

Sunday, April 6

Third Day

defer it or neglect it, for we shall not pass this way again.

May God favor us by granting to each of us the companionship and the association of his sweet, holy Spirit, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Thorpe B. Isaacson of the Presiding Bishopric has just addressed us. Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Hugh B. Brown.

ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

As we pay tribute to the Savior of the world on this Easter day and express gratitude to him for his great atonement, we must remember, also, that to be a true Christian means that we love Jesus Christ and that to love him means to obey him.

How can we truly love him unless we walk in his footsteps. How can we sincerely honor him unless we follow his teachings?

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 7:21.)

His great fundamental teaching was that of love, and out of love he taught unity, harmony, brotherhood, sisterhood. He prayed, you recall, that his disciples might be one, even as he and his Father were one. He taught that a house divided against itself cannot stand. A man cannot divide his loyalty, either. No one can serve two masters.

When he placed apostles and prophets in the Christian church, as Paul explains, he did so to help the saints to be united, to reach a unity of faith, to understand what is true harmony. Yet, as we contemplate these teachings, we must realize that Christianity itself is sadly divided. Thoughts of unity among the churches are repugnant to most Christians, and still they claim to believe the Master's teachings urging unity and brotherhood, not division and lack of harmony.

One of the most difficult things about this division in modern Christianity is the effect it has upon family life. In these days of far too much discord in the average American home, religious differences frequently become the impor-

tant cause of discord, sometimes to the extent of breaking up homes, causing separations and divorce, with all their accompanying heartaches.

Every young couple on making plans for marriage hopes for a happy home life. Everyone wants to make a success of marriage. Most young couples have faith in God and seek his blessings upon their marriage. But in so many instances the very religions to which they hold tend to bring unhappiness to them because the couples belong to different religious faiths. This difference becomes a source of irritation, conflict, quarreling, and unhappiness. It becomes so to such an extent that those who have studied marriage most are convinced that so-called interfaith marriages generally are a mistake.

Christianity is too divided to permit Christians of different denominations to live together in peace and harmony. It may be a great reflection upon Christian living and Christian concepts, but it is nevertheless true. Interfaith marriage jeopardizes the stability and happiness of the home.

The Christian denominations are the first to recognize this. They, themselves, advise their young people to avoid marital disharmony by marrying within their own faith. I have written to many clergymen of various faiths from coast to coast, asking their views on this subject, and have received back a whole sheaf of letters, all advising against interfaith marriage. To give you a small cross section of their opinions, I read to you a few of the letters, at least excerpts from them.

From New York City, St. Patrick's Information Center, the Rev. Charles J. McManus writes:

You can gather the position of our Church from the fact that Catholics are forbidden to marry non-Catholics by Church law.

And from the Salt Lake Diocese of the Catholic Church, a letter signed by the Rev. Francis T. Kelleher, says:

His Excellency, Bishop Hunt has requested that I answer your letter of August 23.

... a mixed marriage is always potentially dangerous. Disagreement on religion can lead to unhappiness for both parties, confusion and indifference on the part of the children, and even breakup of the family. We have seen it happen time and again.

From the First Presbyterian Church of Salt Lake City, the Rev. E. E. Bollinger writes:

The Protestant tradition has always taken a firm stand in advising young people to marry within their own historic faith. . .

We . . . agree with the LDS Bishop, the Jewish Rabbi, and the Roman Catholic Priest, that chances for harmony in marriage are greatly minimized when there are two major religious traditions in the home. . . .

The Rabbi Mordecai Podet of the Congregation B'Nai Israel of Salt Lake City, writes:

To my knowledge no clergyman, marriage counselor, or other person professionally trained and experienced in marital matters recommends mixed marriages. . . . The Central Conference of American Rabbis, which is the organization of liberal rabbis, is on record opposing mixed marriage.

The Christ Lutheran Church and School, of Murray, Utah, has as its pastor, the Rev. William C. Naatz, and he writes:

... we urge our young people to marry within their church if that is at all possible. The tragedy of intermarriage is that far too often when children are born into families of split faiths there are serious complications. It has been my experience that the great majority of unchurched homes in our country today are homes where there were originally two different faiths involved, and as a compromise finally the family ended up going nowhere.

The First Unitarian Society of Salt Lake City writes over the name of Harold Scott, Pastor:

The literature on the subject indicates that when Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and Mormons intermarry, there are more difficult adjustments to be made than as though the contracting parties were of the same faith. . . .

... interfaith marriages . . . mean additional strain on the marriage bond.

We wrote to the Greek Orthodox Church in New York City. The Director of Public Relations, Mr. Arthur Dore, wrote and said:

... our Church . . . never encourages mixed marriages because, speaking from experience, mixed marriages are likely to be a failure. . . .

The Colorado Woman's College recently conducted a discussion for the students of the college in which a Jewish rabbi, a Catholic priest, and a Protestant minister spoke. Following this discussion, the *Rocky Mountain News* summarized the information given in their issue of February 5, 1958, and said:

Marriage between people of different religious faiths is often the start of loss of faith, delinquency or divorce. . . .

The *New York Times* on June 24, 1956, carried an article entitled, "Why Marriages Go Wrong," and among other things said:

... there are approximately three times as many divorces or separations in Catholic-Protestant marriages as there are when the marital partners are of the same faith, and about four times as many when a Catholic father is married to a Protestant mother. And here again the story of marital unhappiness is far larger than divorce and separation statistics show.

Being further interested I decided to write to judges in divorce courts of the nation, and went from New York to San Francisco and Los Angeles, and I read only a few of the replies given us by these gentlemen:

From the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois (Chicago), Judge B. Fain Tucker writes:

... there is an obvious advantage in the same church membership. Dissimilarity of interest in any field may prove a hazard in marriage. This is particularly true with religion. . . . I believe that family worship—family prayers—help tremendously in

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strengthening marriage ties. Family worship is easier if both spouses belong to the same church. . . .

He goes on to say:

. . . Difference in religion undoubtedly will aggravate the "in-law" problem where the parents of one or both spouses are deeply religious. . . . The religious training of the children when the spouses are of different churches, is one of the most vexing problems of all.

Then from the Superior Court of San Francisco, Judge Orla St. Clair writes:

Where the parents are of different religious faiths, we often find that if the marriage fails the bitterness over the religious problems for the children seems to be all out of proportion. . . . if the marriage is a failure, this mixed faith problem is an extremely vexatious one from the point of view of the court trying to decide custody and visitation matters.

From the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Justice Samuel M. Gold writes:

. . . religion does play a part in maintaining a happy marriage and . . . the chances of a marriage being successful are greater when young people marry within their own faith.

And from Denver, Colorado, District Court, Judge Joseph E. Cook writes:

. . . interfaith marriages do not succeed as well as between people of the same faith; especially where children are involved.

Educators have made considerable research into this problem. I quote only one, Dr. Earl E. Emme, Professor of Psychology and Religion, Florida Southern College, who, on October 16, 1957, addressed an open meeting of Pi Gamma Mu, a National Honor Society in Social Science. He listed numerous reasons why people of different religious faiths should not marry. He advocated marriage within your own church. I only give two comments from him in the interest of time. First, he says:

A survey of representative textbooks used in marriage courses [in colleges and universities] shows that they all counsel the students against mixed marriages.

And second:

The slogan of religious groups that "Families that pray together, stay together" might be restated to say that "families that can do things together, plan things together, stay together."

"The *key word*," he says, "is *together*." And then he adds, "The *happy-together family* cannot remain so if *religion is not included*."

Even the Lord has spoken on this subject. Anciently he asked through one of his prophets:

Can two walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3.)

Through Moses, he commanded his ancient people to refrain from marrying unbelievers. Said he:

Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

For they will turn away thy son from following me, . . . so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, . . . (Deut. 7:3-4.)

And the Apostle Paul said:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: . . . (II Cor. 6:14.)

What are we to do then? Shall we bring upon ourselves the unhappiness of a divided household? Shall we profit by the voice of experience and marry within our own faith?

God lives, it is true. Christianity, divided as it is, claims to believe that. The gospel is the way to peace. This also is true in spite of the great divisions existing in modern Christianity. But Christianity of today is so divided that if we bring its conflicting philosophies into our homes, they can and do become a source of discord which may jeopardize the very foundations of our family life.

Then, what are we to do? The obvious answer to everyone is, marry within your own faith. If you are a Presbyterian, marry a Presbyterian. If you are a Catholic, marry a Catholic. If you are of the house of Judah, marry within your own faith. If you are a Mormon, marry a Mormon.

But to the Latter-day Saints we have something still further to say. Not only

should the Latter-day Saints marry Latter-day Saints, but also the Latter-day Saints must marry Latter-day Saints within a Latter-day Saint temple. Just as God has his mode of baptism, so he has his mode of marriage. Should a Latter-day Saint ever reject God's mode of baptism? Then why should a Latter-day Saint ever reject God's mode of marriage?

Marriage is intended by the Lord to last forever, eternally, as President Richards says, "to be projected out into the eternities." That takes temple marriage. It brings together two Latter-day Saints of faith and devotion. If they will be united, if they will come and participate in the great saving blessing of a temple marriage, if they then will live the gospel and keep sacred their marriage covenant, they need never worry about divorce because of religious

or other serious differences in the home, nor need they ever fear that death itself will serve as a divorce court, and break the bonds which were made for time only.

They who are married in the temple of God are married for all eternity, according to God's mode of marriage.

May we have the foresight to live in such a way that we may fulfil this great commandment of our Father and reap the great blessings he has for us, is my humble prayer, in Jesus' name. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Our concluding speaker will be Elder Hugh B. Brown. Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us. Elder Hugh B. Brown, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us.

ELDER HUGH B. BROWN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

An ancient prophet gave the assurance that God would require nothing of his children save he provided a way for them to carry out his commandments. I rely on that promise and pray for divine guidance. Speaking of the Lord making provision for the carrying out of his commandments, I am reminded that in ancient days and in our time he required that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached to all the world. When this commandment was given to the founders of the Church, perhaps it seemed to be an insuperable task, but God has kept his promise and has made provision whereby we are able to reach more people with the gospel in a few minutes than our fathers could reach in years. We are grateful for the microphone, the radio and television; but these facilities, great as they are, as President Clark indicated last night, are just in their infancy, and God will, in his own due time, give us such improvements and amplifications as will enable us to carry out his great commandment.

We greet you, our friends out there in the radio and television audience who are not members of our Church. We join with Christians everywhere, as

has been indicated all through this conference, in commemorating and giving thanks to God for the resurrection of the Lord. The significance of this transcendent event was emphasized by the Apostle Paul in that matchless sermon recorded in Corinthians, in which, among other things, he said: "And if Christ be not risen [from the dead], then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." (I Cor. 15:14.)

We believe that the greatest story ever told in all the annals of history is the story of the atonement of Christ. The record of his resurrection and ascension, without which the atonement would not have been complete, is the climax to that story; and now, two thousand years after the event, it is still central and pivotal in all true Christian thought.

Christ was both mortal and divine—mortal through his mother, Mary; divine through his Father, God—and because of that unique combination he was able to yield voluntarily to death in order that through his divinity he might conquer death, break its bands, and make the resurrection possible to all men. The resurrection is not for a select few, nor is it alone for believing