at once, any more than a person who has been righteous and honest all his life would go out and suddenly rob a bank. There is some preparatory work done in advance. There is some "softening-up" process which leads to the apostate condition. Big sins generally are pre-

ceded by little ones, and I believe that this is true with respect to people who fall away from the truth.

Seeds are sown, seeds of doubt, disbelief, distrust, disrespect. These seeds are watered; they are nurtured, and finally they become fully developed until they produce their evil fruit.

Who sows these seeds of doubt and distrust? They are sown in many ways. I might mention a few.

I have heard of a man who claims to be a very good Latter-day Saint. He claims that he loves the Church, but he also loves the world, and he lives as close as he possibly can to the line of disobedience without actually violating the letter of the law. He does not realize that he must avoid even the very appearance of evil. He does not realize, possibly, that by living as close to the line of disobedience as he can, he sows seeds of doubt and distrust in the minds of others.

There are those who live in open rebellion against the word of God and violate the commandments continuously and intentionally, and of course they always leave doubt in the minds of others, with some disrespect for them themselves.

And then there are the seeds that are sown by some of our teachers and preachers within our own organization, who like to advance some new doctrine, or some new interpretation, or some speculative theory, or advance something that is sensational, because to advance the sensational seems to feed their ego inasmuch as they become the center of a discussion.

Most of our teachers and preachers are wonderful. They teach the truth; they bring about conversions in the minds and hearts of those who listen to them. But there are these few teachers who sow seeds of doubt by speculative and unsound doctrines, and as they do so they "soften up," to use the army expression, some of their hearers who might later be taken over by the apostate teachers who come among them.

It is my full belief that whenever any of us accepts a position of any description in the Church, we accept along with it the responsibility of that office, whatsoever it may be. I believe that if a person accepts a position as a teacher in one of our organizations, or if he accepts the responsibility of preaching from the pulpit, such person accepts the responsibility which goes with that call. He becomes a representative of the Church in that position. Every teacher and every preacher therefore is duty-bound, upon accepting such a call, to represent the official views and doctrines of the Church, and to teach those official doctrines in his class or from the pulpit, with the one thought in mind that conversion is to come about in the hearts of those who listen to him. I do not believe that conversion to the truth comes through the teaching of half-truths or untruths.

Our classrooms and our assembly rooms have been built at great expense with only one thought in mind, and that is that in them we may teach the truth so that we may convert those who come there, so that they in turn will live the gospel and work out their salvation in the earth.

I do not believe that the classrooms or the pulpits of our Church are for laboratory purposes in which to experiment with new doctrines and speculative notions. They are exclusively for the use of those who are willing to convert men and women and boys and girls to the truth.

There is only one man in all the world who has the right to introduce a new doctrine to this Church, and that man is the President of the Church. So teachers, until you become the President of the Church, will you be willing to content yourselves with the present officially accepted doctrines of the Church?

I do not believe that we can escape the responsibility of starting someone off on the wrong way if we teach wrong principles. I do not believe that any of us can afford to take that responsibility.

I do not believe, therefore, that we

can bring into our classes or our sermons views and doctrines which are not accepted and officially advocated by the Church.

I do not believe that any teacher in any organization has the right to discard the prescribed lesson course and substitute in its place magazine articles, philosophical discussions, lectures, or any other extraneous matter.

I do not believe that we can bring into our classrooms or sermons the philosophies and doctrines of uninspired men of the world, no matter how well educated they may be, and present them as accepted truth.

I do not believe we should accept every theory advanced by men of science as though it were true. These men change their minds much too often for that.

I do not believe we should bring into our classes and sermons the doctrines of other churches and teach them as accepted truth.

I do not believe we should teach the doctrines of the British-Israel or similar organizations, sensational though they may be, presenting them to our people as though they were true.

I do not believe we should give time in our classes to discussions of the alleged interpretations of the measurements of the Great Pyramid of Egypt, fantastic and unreliable as they so often are.

I do not believe we should accept the current views that the lost ten tribes have been found in the northern nations of Europe, or that they have been named, indexed, and classified.

I do not believe that we can accept the peculiar notion that the mythical Odin of the North was in reality the Savior of the world performing his work among the northern nations of Europe or the ten tribes.

I do not believe we should give credence to the highly speculative theories about Book of Mormon geography.

I do not believe that there were two Hill Cumorahs, one in Central America and the other one up in New York, for

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the convenience of the Prophet Joseph Smith, so that the poor boy would not have to walk clear to Central America to get the gold plates.

I do not believe we can be good Latter-day Saints and question the integrity of Joseph Smith.

I do not believe we can be good Latter-day Saints and question the testimony of the eleven witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

I do not believe you have a testimony of the truth if you question the accuracy of the translation of the Book of Mormon.

I do not believe you have the facts or are being honest with yourself if you question the Manifesto as it appears in the Doctrine and Covenants.

I do not believe we should try to establish our personal fads as Church doctrine. I do not believe my eternal salvation will be affected in any way if I eat white bread or white sugar. I do not believe the doctrines of the Church are in any way involved in whether my whole wheat is stone-ground or steel-cut.

I do not believe we can be good Christians, regardless of the denomination, if we refuse to believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross. I do not believe anyone can be a good Christian, regardless of denomination, if he questions the reality of the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after his crucifixion.

I do not believe we can be good Christians of any denomination and reject the Old Testament. I do not believe we can be good Christians of any denomination and reject the epistles of the New Testament.

I do not believe we can be good Latter-day Saints, or that we are loyal to this Church, if we accept alleged revelations of men and women who claim to have received them for the membership of the Church when we know that the Lord designates the President of the Church as the only one on earth to whom he will reveal his mind for the Church at large.

I do not believe that we can be good Latter-day Saints or good Christians of any denomination and accept the teachings of some that death was a mistake, that it can be avoided, and that we can achieve immortality without passing through death, just by following the teachings of some false prophet.

I do not believe that we can ignore the teachings of the Savior when he said,

... there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. (3 Nephi 11:28-29.)

On the other hand, I do believe most positively that if we bring false teachings into our classes or sermons we do our people a great disservice, for we confuse their minds, we make them doubt the truth when it is given to them, and we "soften them up" for the attacks of apostate teachers who come among them.

I do believe positively that whenever we teach any speculative notion or try to unravel any mystery, or advance any doctrine not accepted by the Church, we contribute to the spiritual delinquency of those whom we influence.

I do believe that whenever we by our acts or our teachings reflect discredit upon the Church or its doctrines, we contribute to the spiritual delinquency of those about us.

I do believe that God will hold us accountable for every act and word by which we contribute to the spiritual delinquency of other people.

I do believe that the President of the Church is in very deed the mouthpiece of God on earth, the prophet, seer, and revelator of the Lord, and that he and he alone has the right and power to give to the Church any new doctrines or new interpretations of existing doctrines.

I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Eternal God, Creator of heaven and earth, that he died on the cross and was resurrected the third day, literally and physically.

I do believe positively that as we all die, even so, through the power of Jesus the resurrected Christ, we, too, will literally and physically be resurrected.

I do believe that the revealed doctrines and teachings of the Christ will save us without any additions by unauthorized persons.

I do believe that the Lord has given to the Latter-day Saints a fair amount of intelligence. I do believe that he expects us to use that intelligence in studying his revealed word and following his prophets here on earth, so that we will not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

I do believe that he expects our teachers and preachers to use the common sense he has given them to teach the simple truth which saves, rather than the speculations and theories of

men, which only confuse the mind and lead some of our people right out of the Church.

I do believe that by proper teaching of the revealed truth we can convert ourselves and our children and all others who are willing to listen to us.

I do believe that people are converted to the truth only by the truth and not through the teaching of half-truths and untruths.

I do believe that only in loyally teaching and living the true principles of the gospel can we fulfil the responsibility which God has given us, and this is my testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve has just concluded speaking. Elder Alma Sonne, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us, and Elder Sonne will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young.

### ELDER ALMA SONNE

#### *Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

**M**Y BRETHREN AND SISTERS, I hope all the teachers in the Church will have available to them, the splendid discourse delivered by Elder Mark E. Petersen. I believe the spirit of the anti-Christ is rampant in the world and is asserting itself as never before. That places upon the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints a great responsibility because it is our mission to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified.

In this great conference of the Church at this season we are celebrating two great events, as I see it. The Easter time, commemorating the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the 6th day of April, 1830. I have before me the statement made by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, relative to that first organization meeting, where six humble men met together and initiated the great

movement which is going forward so rapidly today. The Prophet writes:

Having opened the meeting by solemn prayer to Our Heavenly Father, we proceeded, according to previous commandment, to call on our brethren to know whether they accepted us as their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God, and whether they were satisfied that we should proceed and be organized as a Church according to said commandment which we had received. To these several propositions they consented by a unanimous vote. I then laid my hands upon Oliver Cowdery, and ordained him an Elder of the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," after which, he ordained me also to the office of an Elder of said Church. We then took bread, blessed it, and brake it with them; also wine, blessed it, and drank it with them. We then laid our hands on each individual member of the Church present, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be confirmed members of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us