

Monday, April 4

Third Day

sure you will be thrilled with their singing, as always.

We shall begin these services by the Brigham Young University Combined Choruses singing, "For the Strength of the Hills," under the direction of Professor Halliday. The opening prayer will be offered by Elder J. Melvin Toone, president of the Canadian Mission.

The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses sang the hymn, "For the Strength of the Hills."

The opening prayer was offered by President J. Melvin Toone of the Canadian Mission.

#### President David O. McKay:

The Brigham Young University Combined Choruses will now favor us with

"Thou Life of Life," conducted by Elder John R. Halliday, following which Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will address us.

Singing by the Combined Choruses, "Thou Life of Life."

#### President David O. McKay:

We hope, students, that the loud-speakers are arranged properly so that you may now hear clearly the messages from the Brethren. That was inspirational. (Referring to the singing.)

Our first speaker this morning is Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve. He will be followed by Elder John Longden.

### ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

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

**I**SN'T IT THRILLING, brothers and sisters, to hear these glorious young people sing praises to God and express their trust in him? It gives you a wonderful feeling of confidence, doesn't it, to know that the rising generation is made up of such marvelous young people.

Two weeks ago my wife and I had the opportunity of attending a meeting of some hundreds of M Men and Gleaner Girls, and there again we were impressed with the fact that our young people are great. Those hundreds of young people stood up in that meeting and gave the MIA theme for this year. I wish you could have heard them because they spoke with such clarity. They were in almost perfect unison, and as they said these words, it gave me a great thrill:

Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich. (D. & C. 6:7.)

As I say, hearing those voices in unison say those inspired words, moved me deeply inside. I was so thrilled that young people could stand and say and believe that "he that hath eternal life is rich."

When my wife and I were in South America recently, we had the same kind of thrill because there we saw your sons and daughters, sometimes under difficult and even adverse circumstances standing in the glory of their young manhood and womanhood, in the glory of their membership in this Church, in the glory of being missionaries for the Son of God, speak in languages previously unknown to them, bearing testimony of the restoration of the gospel of Christ. Oh, how happy we were! How humble we felt in their presence, and again came to us this great conviction that the youth of Zion are a great people.

As I reflect upon the youth of Zion, I reflect also upon the homes from which they come. I know that great homes produce great people. Those homes need not be rich in this world's goods, but if they are rich in the wisdom of God, they are rich indeed, and young people who grow up in homes such as those are great young people.

You recall that the Savior at one time said: "... every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." (Matt. 7:17.) I know that even from a good tree occasionally a piece of fruit may fall, and as the

prodigal go the way of all the earth, but that does not change the great underlying fact that "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

As I have studied your young people and mine, I have come to the conclusion that they are great because by and large they come from great homes. It has been my observation that where young people are active in the Church, as a general rule they come from homes where parents also are active in the Church.

Now, there are some exceptions, I know, but I say as a general rule great homes produce great young people. Parents who are active in the Church usually produce children who are active in the Church, again proving the truth of the Savior's words that "every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."

But I would like to read to you the rest of the Savior's words in that quotation. He said: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (*Ibid.*, 7:17.)

Now what about the meaning of those words? Do homes which are not classed as good homes produce evil young people? And if they do, who must bear the blame?

There have been many public opinion polls taken in the United States, as you know, and I suppose they have touched almost every subject under the sun. There is not very much left uncovered by the time they get through.

I have been shocked and astonished at one of these public opinion polls which indicates that there is a higher percentage of drinkers of alcoholic beverages in the age group of fifteen to thirty years than in any other age group. This particular poll indicated that sixty-seven percent of American young people from fifteen to thirty years of age use alcoholic beverages occasionally or more or less regularly.

Now these studies, and others, tell us where these young people learn to drink. Again I was astonished to learn that the majority of the American young people who drink liquor learn to drink from their own parents.

A number of studies, as I say, have been made on this subject, some of them among college students, some among

high school students, and even some elementary students have been brought into the study. One of the studies having to do with college students indicated that eighty-five percent of the drinking students have drinking parents. This same study, which included information on students who abstain from the use of liquor, said that seventy-seven percent of the students who abstain from the use of liquor have both parents who abstain from the use of liquor. Isn't that a great lesson? The majority of the drinking students drink because their parents drink. The majority of the abstaining students have parents who abstain.

One of these studies was conducted in the state of Idaho by the department of social studies of the University of Idaho, and the figures sustain the general results as obtained in other studies in eastern United States. They found that the drinking habits of students follow almost exactly the drinking habits of parents. I quote just one line from their report:

"The proportions of students who drank are approximately equal to the proportions of parents who drank with the knowledge of the students."

In eastern United States a study was made along the same lines. After the completion of the survey those who conducted it reported: "It certainly is not surprising to find a tendency for students to follow the example of their parents in deciding whether or not to drink."

Dr. Andrew C. Ivy, head of the department of clinical science at the University of Illinois, recently wrote an article in the magazine, *Life and Health*, entitled, "Why I Don't Drink." He commented on the fact that there are over sixty million drinkers in the United States, and after discussing that horrible fact, asked this question: "Who can save future citizens from drink?" He answered, "The fathers and mothers of today's children."

And then he said this: "Children, teen-agers, and college students drink and do other things that harm their bodies, characters, and lives largely because their parents do. If we are going to reverse the trend to moral decline and degeneration in our country, moth-

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ers as well as fathers are going to have to correct their own irresponsible behavior."

He goes on to say, "The question for parents to answer is: 'Has drinking alcoholic beverages contributed so much to my happiness that I want my child and all children to take the one in twenty chance of becoming an alcoholic?'"

Then he said, "Seventy percent of the chronic alcoholics in the United States started drinking as teen-agers."

In studies that have been made with regard to smoking habits, the same type of thing has been developed. It is discovered that by and large smoking parents have smoking children, and abstaining parents, by and large, have abstaining children. The same thing is true with Church activity, as I have already indicated. If parents reject religious activity, their children generally reject religious activity. If, on the other hand, as we have pointed out, parents are active and enthusiastic and faithful about their Church responsibilities, as a rule the children likewise are active.

And so we may reach some definite conclusions and say that where parents smoke they can expect their children to smoke. Where parents drink, they may expect their children to drink. Where parents deny religious activity and interest, they can expect their children to deny religious interest.

Now these same studies have gone into the questions: Why do people drink? Why do people smoke? I do not know anybody, with his eyes open, who would suppose that drinking would do him any good, or that smoking would do him any good. Even the merchants of these commodities are now changing the claims in some advertising that they are good for a person. I remember there was a time when they used to advertise that smoking was good for digestion, but they do not any more since the doctors have discovered that tobacco is one of the very worst things for your stomach, and that whether you smoke or chew the tobacco, you can get stomach ulcers from it, and you can develop cancer of the stomach from the ulcers. So tobacco companies have stopped advertising about how good for your digestion it is if you smoke cigars.

Why do people smoke, and why do they drink? According to these surveys, it is because they think it is smart. They think it is popular. They think it is the thing to do because the Joneses and others they happen to know and regard as smart also smoke or drink. For that reason they think they should take up the habit, and because parents who are blinded by this false notion of popularity lead their children, who are blinded by the bad example of their parents, they both fall into the ditch.

So we can begin to see the truth in the Savior's words, can't we, that a corrupt tree will bring forth evil fruit. I ask you parents if you have the right to gamble with the future lives and happiness of your children. If we set our children an example which is almost sure to lead to failure, what is our responsibility? If we should lead our own children into disaster, would we ever forgive ourselves?

Two weeks ago Brother [Delbert L.] Stapley and I happened to have the privilege of being in the same conference together. Brother Stapley there delivered one of his wonderful talks, and in his discussion gave me a new point of view on an old subject, and with his permission I would like to mention it here.

Brother Stapley was talking about the fact that children cannot be tempted by the devil before they are eight years of age because the Lord has not given Satan that right. Just suppose that there was a basketball game, and for eight minutes one of the teams was ruled off the floor while the remaining team stayed in there and pitched as many baskets as it could for eight minutes, and every basket would count. Just think about that.

And suppose there was a football game in which one of the teams was ruled off the field while the other made touchdowns for eight minutes, and every touchdown would count, and it could make these touchdowns without any opposition from the other team. Just think what kind of score it could develop!

You do not get that in athletics, but you do get it in the rearing of your children because during the first eight

years of their lives, Satan has no right and no power to tempt those children. If they are tempted, if they sin, you have to blame somebody else besides Satan. During those first eight years you are left in the field without the opposition of Satan in the training of your children. For eight years you can train them, mold their characters, develop their faith, and teach them to pray, and to love God, and to keep his commandments, without any interference or any opposition from Satan.

Have you ever thought of it that way? I hadn't until Brother Stapley mentioned it, but I was glad he did because, as I say, it gave me a new point of view. The first eight years of a child's life in a Latter-day Saint home form the golden age for parents in the rearing of their children—a golden age when Mother and Father may set them the proper example, and play with them, and pray with them, and enjoy them, and develop Christlike traits of character in their children without the opposition of Satan.

Have you that kind of home? In your home are you setting up the circumstances and the surroundings where-

by those children can get the most out of this golden age? Are you doing all you can while you do not have the interference of Satan to train those children? Or, on the other hand, are you careless enough so that you tempt your own children, so that you will lead them into paths of sin, so that you teach them by your own bad example how to do the things of the world?

Well, I come back again to the Savior's words: ". . . every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (Matt. 7:17.)

May our homes be good homes, from which we may send good young people, trained and reared in the gospel of Christ, is my humble prayer, in his holy name. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

He to whom you have just listened is Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve. Elder John Longden, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. Elder Longden will be followed by Elder Levi Edgar Young.

### ELDER JOHN LONGDEN

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

**M**Y DEAR brothers and sisters, I am humbly grateful as I accept this great responsibility and assignment this morning, and testify to you that without the assistance of my Heavenly Father I would not even be able to stand here. I am grateful this morning for faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am grateful this morning for faith in a divine, Living God; in the divine mission of his Son, Jesus Christ. I am grateful for faith that the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored in its fulness, and I reflect at this moment on the words of David, oftentimes referred to as the Psalmist David, as recorded in the twenty-seventh Psalm:

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalms 27:1.)

There was no fear in the heart and mind of David because I believe he was a prayerful man. He had implicit faith in God, his Father, and thus he was able to go forth in one experience as he faced the Philistine, the giant, Goliath. You will recall the great lesson there where Goliath indicated he would cut David up and feed him to the fowls and the beasts. David, even though he was small of stature by comparison, had the assistance of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, and he said to Goliath:

Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. (1 Sam. 17:45.)

And therein was the strength of David because he had not defied God. He was