

## SECOND DAY

### MORNING MEETING

(For a full report of the *Tabernacle Choir and Organ* broadcast, see page 123)

The Sunday morning session of the Conference convened at 10 o'clock a.m., April 5th, immediately following the conclusion of the *Tabernacle Choir and Organ* broadcast.

The music for this session of the Conference was furnished by the *Tabernacle Choir*.

President David O. McKay presided at this meeting and conducted the services.

#### President David O. McKay:

The *Tabernacle Choir*, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will open these services by singing, "Jesus, Our Lord, We Adore Thee." The opening prayer will be offered by Elder Henry A. Smith, president of the Central Atlantic States Mission.

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The Choir sang as an opening number, "Jesus, Our Lord, We Adore Thee."

Elder Henry A. Smith, president of

the Central Atlantic States Mission, offered the invocation.

#### President David O. McKay:

The Invocation just offered was by Elder Henry A. Smith, president of the Central Atlantic States Mission. The Choir will now sing, "Behold, God the Lord Pass By."

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The *Tabernacle Choir* sang, "Behold, God the Lord Pass By."

#### President David O. McKay:

You who heard that great broadcast this morning know that it was under the direction of Richard P. Condie with Alexander Schreiner at the organ. So also was this beautiful hymn, "Behold, God the Lord Pass By."

President Stephen L. Richards of the First Presidency will be our first speaker. We are in connection with many of the western states by direct wire this morning, during the first hour especially. Brother Richards will be followed by Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve.

### PRESIDENT STEPHEN L RICHARDS

#### *First Counselor in the First Presidency*

My dear brethren and sisters and friends, I assure you that I appear before this vast audience without self-assurance, and with deep humility, and with an earnest prayer that the Lord will bless me and you with a bond of sympathetic understanding.

Some time ago I heard over the radio a minister begin his address with the following question: "Can a man be a Christian without belonging to a Christian church?" His discussion of the subject was very interesting. If I correctly interpreted his argument, his answer was, "No—a man cannot truly be a Christian without belonging to a Christian church."

I do not propose on this occasion either to support or oppose the conclusion reached by the reverend gentleman. The reasons he presented seemed plausible to me, and I have no doubt they seemed so to many of his listeners. I should like to use the theme of his arresting address to bring forward some thoughts and concepts I have on the nature and vitality of the Christian religion.

Just what is Christianity, and what does it mean to be a Christian? In assuming to make comment on these important questions, I wish it to be understood that I make no pretention to scholarship or academic learning on

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the subject matter involved. I believe that academic learning is not itself essential for me or any other man to reach some important conclusions. We are told that things of the Spirit in divine revelation are so plain and simple to those of faith and understanding that he "who runs may read."

Surely most, if not all, Christians will agree that any adequate concept of the Master must involve a spiritual interpretation. When the Savior uttered those great words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," it is entirely clear that he had no intention of defining merely a moral code of which he was the exemplar, for following these words he declared a great spiritual truth which lies at the basis of the whole Christian faith when he said: ". . . no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6.)

Herein lies the very crux of the question which the minister proposed: Can a man be a Christian without allying himself with a Christian church? Is it sufficient that one adopt the Christian virtues in his life—be unselfish, kind, considerate, long-suffering, patient, gentle, serving his fellow man after the pattern set by the Savior? Is this alone sufficient? There is no question that a man so living commands the utmost respect and esteem of good people. There is no question but that such a life is filled with happiness and satisfactions—satisfactions that endure. Is all this good living of itself enough?

At this point I must introduce to my friends—my fellow members of the Church are well acquainted with it—a scripture from modern revelation, which brings clarity to our thinking. These are the words of the Lord to his Prophet: "And verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth my gospel receiveth me; and he that receiveth not my gospel receiveth not me." (D&C 39:5.)

Now if it is essential to receive the gospel in order to receive the Christ, what follows? To answer this we must understand and define the gospel. Is the gospel itself anything more than the sum total of the Savior's divine attributes and qualities? I think that all who give careful consideration to the scriptures and the works of the Master will agree that it is. Perhaps the most

famous of all definitions of the gospel is that given by Paul when he said: ". . . I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; . . ." (Romans 1:16.)

It is certainly not difficult to gather from the words, "power of God unto salvation," a meaning beyond that of a moral code for living based upon the attributes of the Savior. The gospel as a power unto salvation must embrace not only all the Christlike characteristics of living, but also the means essential to salvation. These indispensable means or essentials for salvation have been clearly set forth by the Savior on numerous occasions and in unmistakable terms. He prescribed ordinances and proclaimed their indispensable nature. He declared to John the Baptist who protested his application for baptism that baptism "becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. 3:13-16.) Time and again he and his apostles after him exhorted all to repentance and baptism and to faith, firm and abiding faith in him and the holy gospel.

And Paul, his apostle, certified that there was but one authentic gospel. These are his words: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8.)

And further he declares: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (*Idem*, 11-12.) And the Christian scriptures are replete with the injunction that the gospel of our Lord is to be preached ". . . to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Rev. 14:6.)

If there should be any uncertainty in the mind of anyone professing to be Christian as to the essentiality of the gospel and its ordinances, it seems to me it should be completely resolved by the final charge to his disciples, given in almost the closing hours of his mortal life, when he uttered these portentous words: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all na-

tions, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:18-20.)

Now if gospel ordinances are essential they must be administered, and in logical sequence it follows that they must be administered by those having a delegation of authority to do so. So it follows also that the delegation of authority must come from one source only—the Author of the gospel plan, the Christ, who derived his authority from the Eternal Father. Those who held and exercised such authority in ancient Israel, as in the Meridian of Time, were endowed with what is called "priesthood," being a divinely bestowed commission to represent the Father and the Son and perform the ordinances of the gospel.

This divine authority is a special kind of power, differing widely in many respects from other forms of delegated authority. I am indebted for a description of its nature and constituency to a modern revelation, unique so far as I know in the whole field of theological learning. This is the revelation:

". . . the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and . . . the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.

"That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man." (D&C 121:36-37.)

Here is a divine endowment, a marvelous gift to man, which may be lost by failure to exercise the power in its true meaning and spirit. It has been lost, my brothers and sisters and friends, to men of old as in modern times by failure both to understand its true nature and to exercise its functions in a

manner compatible with the spirit and essence of the power itself.

Listen to these lovely words further defining the nature of this holy power. "No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

"By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

"Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven." (*Idem*, 41-42, 45.)

The priesthood which the revelations so define was lost to those following his apostles when they failed to preserve the spirit and essentials of this divine power, just as the Lord said in the revelation it would be: "Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man," (*Idem*, 37) are the words of the Lord. When it was lost, it had to be restored, and it had to be restored authentically.

The powers of the priesthood may never be assumed. They must always be conferred, and of course by someone having the power to confer. My friends, I wish you to know—and I hope you will not regard it as presumptuous in me to inform you—that the powers of the Holy Priesthood have been conferred authentically in modern times. Time will not permit me to detail all the circumstances attendant upon this bestowal of divine power, but I give it to you as my considered judgment and my firm conviction that there is evidence—credible and reliable evidence—to support and verify the account of such bestowal as contained in the records of the Restored Church of our Lord. And in addition to such credible evidence I believe that an open-minded investigator will discover from the operations of this divine power results, benefits, and blessings corroborative of the divine authenticity of the Holy Priesthood as it exists today in this sorry world which so much needs it.

Now we return to the specific theme

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with which we began—the relationship of a Christian to a church. Perhaps I had better begin with a few statements which may seem rather trite. The kingdom of God is a kingdom, not a democracy. The king is the author and source of the law, the judge, and the omnipotent administrator. He and he only prescribes the rules governing eligibility for membership in his kingdom. I grant that this may sound arbitrary and dogmatic. In organizations formed by men no such autocratic power would be tolerated. But the kingdom of our Lord is not an organization formed by men. Liberty loving men can accept such omnipotent power only because they have faith and complete confidence in the beneficence of such power.

What then is the standing of a so-called Christian with reference to the kingdom of God? Is he rightly classified as Christian unless he has taken the steps necessary to receive the gospel of our Lord and enter into his kingdom? I believe, my friends, that a careful survey of all pertinent scriptures, as well as the whole history of Christ's work among men, will demonstrate that only by the complete acceptance of the Christ as our Lord, and subscribing to all the conditions and requirements of his holy gospel, including its sacred ordinances governing induction into his kingdom, can a man fully justify a claim to the honorable distinction of being a Christian. So it seems to me that the crucial question is not so much whether a man must belong to a church to be a Christian, but whether he has prepared himself and taken the necessary steps to enter into the kingdom of God.

It would seem beyond question that there could not be more than one kingdom of the Lord. So the concern of all who seek Christian salvation must be: Where is that kingdom? Where is it set up in the earth that men may come to it and receive its transcendent blessings? This is a delicate question because the feelings of people about religion are deep and sensitive. No one likes to offend. I assure you I do not, but I would be untrue to my calling if I did not undertake to the best of my ability to give to all men the revelations of the Lord about this question: Where

is the kingdom of God set up in the earth?

First I must take you back to an ancient prophecy with which many are familiar. You will remember that when Daniel was asked to interpret the king's dream of the great image whose head was of gold, whose breast and arms were of silver, whose belly and thighs were of brass, with legs of iron and feet of clay, he uttered these portentous words:

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away. . . ." (Dan. 2:34-35.)

Then follows a description of the kingdoms represented by parts of the image which the king saw, and finally, following a description of the kingdoms of the world, these words:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (*Idem* 44.)

This and other prophecies of ancient days predict with certainty the setting up of a kingdom of God in the earth. In the mind and heart of the prophets no mere mystical kingdom is predicted, but an actual institutional power which shall not only have sway among men, but among the kingdoms and establishments of the world.

In a later day, after the Savior had completed his ministry on the earth, to his beloved apostle, John, came the following revelation:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." (Rev. 14:6-7.)

It is true that times are not set in

these revelations for the fulfilment of the prophecies therein contained, but all will agree that they contemplated a time of fulfilment. That time came, my friends, more than a century ago in the free land of America with guarantees of liberty sufficient to protect men in the free expression of religious convictions. I think in no other land at the time of fulfilment could the great spiritual experiences lying at the foundation of a great cause have been tolerated sufficiently to come to fruition.

In this land of liberty fulfilment came. The predictions of old came to pass. The prophets were vindicated. Through the instrumentality of an intelligent, unsophisticated young man of great faith, through men of humility, the Lord's kingdom was set up in the earth, his own true Church established with the power of the Holy Priesthood to administer the ordinances of the gospel, and with the same organization that the Christ himself gave to men when he ministered in flesh among them.

I hope you will realize, my friends, that it is impossible in this short period of time to present in any detail and with any sufficient measure of adequacy the circumstances which justify the statement which I have made in your hearing. All I can do in these few minutes is to give you assurance that proof is available, proof not only for mental assurance but soul conviction as well, which in my humble judgment is sufficient to satisfy the searcher after the truth.

Therefore, if you would be truly Christian, if you would be classified as a disciple of our dear Savior, I hold out to you the one sure way of achieving that great distinction. Come into his kingdom through the door which is open to all who will abide his law and his gospel. Come to participate in blessings and high privileges which surpass even the vision of your highest hopes and ambitions.

I have one more thought to give you, fearing that some may appraise my remarks as too fanatical and visionary. I remember years ago reading a book written by Walter Lippman, who I think has the reputation of being a rather keen analyst of human affairs. Writing of man and religion, he said

in substance that they who give serious thought to religion are of two classes—the humanists and the authoritarians. Either one must interpret the spiritual and religious in terms of human origin, attributes, and characteristics, or in terms of a God of revelation, power, and authority.

Well, I am of the latter class. I believe in God implicitly. I believe in the divinity of our Lord and Savior as the Son of God. I believe that the Lord has revealed himself to men in days past, and that he has not denied to his children of later generations the blessing and benefit of his revelations. I am convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that his gospel has been restored in its fulness with all its ordinances, and the powers authentically to administer them in these last days. I give you my solemn witness that his kingdom is set up in the earth, and that it is established forever; that they whom he has chosen to be his special representatives from period to period have not been pretenders. I have lived long enough to have known personally four, and two more at a distance, of the nine Presidents who have presided over the Church since its beginning, and I have had intimate association with our leader who guides the Church today for more than fifty years. Of my own knowledge I testify that these revered leaders and their associates in the Presiding Councils of the Church, acting under the authority of the Holy Priesthood, have administered the affairs of the kingdom with the fear of God in their hearts, fearing to offend him in any degree, and seeking to serve him and his children with humility and complete dedication.

And I must ask all of you, my friends, not to forget that truth is not determined by numbers, nor the number of its adherents. Christ began alone. Then as always, as the old saying goes, "God and one man are a majority." With him we are safe.

I pray for spiritual understanding to come to all our dear brethren and sisters in this world, that men may know in their hearts what it truly means to be a Christian, a disciple of Christ. The Lord bless us all, I ask humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.