

When Joseph Smith went into the woods to pray on a spring morning in 1820, "grace was poured out upon his lips and God blessed him forever." God came to him and spoke, and with him was Jesus Christ the Redeemer of the world. Joseph heard from the divine lips the message that a new day was at hand. Out of it came the knowledge of the weaknesses of the necessities of man's spirit. The eternal truth that man is himself a God in latent power had long been forgotten, for the religion of Jesus Christ had taught faith in the possibility of ascent from height to height. So the boy prayed for light and understanding.

When we get the spirit of this new age, then it is that we come to understand the divine truths of the gospel more and more. Many things make our history beautiful. The Prophet Joseph Smith inaugurated a new age of culture and heavenly gifts. We all know what this means through our testimonies of divine truths. In conclusion, may I give just one example of what I mean. During the days when the pioneers were working hard to establish their homes and redeem the soil,

they gave examples of their culture in many ways. For example, they built a theatre here in Salt Lake City which became known throughout America and in England, France, and Italy. Famous actors came to play on its stage. President Brigham Young gave the people a love for the drama. It was he who had the theatre built. One time a noted actress, Julia Deane Hayne, in leaving to return to New York, gave her good-bye message to President Young and the people in a very beautiful statement. The theatre became known to the world as a place of divine art years before the railroad reached Salt Lake City. It was truly a creation of pioneer days, the theatre, for it was built by the inspiration of God. May we learn more and more every day about the history of the gospel in this day and age of the world, I ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Levi Edgar Young of the First Council of Seventy has just concluded speaking. Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy will now address us.

## ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

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

President McKay opened the conference yesterday with a fervent and forceful plea to the Latter-day Saints to rise above the carnal and animal things of the world and attain to a state of spirituality, a plea for them to crucify the flesh and turn their hearts and interests to the things of the Spirit.

In this connection I call attention to the words which the beloved disciple wrote:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. (I John 2:15-17.)

There is, of course, a difference between the earth and the world. The earth is this sphere, this planet upon which we reside. It is composed of natural elements—the things that make up the dust and the rocks and the trees. The world, on the other hand, is the society of men living on the face of the earth, a society that is carnal and sensuous and evil, a society which is living, in effect, a telestial law; and there will be a not distant day when the end of the world will come, which means by definition, the destruction of the wicked. This will take place in the day of millennial cleansing.

We have been sent from a pre-existent sphere to this earth; as a consequence we have received bodies made of the dust of the earth. Through the grace of God and the atoning sacrifice of his

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Son we will get these bodies back again in immortality in eternity.

We have also been sent from the pre-existent sphere and placed in the world, that is, in circumstances where we will be enticed to do evil, where we will be subject to the lusts of the flesh and the passions that go naturally with a mortal existence. The object in placing us in the world is to try us, to test us, to see if we can overcome the world, to see if we can walk in the things of the Spirit in spite of the worldly enticements that surround us.

I suppose that in our day—in this age, with all the pressures of advertising, made possible by the use of all the modern inventions—that the enticements and pressures of the world exceed anything that has existed or prevailed in any age past.

Our Lord, in speaking to his ancient disciples about the lusts of the world, said that both he and they had overcome the world. He told them that they would be hated by the world because they were not of the world. In his great intercessory prayer he prayed that the Father would keep the disciples free from sin. He said,

I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; . . .

I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. (See John 15:18-19; 17:6-18.)

Well, then, an omnipotent God has deliberately and advisedly placed us in the circumstances in which we now find ourselves, with enticements and lusts of every sort around us, for the very purpose of determining whether we will overcome the world, whether we will turn to spiritual things rather than be engulfed in carnal things.

We had a probationary experience, a testing of a different sort, in the pre-existent sphere. We were there as spirit beings only, without these temporal bodies. Now we have mortal bodies that are subject to different enticements; and this particular portion of all eternity is that which is segregated as the time when we will be tested and tried and examined in the very manner in which we are now being examined. May I suggest to you some of the things that there are in the world which stand

as tests in determining whether we will turn to the things of righteousness or whether we will go off after the manner of the world, walking as carnal men do.

If, for instance, we gratify the appetites that there are in this body, taking into the body food and drink that are unclean and unwholesome, we are walking after the manner of the world and manifesting love therefor. But if, on the other hand, we abstain completely from tea, coffee, tobacco, and liquor, and from every other unwholesome and impure food or drink, thereby developing self-control, then to this extent we are both overcoming the world and acquiring a godly attribute.

If we walk in this life in such a manner as to use all of the time that there is, seven days a week, either for the purpose of gaining a livelihood or for engaging in recreational pursuits, we are walking after the manner of the world. But if, on the other hand, we honor the Lord's holy day, keep his Sabbath, go to the house of prayer and offer up our vows and sacraments so that we may gain strength to become and to remain unspotted from the world, if that is our course, then we are rising to a plane of spirituality.

Paul said, "The love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim. 6:10.) Now, if we get the love of money or the love of the things of this world in our hearts, so that we desire those things in preference to the things of the Spirit, we are walking in carnal paths. But if, on the other hand, we pay an honest tithing; pay our fast offerings; contribute to the great missionary cause, to the Church educational system, to the building programs of the Church, and so on; if we make our means available to the Lord and to his kingdom and to his work—then we are rising above the plane of covetousness and lust that is inherent in the nature of our mortal existence.

The Lord has placed in our bodies certain passions and certain appetites; perhaps the strongest of these deal with what we call the sex urges. Now if we walk in an unbridled manner, after the way of the world, and are immoral and lascivious and unclean, then we are reveling in the basest sort of carnal existence. But if, on the other hand, we have the strength of character and

the fortitude and ability to stand up like men and bridle our passions and control our lusts and use the sex urges in the manner in which the Lord has ordained that they should be used—which is wholesome and pure and right—if we walk without any form of sex immorality, then we are rising above the animal plane, and we are walking in the realm of spiritual things.

And so it is with every situation in which we find ourselves. If we play cards; if we visit beer halls; if we lie or steal or cheat; if we take advantage of our neighbor for a word; if we oppress the hireling in his wages; if we are immodest in our dress; if we do any of the things that are commonly done by the great masses of ungodly people in the world—we will be living after their manner and certifying that we love the things of the world more than we love the Lord. But on the contrary, if we abide in the truth and keep our covenants and walk in the manner that we were counseled to walk by our President as he opened this conference—and do it consistently, acting uprightly, with integrity and devotion—then we will be putting off the natural man; we will be born again; we will become new creatures of the Holy Ghost. Then it will be our right to have the constant companionship of that member of the

Godhead. And finally, if we endure in faith and in devotion to the end, we will be inheritors of eternal life in the kingdom of God hereafter.

He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come. (D & C 59:23.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the First Council of Seventy has just spoken to us. The Congregation will now sing, "Praise to the Man," joining the Choruses, under the direction of Alma Dittmer. After the singing, Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin will speak to us.

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The congregation and the Combined Choruses joined in singing the hymn, "Praise to the Man," with Alma Dittmer conducting.

President David O. McKay:

We shall now hear from Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, Presiding Bishop of the Church. He will be followed by Elder Richard L. Evans.

## BISHOP JOSEPH L. WIRTHLIN

### *Presiding Bishop of the Church*

My dear brethren and sisters, I sincerely trust that I might have an interest in your prayers in my behalf. Without prayer, it would be impossible to express one's thoughts and give testimony of the existence of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church.

Our general conference being held on April 4, 5, and 6 recalls vividly those memorable days of the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The words of Paul voice the testimony of each of us when he said,

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (Heb. 13:8.)

As Latter-day Saints, we are particularly interested in two great individuals:

one, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the other, Joseph Smith—the one at the age of twelve, the other at the age of fourteen. Christ visited Jerusalem for the first time with Mary and Joseph, who had gone there to attend the Feast of the Passover and to pay their taxes. When they started homeward, and after one day's travel, they discovered the Christ was not in their company. Returning to Jerusalem, they found him in the temple where he was engaged in discussion with the great men of the day and was, no doubt, telling them of his future assignments and teaching them the gospel that was to be given to the world. Mary and Joseph entered the temple. Mary said, ". . . Son, why