

but on the seventh, may we keep it a day holy to the Lord, I humbly pray.

### President David O. McKay:

Elder Oscar A. Kirkham of the First Council of Seventy has just concluded speaking. The congregation will now join in singing, "Redeemer of Israel." After the singing, Elder ElRay L. Christiansen will speak to us.

The Choir and congregation joined in singing the hymn, "Redeemer of Israel."

### President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. Elder Christiansen will be followed by Elder Adam S. Bennion, who will be our concluding speaker.

## ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

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

**I** STAND BEFORE YOU in deep humility, my brothers and sisters, and with a prayer in my heart that what I might say may be of some encouragement to all of us. I should like to base my remarks upon a divine truth that is found in the Book of Proverbs. It reads as follows:

For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. (Prov. 6:23.)

There are good people in every segment of life who have developed an erroneous philosophy that the laws of God, even the great Ten Commandments, are intended only for certain people; for those whom they describe as being extremely religious, or for the less fortunate; that while it is essential to observe the laws of the land, it matters little or none if one observes the laws of God. Some of these people feel that the laws of God are inhibitions to one's freedom, and that they who are not religiously inclined are automatically exempt from the laws and commandments of the Lord; that if one minds his own business and lives his own life, so to speak, he has sufficient religion for his own welfare, and that salvation and joy everlasting somehow will be forthcoming.

Surely these are short-sighted views. Actually, the laws and commandments of the Lord are the foundation principles upon which lives of happiness, success, and peace are built. They are de-

signed to bless and benefit all mankind. The love of the Lord is universal, all-inclusive. He has said:

Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God;

For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. (D & C 18:10-11.)

that we might come home to him, as it were.

As a Church, we believe that through the atonement of Christ all mankind may be saved by obedience to the laws and the ordinances of the gospel, and that because of his great love for man the Lord has granted each of us an opportunity to live in the flesh, and through obedience to the laws of the gospel, find happiness and peace here, and prepare to live hereafter in a "state of never-ending happiness," as the Book of Mormon expressed it.

But the Lord does his work according to eternal principles and eternal laws. While he is a God of love, he is also a God of order. He does not deviate from the established principles and laws. He and they are the same yesterday, today, and forever. The laws and conditions prescribed for the welfare of mankind cannot be changed nor circumvented, because they are divine, and were declared before the foundation of the world was laid. They are, in fact, the only means by which we can have

that peace of mind here, and gain eternal life hereafter. This is expressed in a great revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world. (*Ibid.*, 132:5.)

So, brothers and sisters, we need simply to remember that which is expected of us. The Lord will remember that which is expected of him.

Now, his commandments are not grievous. They are not oppressive. We sing in one of our hymns: "How gentle God's commands! How kind his precepts are!" The laws of God are not given to us to burden us nor to handicap us. They are not impositions! They are the statutes which must be observed if the purpose of life and existence is to be realized. Even those who are called to go through trial, sorrow, tribulation, and adversity are promised that, if they are faithful, the reward to them for such obedience may be even greater. It is comforting to read the word of the Lord in regard to that:

For verily I say unto you, blessed is he that keepeth my commandments, whether in life or in death; and he that is faithful in tribulation, the reward of the same is greater in the kingdom of heaven.

Ye cannot behold with your natural eyes, for the present time, the design of your God concerning those things which shall come hereafter, and the glory which shall follow after much tribulation.

For after much tribulation come the blessings. Wherefore the day cometh that ye shall be crowned with much glory; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand. (*Ibid.*, 58:2-4.)

If one is inclined to question the advocacy of observing the law, whether it be the laws of man, the laws of nature, or the laws of God, he should consider these words of the Lord:

And again, verily I say unto you, that which is governed by law is also preserved by law and perfected and sanctified by the same. (*Ibid.*, 88:34.)

There is a reciprocal blessing from observing the law.

That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. (*Ibid.*, 88:35.)

Observance of law brings harmony, peace, and order. Without observance of law there is found confusion, sorrow, remorse, failure, whether it be the laws of man or the laws of God, whether it be nations, or whether it be individuals. There are those who ask, (they have asked me and really that is the reason I am speaking along this line), "If the Lord loves us why does he then give so many commandments, many of them restrictive in their nature?" The answer is because he loves us. He wishes to save us from sorrow, remorse, failure, and from losing our blessings.

While I was attending a conference in California not so long ago, I was told of one of our members living there, whose business it is to assist those who are in difficulty, that he had been given permission to interview a fine young man who was in serious trouble with the law. The interviewer asked this question: "Would you mind giving me the dominant reason for your being here in this condition?" This young man, after a moment's thought, replied: "I am here because no one loved me enough to correct me."

Now, the Lord loves us enough to say "Thou shalt not." The gospel of Jesus Christ is the perfect law of liberty, according to the Apostle James. God is its author. He sets forth the conditions. He is its fountainhead. The gospel is a great system of laws—which laws are eternal principles by which our Father in heaven designs to save mankind, his sons and his daughters, and not only to save them, but also to share with them all that the Father has—associations with those we love, honor, powers, glory, dominions, and even exaltations.

But while he gives us commandments, he also gives us the freedom, the liberty to reject them if we so choose. As he spoke to Adam and Eve in the garden, he told them they could eat of every

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tree of the garden. This they were free to do. However, he gave commandment that they should not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, or the penalty of death would follow. They could eat of it if they wished, but they must remember that he forbade it. They were at liberty to break the commandment. Their liberty was not restricted, but if they did eat of the tree, they would have to pay the penalty.

As it was with our first parents, so it is with us. We have the divine right and also the individual responsibility to determine whether we will accept or whether we will reject the laws and principles and commandments of God. But my, how grateful we ought to be that these laws are given us to direct us, that we may not lose our way in darkness and misunderstanding, and with the vain philosophies of the world.

How thankful we ought to be for such truths as these:

Men are, that they might have joy. (2 Nephi 2:25.)

I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise. (D & C 82:10.)

There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

And when we obtain any blessing from

God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it [that blessing] is predicated. (*Ibid.*, 130:20-21.)

And, finally, this most beautiful statement of King Benjamin in his address:

And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness. O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord hath spoken it. (Mosiah 2:41.)

May we also be grateful for these laws, and use them for the purpose for which they are designed, to sanctify and perfect our lives, that we too may dwell with him in a never-ending state of happiness, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, has just concluded speaking. We shall now hear from Elder Adam S. Bennion of the Council of the Twelve. Brother Bennion has just recently returned from an assignment to the European Missions.

#### ELDER ADAM S. BENNION

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

**P**RESIDENT MCKAY, and my beloved brethren and sisters, there are fathers and mothers sitting in this audience, and I feel sure listening in at their radios, whose sons and daughters I have seen and fellowshipped with in the last five months. I trust that I may enjoy the blessing of our Father in heaven to bring you in some little measure the spirit under which those grand young people are working. You can be proud of them. I have never been so proud of the young people of the Church as I have in these last five months.

Since April we have traveled 31,000 miles. We have addressed 32,000 people and have sat in and discussed with, and

taken a little note on 1,056 missionaries, all of whom we have heard in testimony, and all of whom would like to send to you the new love they have developed since they left home. Home never seems so sweet as when you are away from it, and they know it.

I give you my witness that they have realized the promise that the Lord gave his missionaries of an earlier generation. The occasion for the blessing was in the case of James Covill, who was to go upon a mission, and who had this wonderful promise given by way of revelation through the Prophet Joseph:

Thou shalt preach the fulness of my gos-