

ington, 593; Wyoming, 306; and I do not know how many in these telegrams this morning.

What an inspiration! What hopes and assurances we have for the future!

These services are broadcast in the Assembly Hall and Barratt Hall, and over a public address system and by television over 18 television stations operating in Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, California, Washington, and Colorado, this morning. We welcome you all. We are likewise being heard over 14 radio stations in these western states. The names of these stations have already been mentioned over KSL. Thank you all. You have our appreciation for the time and facilities you are furnishing for this great Conference. In behalf of the membership of all the Church we thank you.

We welcome the following special visitors and regular members of the Church: you who are listening in will be pleased to know we have present Senator Wallace F. Bennett, Congressman H. Aldous Dixon, Mayor Adiel F. Stewart of Salt Lake City, President Ernest L. Wilkinson of the Brigham Young University, President A. Ray Olpin of the University of Utah, President Daryl Chase of the Utah State Agricultural College, Superintendent E. Allan Bateman, superintendent of Public Instruction, Superintendent M. Lynn Bennion of the Salt Lake City Schools, Brother LaMont Toronto, Secretary of State. Undoubtedly there are others whom we have not seen, but you are all cordially welcomed. It is glorious to meet with you and have you partake of the spirit of the Conference, and to let us partake of your spirit by your presence here.

PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

First Counselor in the First Presidency

IN THE SPIRIT of the brotherhood and the love which the gospel of our Lord inspires, I greet you this morning, my brethren and sisters and friends. The sun is shining in Salt Lake City, bringing with it good cheer to those assembled here in the conference. I hope that those who are away from us, and who listen in, are likewise happy and

The Choir this morning, as you already know, is our own Tabernacle Choir, with J. Spencer Cornwall conducting, and Alexander Schreiner at the organ, and as has been announced already by Brother Evans, the numbers that they have sung at the Broadcast and the numbers that will now be sung are from the Choir's European concert repertoire.

The Choir will now sing "The Lord's Prayer," by LeRoy Robertson, our own composer, with J. Spencer Cornwall conducting.

The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Thomas Gay Myers, president of the Las Vegas Stake.

An anthem, "The Lord's Prayer," was sung by the Tabernacle Choir.

The opening prayer was offered by President Thomas Gay Myers of the Las Vegas Stake.

President David O. McKay:

He who just offered the invocation is Elder Thomas G. Myers, president of the Las Vegas Stake.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born." Following the Choir singing, we shall hear from President Stephen L Richards.

Singing by the Choir, "For Unto Us a Child Is Born."

President David O. McKay:

President Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency will be our first speaker this morning. He will be followed by Elder LeGrand Richards.

well, rejoicing in the blessings that the Lord has so bounteously bestowed upon all.

I wish to bring you this morning a message of encouragement. I need the aid of our Father and his spirit in so doing, and I trust he will bless all of you likewise.

It is said that the Dispensation of the

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Meridian of Time opened with the words: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2) first uttered by John the Baptist and then by the Savior after his ordeal of fasting and temptation, when "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17.)

It is interesting to contemplate the intonation of voice used in the pronouncement of these first portentous words. I have heard them repeated in tones of a piercing proclamation to convey the impression of a stern command and authoritative exhortation. Undoubtedly they were meant to be all three—a penetrating pronouncement, a command, and an exhortation. But I like to think that there was also an intonation in the voice of our Lord, as he spoke these words, indicative of entreaty and kindly solicitude to the erring ones to whom the words were addressed.

A part of the mission of our Savior was to bring the element of mercy to the rigorous, exacting, hard-hearted people among whom his mission began. When he taught forbearance and kindly, merciful consideration for human frailty and weakness, he was accused of violating and dispensing with the law. His reply to this accusation was: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matt. 5:17.)

Repentance was always, and is, a part of the law and the gospel plan, and the mercy which the Savior brought is essential to the doctrine of repentance and to the administration of the laws of God. The fine balance between the two is preserved for us in the great principle that mercy shall not rob justice (Alma 42:25), nor justice, mercy.

Before I comment further on the principle of repentance, I wish to make it clear that I regard all laws of the gospel as essential in the plan of salvation, and that no one of his children may hope to obtain the highest exaltation in the celestial kingdom without complying with every law and every commandment given of the Lord for men to follow. I believe also that the Lord fully recognizes the frailties and the weaknesses of his children while they

undergo mortal probation. He subjected them to the tests of mortality. He gave them their free agency to cope with its temptations and problems. He planted within them a sense of right, and surrounded them with his Holy Spirit to help them chart the course of their lives, but he knew from the beginning that not all would have the vision and the strength of character to pursue the straight and narrow way. He knew that many would succumb to the seductive temptations of the adversary whom he permitted to be in the world with his children to test and ultimately to strengthen their faith and determination.

So, repentance was from the beginning a necessary part of the plan. It was not the only part of the plan indicative of the love and mercy of the Lord. The laws and commandments are themselves generous and loving provisions, formulated by our Father to bring to pass the greatest possible happiness and blessing to his vast family whom he loves. Every single commandment, stern as it may appear to some, is in reality an avenue to the glorious realm of peace and happiness. But repentance is an outstanding principle of mercy and love and kindness, attesting the concern and love of the Father for his children, for in final analysis, he gave his Beloved Son, not alone to redeem us from the effect of transgressions which lay heavy upon the whole race of men, but also to give to us the inexpressibly glorious opportunity of repenting of our own individual transgressions so that we might again come back into his presence clean and forgiven, through the precious gift of repentance.

I have never regarded repentance as being a static thing. It is difficult to imagine how men may repent once and for all for a full lifetime of experience. I look upon it as a progressive principle applying to each of us day by day. With those who have been given the noble concepts of a perfect life, there must be very few, if any, who do not feel that each day he or she may have fallen short of the ideal of perfection; so, each day, working toward, but failing fully to realize this lofty goal, each must feel the need for repentance—and so each,

with such a feeling of inadequacy, will seek the forgiveness of his Father in heaven and also his fellow men if them he has offended. It is this constant sorrowing and striving that constitutes the progressive, constantly applicable, principle of repentance. This ever-recurring acknowledgment of weakness and error and seeking and living for the higher and better will lead us to perfection.

We have a tendency to grade and evaluate the mistakes of life, in which we have support from the revelations. Some deviations we classify as serious, even to the point of unforgivable. Others we look upon with more allowance. In some cases the gravity of the offense and the extent of culpability are subjects for judicial determination by those appointed to be judges in the Church of our Father. All such judgments are authoritative, and we believe, almost without exception, righteous judgments. The penalties are to be observed. But even such serious infractions do not do away with the merciful principle of repentance, and I know of no judicial tribunal in the Church that does not uniformly admonish and entreat those who are convicted of offenses to repent, to sin no more, and by their lives seek and be worthy of forgiveness.

There are so-called lesser offenses which are not brought to the attention of Church tribunals but which frequently come before the presiding officials who are judges in Israel, with relation to the advancement of men and women in the offices and privileges of the Church. Questions arise in connection with advancement in the priesthood, temple recommends, and suitability for offices in the organizations. I wish each one who may feel that his progress is being retarded, and he is not recognized as he would like to be, might ask himself what there is in his life to bring about this retardation. I am sure that each one, if he is frank with himself, will find the answer. There is a remedy—a universal remedy—that does not fail. It is repentance, turning away from that which impairs progress and deprives one of the true Spirit of the Lord. While I have mentioned offenses that are spoken of as serious and those

which are less serious, I would have all understand that there is no departure from the ways pointed out by the Savior which is not serious and which will not impair the full development of a child of God.

I have said these things about the great salutary doctrine of repentance as a constantly applicable, progressive principle of life. I would like now to devote a little attention to the encouragement we may give each other and all our friends in the adoption of this principle. We are enjoined by the revelations coming to us with the restored gospel to call all men to repentance. Indeed, missionary work is the first obligation laid upon the restored Church. We would like all of our friends to understand that when we issue this call to repentance, we include ourselves within it. It is hoped there will be no implication of a boastful attitude on our part and that of our missionaries that we are free from the necessity of repentance. It is true that there is inconsistency in asking our neighbor to repent and turn away from a practice in transgression of the laws of the Lord which we ourselves indulge. Such an example does not lend weight to the call; but in spite of such inconsistency we are still under divine command to preach repentance to the people of this world, for repentance is indispensable. To those who criticize because they find within our ranks digressions from the pure laws of the gospel we seek to teach others, I put this trite but pertinent question: Does one offense wipe out another? Does weakness in one, even one who has been given a testimony of the truth, justify transgression of the law or failure to listen to its precepts?

I said in the beginning that I thought there must have been much of entreaty and appeal in that initial call of the Savior to his fellow men at the beginning of his ministry: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17.) He knew the weaknesses of those to whom he issued that call. He knew their pride and arrogance, their love of the things of the world. He knew that they would not receive him for what he was. He knew that infinite patience and kindness and mercy would be re-

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quired to teach them the principles of love and brotherhood embraced in the holy gospel. He knew that they would have to change their ways and transform their lives and concepts before they could truly come into his fold. So the first thing that he taught them was repentance, to let them understand that they could change their lives, that they could abandon their traditional practices, their intolerance, and their arrogance, and be inducted into the higher realm of love—love of God and of their fellow men. Those who became conscious of the power and the beauty of his teachings must have received the glorious principle of repentance with great joy. He encouraged them. Jesus taught his disciples the doctrine by example and parable.

There was the woman taken in sin. I think I have never seen a more impressive spectacle featured on the screen than that portrayed years ago when the movies were without sound in the picture called "The Ten Commandments." There was the woman cast into the dust, ashamed, hopeless. Surrounding her were hard-faced men, stones poised in their hands, ready, seemingly eager, to execute the penalty of the law. The plight of the woman was pitiful, desperate. Then suddenly there came on the scene the portrayal of the Christ. In his presence they were silenced, and withheld the stones, and then the scriptural account was enacted:

"They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

"Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

"This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

"So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

"And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left

alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

"When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

"She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." (John 8:4-11.)

He encouraged all to repentance. To do so he told one of the greatest of all his parables, of the man that had two sons, an older and a younger. The older son was devoted to his father, obedient to his commands, serving him dutifully. The younger son was apparently of a different disposition with a longing for the things of the world and its pleasures. He requested and received a portion of the father's goods that he would have inherited, thus renouncing his patrimony, so precious to the Jews. He took what he received and went into a far country and spent that which had been given to him in riotous living. It is assumed that he committed many offenses and that his life was wholly at variance with the ideals of his home, but he paid a heavy penalty for his transgressions.

When he had spent all that he had, a mighty famine came in the land, and he found himself in great want. He was obliged to seek work, and his master sent him into the fields to feed swine, perhaps the lowest, most menial and degrading of all things that could come to a Jew. We are told that so great were his hunger and desperation that he would fain have eaten the husks that the swine did eat.

When so reduced in bodily strength and spirit, he came to himself. We have reason to believe that he was caught in the spirit of repentance, and in his desperation he said to himself: "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

"I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great

way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." (Luke 15:17-21.)

But the father, seemingly overjoyed with the son's return, did not reply to his son's exclamation, but he called out to his servants: "Bring forth the best robe and put on him, and bring a ring for his hand and shoes for his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead, and he is alive again; he was lost, and he is found." (See Luke 15:22-24.)

I have always felt that the Savior intended the father in the parable to typify the Eternal Father of all of us. He knew the rigidity of the Jewish law. He knew what a terrible offense it was to renounce one's patrimony—an unforgivable offense, I assume, in the Jewish household. So he had this wayward son come back to his father, not to be rejected, but to be received and loved. He did not have the younger son restored to all the privileges he had forfeited. The older, more dutiful son, complained of the feast that had been made on the return of his younger brother, but the father consoled him with the statement: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." And then he repeated to his older boy the words he had said to the younger: "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." (Luke 15:31-32.)

I think it is significant that the Lord made it clear in the parable that the younger son had lost much by his wayward course, but in a measure, at least, he paid for it, with his suffering and degradation. Justice requires that. But when the penalty had been exacted, the fond father's heart was gladdened by the repentance and the return of his son. What an encouragement for repentance! How good to know of the mercy and forgiveness of the Father! Better not to have transgressed, but wonderful to be taken back!

Just as repentance is a divine principle, so is forgiveness. The Lord has

said, "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." (D & C 64:10.) If we were more liberal in our forgiveness, we would be more encouraging to repentance. Someone has said that the supreme charity of the world is in obedience to the divine injunction, "Judge not." When the Savior gave that injunction, he was well aware of the limitations of human understanding and sympathy. We can see overt acts, but we cannot see inner feelings nor can we read intentions. An all-wise Providence in making judgment sees and knows all the phases of human conduct. We know but few of the phases, and none very well. To be considerate and kind in judgment is a Christlike attribute.

So may we hold out the merciful, saving principle of repentance to ourselves and to all our Father's children. Let us issue the call as we have been commanded to do, but let it be so tempered in love and humility that all may receive it as a heartfelt invitation to share the glorious principles of the gospel which have come to the earth through revelation in these latter days. Let no brother or sister in the whole family of God feel that he or she has gone beyond the point where error and sin may be left behind and true repentance enlighten the soul with hope and faith.

Many years ago, while visiting one of the missions of the Church, a man asked if he might drive me to my next appointment. I spoke to the mission president, and he said he thought it would be all right. During the course of the journey, this man painfully outlined for me the course of his life. He told me something of his home and of his youth, and then in deep sorrow, he confessed his transgressions. They were very serious, and his consciousness of guilt almost overwhelmed him, and then almost choked with emotion, he asked the question he had premeditated when he sought my company: "Brother Richards, is there any hope for me? Now that I have learned the gospel from the missionaries and have come to understand the kind of life the Lord expects his children to live, the consciousness of my offenses overwhelms me. May I ever be

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forgiven?" He so shook with sobs that I feared somewhat for his security in the driver's seat.

His deep moving contrition touched my heart. I breathed a silent prayer that I might console and help him. And then I set before him the things I have tried to set before you this day. I gave him the same examples of the merciful principle of repentance and forgiveness, and when I held out to him hope and encouragement, he was consoled, he regained his composure, and in a voice ringing with determination, he cried out, "With the Lord's help I will make myself worthy and regain that I have lost." I was sure the Lord would help him in his effort.

This man did not know, although he must have heard the whisperings of his conscience, how grievous were his transgressions until he heard the true gospel, but members of the Church who have been taught know, and their knowledge brings accountability and responsibility. To them repentance has special significance. They are leaders and teachers to the unenlightened. On their shoulders they carry the weight of the kingdom. Its progress is retarded not so much by lack of effort as by insufficiency of repentance—individual repentance—which is essential to make them profitable servants.

So, my brethren and sisters, in the

love and respect which I bear you, I appeal, I entreat you, and I offer encouragement for repentance for all the misdeeds of either commission, or omission, which retard our progress toward the perfect life and destiny the Lord so graciously holds out to beckon us on.

And to my friends and our friends, not of the Church, may I humbly and sincerely hold out this glorious doctrine as the true way to happiness and peace. I call upon all in tones of entreaty and concern to stop damning God, to refrain from intemperate judgment, to be honest and virtuous. If you want peace and happiness, if you have made mistakes, you can repent if you will. The Lord will help you, and he will reward you a thousand times over for your effort. What the world needs is a repentant world, and you may be assured there is no enduring happiness in anything but goodness.

I invoke the blessings of the Lord upon all in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

President Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency of the Church has just spoken to us. Elder LeGrand Richards of the Council of the Twelve will be our next speaker. Elder Richards will be followed by Elder Marion D. Hanks.

ELDER LEGRAND RICHARDS

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

AS I OCCUPY this position of responsibility this morning, I first express the feelings of my heart of gratitude to the Lord for my membership in this Church and all that it means to me and for my fellowship with the members of the Church. They are wonderful people. If we have listened to the prayers of these stake presidents who have prayed in the conference, we know something of the faith and the leadership ability of the men who preside throughout the stakes of Zion. I feel to say God bless them all, and all you fine people and those who are listening in, who are giving of their time and their talents and their means to help build the kingdom of God in the earth.

One of the great events of the last year as far as the Church is concerned was the choir trip to Europe. I thought I would like to pass on to its members this morning, since they are here, comments that came in a missionary's letter from Berlin a few days ago.

He said, "When we go out tracting now and we announce ourselves as representatives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the people do not quite understand, we say, 'The Mormon Choir that was just here,' and they say, 'Oh, come in.'" The missionaries say the choir has done so much good in opening the doors of the people for them to carry on their missionary work.