

Sunday, April 5

Second Day

to the end of the sacred records, but I choose just one as the example, and this, section 52 of the Doctrine and Covenants, where the Prophet, under the inspiration of God, encouraging and suggesting compassion and love and brotherliness, and prayer and humility and every other virtue, also had something else to say:

"Wherefore he that prayeth, whose spirit is contrite, the same is accepted of me if he obey mine ordinances.

"He that speaketh, whose spirit is contrite, whose language is meek and edifieth, the same is of God if he obey mine ordinances." (D&C 52:15-16.)

I thank God for the blessing of the gospel, of some understanding of it, and of certain witness that it is the very plan of God, and that they who speak for God are his servants in this day, as anciently, which I say, and which witness I bear, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy has just addressed us. We shall now hear from Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER EZRA TAFT BENSON

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My beloved brethren and sisters and friends: Humbly, gratefully, and prayerfully I approach this assignment and face this great audience and the unseen audience of thousands more. Since listening to the inspiring address of President McKay I have felt impressed to leave in my pocket a manuscript which I had intended to present as my small part of this conference.

I would like to say just a word about youth, if I may, the theme which the President has so impressively emphasized in our hearing by his inspiring address. With all my heart I respond to this great message of the president, prophet, seer, and revelator of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. And I hope and pray that leaders of youth everywhere who were fortunate enough to hear his message, or will be fortunate enough to read it, will heed the counsel given therein.

I love the youth of the Church and of this great country. I know that our future as a nation, as a people, and our future as a Church depends very largely upon our young people.

I rejoice as I look into the faces of the leaders of youth who have been called to represent the Church. I was thrilled as we met at Camp David in the mountains north of Washington and found that Elder Marion D. Hanks had been appointed a member of the Citizens' Advisory Committee of the President's Council on Youth Fitness,

already referred to by President McKay. We have a group of great leaders in the Church who have been assigned to work with young people, and I think nowhere in all the world will you find a finer youth program than we have right here in the Church.

Everywhere I go I hear praise of the youth program of the Mormon Church, and I am sure that the praise is well merited. I have thrilled with the recent series of articles, cards, and displays on the general subject, "Be Honest with Yourself." It is our appeal to the young people of the Church to adhere strictly to the basic, eternal concepts which make for the good life. It is an appeal for them to live clean, upright lives, to adhere to those basic principles which their parents and their grandparents and their great-grandparents adhered to, and upon which they build in this western land.

It is my hope and prayer, my brethren and sisters, that those of us who have responsibility for leadership, among the youth of Zion particularly, will have the courage and the good common sense to speak frankly and honestly with our young people, that they might know what the Church expects of them, that they might know what is best for them as citizens of this great land, and citizens of the kingdom of God.

Now, what is it that we seek for our young people? It has been said that they are the greatest group of young

people in all the world. I am sure they are the greatest in opportunity of any group of young people anywhere. No group of youth has ever had richer opportunities than our young people have today. What do we seek for them? I have concluded that there are four essential things that we seek for them.

First of all, we want them to be happy. "Men are, that they might have joy." There is no happiness in sin. Wickedness never was happiness. There are no shortcuts to happiness. It pays to live the good life. It pays to heed the counsel of one's faithful parents and the teachers of youth. It pays to heed the counsel and the instruction given by the General Authorities of the Church. If our young people would be happy then they must adhere to the eternal, basic principles and concepts of our belief and follow the advice given them by the leadership of the Church.

Secondly, we want them to be successful in their chosen field of life's work, whatever that field may be so long as it is honorable. We would like to see them excel. The Lord wants them to excel, and he will help them. I am convinced, my young brethren and sisters, that while the world may not live our standards, I am confident in my own heart from observation, experience, and broad contact with the world, that the world is willing to pay for the services of young Latter-day Saint men and women who are willing to adhere strictly to the standards and ideals of the Church. If a young man and woman were thinking only of getting ahead materially or financially in their chosen field, it still pays to live the standards of Mormonism. You have everything to gain and nothing to lose by adhering strictly to the standards which you have been taught from childhood, and which the Church emphasizes today.

Thirdly, we hope that our youth will develop a love for freedom and become good citizens of this great Christian nation. We hope that our youth will develop in their hearts a conviction, a testimony, that this is not just another nation, not just one of a family of nations, but a nation with the responsibility of a great mission to per-

form for liberty-loving people everywhere. We hope they will realize that the Constitution of this land was established by men whom the God of heaven raised up unto that very purpose. Our young people have a responsibility as citizens of this land to see to it that the basic concepts, and principles, and ideals, upon which this great Christian nation has been established are preserved, and strengthened, and safeguarded.

Fourthly, and most important of all and really all-inclusive, we hope that the youth of the Church will live so that eventually they will be able to go to the house of the Lord with a choice companion, and receive the priceless blessings which are in store for the faithful there. And we hope that they will then continue to live worthily so as to eventually be exalted in the celestial kingdom of our Heavenly Father.

Yes, we want them to have a good time. We want them to be happy. We want them to succeed in their chosen fields. We want them to become good citizens. We want them to become good fathers and mothers. We want them to establish happy homes, and in order to do that they must live good lives. They must keep themselves clean and pure.

I thrilled as I listened to Sister Jessie Evans Smith sing the solo part of that lovely song this afternoon: "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart." Our young people must lead clean lives—clean in their actions, clean in their thoughts. This means that they cannot indulge promiscuously in so-called petting and necking. It means that they should look very carefully at a common practice which we find on American dance floors today of close bodily contact—cheek to cheek dancing—which I think, my brethren and sisters, has in it real danger.

I think our young people want to know this. My advice to them would be not to engage in these promiscuous relationships, these close and intimate contacts, including cheek to cheek dancing on the ballroom floor, whether it be at a Church dance, a public dance, or wherever it might be. I urge that they never do anything, on the dance floor or off the dance floor, that they would

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be ashamed to have their own fathers and mothers witness.

If they are wise, our young people will reserve for the marriage covenant those sweet and intimate associations. They will reserve such intimacies for their companions for eternity. Such a course is pleasing to our Heavenly Father and will bring peace and happiness—eternal happiness.

I know this may seem strong doctrine for some. I stress it because I believe that the young people of the Church want to know. I believe they are entitled to know. I believe it is best for them.

In all your relationships, my young friends, when in doubt then do not enter into the act or practice. In fact, our young people should not enter into any activity if there is any doubt as to its propriety. If you are living right, my young brethren and sisters, you will have the prompting of the Spirit which will tell you whether it is right or wrong. Do not fail to heed that prompting, as I hope you will heed the counsel of your own parents and your leaders in the auxiliaries.

Just one thought in closing: As you resolve in your hearts to live the standards of the Church—and you cannot afford to do otherwise, from a material standpoint, from a spiritual standpoint, from the standpoint of getting ahead in the world—I hope you will remember that your prescribed standards are a part of a great body of truth—the gospel of Jesus Christ—revealed truth from heaven. Please remember that no discovery of the future, in the laboratory or anywhere else, no other truth will ever be

in conflict with the teachings of the gospel. Truth is always consistent. It is never in conflict. The gospel encompasses all truth. When doubts come to your mind because of instructions you may receive in the classroom, I urge you to remember that time is always on the side of truth, and Mormonism is truth.

God bless you and protect you and guide you, and give you the courage to live the gospel, to maintain the standards of the Church, so that the blessings which have been promised to the faithful may be yours eternally, and here in mortality also, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve has just concluded speaking to us. The Choir and Congregation will now sing, "O Say, What Is Truth?" conducted by Assistant Chorister, Jay E. Welch. After the singing, Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr. will speak to us.

The Tabernacle Choir and the congregation sang the hymn, "O Say, What Is Truth?"

President David O. McKay:

Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder A. Theodore Tuttle.

ELDER WILLIAM J. CRITCHLOW, JR.

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

"The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils. The motions of his spirit are dull as night, and his affections dark as Erebus." (*Merchant of Venice*, Act V, Sc. 1.) Certainly some of the loveliest, and I am sure the sweetest, sermons that we have heard in this conference have been rendered by this choir, and the choir we heard yesterday.

Six months ago I was the president of a large Ogden stake which, I was told, would be divided at our next stake conference, and that I would be retired as its president. Before that conference arrived, I came to general conference, and there I found myself suddenly and unexpectedly retreated instead of retired, and I have traveled several thousand miles on those treads to the stakes of Zion to keep stake conference appointments. I thought the people in my