

He was resurrected—after three days in a tomb.

He lives.

He will return again.

Listen; these words are his:

*"I am from above.*

*I came down from heaven.*

*All power is given unto me.*

*I am the light.*

*Ask in my name.*

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

*I am the way.*

*Keep my commandments.*

*I am the Lord of the Sabbath.*

*I am greater than the temple.*

*I am the life.*

*I am the resurrection and the life.*

*I am the truth.*

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*

*I will rise from the dead.*

*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*

*Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well for so I am."*

"I know," said the woman at the well, "that Messias cometh, which is called Christ."

Jesus answered—"I that speak unto thee am he." (John 4:25-26.)

When Caiaphas shouted—"... tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God."

Jesus answered—"Thou hast said." (Matt 26:63-64.)

"Nearly two thousand years have passed and none has reigned, or served, or dreamed who has so touched and moulded human life. He is the ideal—the example—the greatest unalterable, wholesome, growing influence in a world of blood and tears. Books on his life fill libraries; the name of Pharaohs,

Caesars, emperors, kings of all ages that have come and gone are but ghosts upon a printed page. Their legions dust upon the land; their proud armadas rust upon an ocean floor."

"But this one solitary life, surpasses all in power. Its influence is the one remaining hope of future years."

In a Roman court, nearly two thousand years ago, the skeptic Pontius Pilate demanded of Jesus: "Art thou a king?"

Jesus answered: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

The perplexed Pilate muttered: "What is truth?" (John 18:37-38.)

The truth, my brothers and sisters and friends is,—and I say it in all solemnity—it is my witness: Jesus, the man of Galilee, is Christ, the Son of the Living God.

Pilate spoke again: "What shall I do with this man?"

What he did is history. Now twenty centuries later—what will you, my listening brothers, sisters and friends, do with this man?

Speaking for myself, I have accepted him as the Son of God.

He is the living Son of the Living God—that is my testimony—my witness—and I declare it boldly, yet humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder William J. Critchlow, Jr., Assistant to the Council of the Twelve. We shall now hear from Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve.

## ELDER MARK E. PETERSEN

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

With you, my brothers and sisters, I have been very deeply impressed by the conference session this morning. I do not know when I have been so deeply touched by the words of a prophet of God as I have been this morning by the remarkable address of our President.

I love this President. He is the prophet of Almighty God. I bear you my solemn

testimony he is the prophet, seer, and revelator of the Almighty for us today, and I testify to you that if we follow in his footsteps and accept his teachings the Lord will bless us and prosper us and guide us throughout our days.

And I have been so deeply touched, with you, by these other two addresses that we heard. I am so grateful for

Friday, October 9

First Day

these testimonies pertaining to the Savior of the world. I love Jesus Christ. I love him as my Redeemer and my Savior. I know that you love him likewise, but I know that our love for him is interpreted strictly in terms of our service to him. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." (John 14:21.) So said the Savior.

I would like to talk with you today in a projection of some of the ideas presented to us by President McKay. These words that he gave us, that we must be preachers of the Word, and be evangelists for the Lord, are so filled with meaning for us all. I hope each one of us will take these words to heart. Each one of us is a minister. Each one of us is an evangelist for Christ. Where is your ministry?

I would like to talk with you about your ministry among your own children, because you are ministers of the Lord unto your children, and if you will do your duty by your children, you will be as saviors on Mount Zion to them. But if you fail in your responsibility in serving the Lord pertaining to your children, they may go astray, and the Lord has said that their sins shall be upon the heads of the parents.

A few days ago I received a letter. It is like some other letters I have received, and I would like to read a part of this letter to you. It comes from a mother. She says: "I have a daughter who is 15. Her boy friend is 16. They have been going steady for over a year. We have just now learned that they are in serious trouble. For the first few months of their friendship they dated only occasionally. Then they decided to 'go steady.' That was the beginning of their trouble. It seemed they were always in each other's company. Now my little 15-year-old girl is soon to become a mother, and we are all just broken-hearted."

This letter is typical of a nation-wide problem, one which has become of major concern to both federal and local officials, and which poses a difficult situation for school executives in many parts of the nation. It is a situation which is forcing an increasing number of young people into child marriages and child divorces, with broken hearts and broken lives, and the problem is a growing one.

In the September 6, 1959 issue of *Parade* magazine there appeared an article with pictures discussing this problem. It was entitled, "Married Teen-agers." One of the pictures showed a 17-year-old mother of triplets. The article discussed conditions in Dallas, Texas, and reported that in the schools of that city there are 480 married children: 459 in senior high schools; 12 in junior high schools; and 9 in elementary schools.

The Family Service Society of San Bernardino County in California reports that from the year 1940 to 1958 the number of marriages involving two teen-agers increased twelve times, and the marriages involving one teen-ager increased six times. The average age of these children is 17 for girls and 18 for boys, but many of them involve 13, 14, and 15 year-old girls, and 14, 15, and 16 year-old boys.

The *U.S. News & World Report* for December 12, 1958 reports that there are child mothers, some married and some not, in twenty-two of the twenty-three high schools in the city of Washington, D. C., as well as in four of the elementary schools of that city.

The Associated Press, in a nationally published article written out of Washington by Roger Greene, dated August 9 of this year, reports: "An all-time record of babies born out of wedlock—more than 200,000 a year—has set off a new storm of controversy over ebbing standards of American morality. . . . Latest figures show the rate of such births per 1,000 unmarried females has tripled in the last two decades, with a particularly alarming rise among teen-age girls. . . . 5,000 illegitimate babies are born each year to girls under 15. . . . A tragic by-product is that at least 20,000 young unwed mothers sell their babies on the 'black market' annually, with price tags ranging from \$1,500 to \$3,000."

*Life* magazine recently carried an article on this trend toward child marriages resulting from the present dating tendencies of American children. After showing what leads up to these tragic marriages, the article discussed the divorces which result. It quoted Judge Willard Gatling of Charlotte, North Carolina on the subject. Said the judge: "Teen-age marriage has almost

no possibility of succeeding. Ninety percent are total failures."

The fact is that neither the boy nor the girl at this tender age is in any way prepared for marriage. The boy and girl want what they think is the fun, but they do not want the responsibility. Said one youngster quoted in *Life* magazine: "I'm a party boy. I just ain't cut out to be married."

What are the reasons for these early child marriages? Why do we have so many of these adolescent tragedies? Let me list a few of the reasons.

1. Early dating. Unfortunately this early dating is often encouraged by parents, school officials, and occasionally by some church groups. Children are actually urged at times to date when they are but 11, 12, and 13 years of age.

2. Early dating soon grows into early steady dating. Some go steady at 13 and 14, while many do so at 15 and 16.

3. Steady dating is encouraged by steady dancing, where one boy dances with one girl all evening.

4. Early steady dating demands the use of automobiles. In North Carolina, where one study was conducted it was learned that many ninth grade girls, 13 and 14 years old, dated only boys with cars, and many of those boys were under 16, which is the legal driving age. One 13-year-old boy said, "I asked a girl of my age for a date. She asked me if I drove a car. I said no. 'Well,' she said, 'come back and ask me when you do.'"

5. Early steady dating and the free use of automobiles by children lead to early intimacies and immorality. Said one girl who was asked about this subject: "We loved each other so much, and we were together just all the time. And there's not much to do, you know—the drive-in movies, and the movies downtown, and that's about all. So after you've seen all the movies, you just park the car and if you're in love—well, that's it."

6. Early intimacies bring early child marriages.

7. Child marriages bring on divorce, as Judge Gatling said, in ninety percent of the cases.

Writing in *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine recently, Howard Williams discussed the great moral breakdown of the so-called "enlightened era," and

said: "Promiscuity, illegitimacy, heart-break, and misery are all that the enlightened era has brought us. Let's put an end to them."

But how can we put an end to them? In order to do so we must see the problem clearly. To help us in our study permit me to ask some pointed questions of you as parents.

1. How early should young people date? Do you think it is wise for 12 and 13 and 14 year-old children to date?

2. Should schools or other public organizations sponsor dances for early teens and require that only couples come? Should schoolteachers force early dating upon these youngsters? By what right do they exclude children from school-sponsored socials because they or their parents oppose dating at this early age?

3. At what age should girls begin wearing lipstick and dressing and acting like grown-ups? At 12 or 13, or even younger? This may seem like a trivial thing, but does not the early use of lipstick mean an early invitation to dating, and does not early dating so often lead to early tragedy?

4. Should little boys and girls kiss and neck? The youngsters themselves should think carefully about that question. They may kid themselves into thinking that early necking is a sign that they have now grown up. But is it? In reality it is but the first step to the more serious and tragic petting which drags so many 13, 14, 15, and 16 year-old children down into a loss of virtue and into forced marriages or illegal operations.

5. When should young people begin going steady? Should it be while they are yet in junior and senior high school? Or should steady dating be reserved for the time when young people are actually considering marriage, and are old enough to consider it sensibly and realistically, and are capable of carrying on the responsibilities of marriage?

6. After their first ruinous experience in child marriage and child divorce, do the young people consider that in the future they might desire a good marriage, a permanent one, with a respectable and well-established partner? And do they consider that when they come to that age, the good fellows and the desirable girls may not wish to marry someone else's castoff?

Friday, October 9

First Day

What are some of the remedies for this situation? First and foremost I believe that it lies in large part in the parents' assuming their proper role as guardians of their children. Parents need not forever be slaves to the philosophy that they must obey their children in every whim. Parents must assume the position of leadership in the family. They must make the basic decisions of family life and not leave these decisions to the spoiled children of the household.

In an article in a recent issue of *This Week* magazine, under the caption, "Don't Let Them Grow up Too Fast," the author referred to a study made in North Carolina, where parents got together to slow down early dating and early marriage in that state. The parents formed a league to do so. The article said: "The kids themselves approve of the slow-down program. They don't want to be pushed into adulthood. And far from resenting clearcut rules and regulations they appreciate guidance and discipline.

"One 14 year-old girl said: 'Since my parents joined the league, they've begun telling me what I can do and what I can't do, and frankly, it's a big load off my mind. And anyway, isn't that what parents are for?'"

Parents must screen the playmates and dating partners of their children. Parents must decide when the child is old enough to date. Parents must provide chaperonage for early social activities of their children. Parents must make certain that their children have a proper conception of true values, moral, economic, and religious.

It is an interesting thing that studies made in the Family Service Agency of San Bernardino showed that among divorcees forty-three percent never went to church at all; thirty-five percent went occasionally; and only twenty-two percent attended church with any regularity.

Parents must decide on the use of the family car by their youngsters. In this connection they must be obedient to the law, and not permit their children to drive until they reach legal age.

They might also have in mind the paragraph about automobiles contained in an article by Jacob M. Braude, circuit court judge in Chicago, who listed the

fifteen chief causes of juvenile delinquency, and said:

"A boy or a girl under 21 has no business owning a car, period. These young people simply don't have the sense of moral and social responsibility that should go hand in hand with the ownership of an automobile.

"Now I don't mean by this that it is wrong for properly licensed boys or girls to drive the family car under effective parental supervision. . . . But the key to the automobile problem is proper adult supervision—and this is difficult, indeed, when the juvenile himself owns the car. Youngsters who buy automobiles legitimately are faced with the constant drain of buying gas and maintaining the car, a problem that too many of them solve with a syphon hose or money stolen from home. A large percentage of the sex offenses can also be traced directly to juvenile ownership of cars."

Parents must be exemplary themselves. How can they expect their children to respect them if they themselves are not respectable, or if they themselves are not obedient to law and order? How can parents expect their children to accept their discipline if the parents refuse to discipline themselves?

And then parents, as adult citizens and taxpayers, must express themselves on school problems which affect their own children. They must become vocal and active members of parent-teacher groups and other organizations which can sway opinion and policy with respect to the social life of their children at school. Parents must co-operate with law and enforcement officers in their efforts to preserve law and order in their communities.

Parents must develop good character in their children, a love of righteousness, faith, a respect for other people, and they must help their children to overcome selfishness, and to live for the future, and not for the momentary lusts or so-called pleasures of today.

Does it seem that I lay too much upon the parents? Not when you realize that the parents hold the key to the situation.

The Boy Scouts of America engaged the Institute of Social Research of the University of Michigan to make a study of adolescent young people. That study showed that the vast majority of young

people—ninety-four percent—desire and expect that their parents will provide leadership for them and give them guidance; ninety-five percent said they are willing to take parents' rule on what time to come in at night; eighty-seven percent are willing to accept their parents' advice pertaining to money; seventy-six percent accept their parents' guidance in personal problems; sixty-two percent accept their parents' advice on how to act when out in a crowd; ninety percent believe that when parents make rules, those rules are for the benefit of the youngsters, and not for the convenience of the parents.

But the survey also showed a tragic note—the parents do not live up to the expectations of the youngsters. They fail to provide the leadership their own children expect of them.

When the study endeavored to find out how many parents plan family activities to include the children, it was discovered that only seventeen percent provide such activities regularly; sixty percent only occasionally; and twenty-two percent not at all.

All of this points up the wisdom of the Lord in laying upon the parents the responsibility of rearing and training their own children, and adding that if they fail to do so, the sin be upon the head of the parents.

Now I ask you—do you want an early child marriage for your youngster, with only a ten percent chance of that marriage being successful? Do you want to take the chance on immorality that forcefully confronts you if you permit your child to date early, and especially if you permit the child to date steadily?

Are you willing to assume the full guardianship of your own child, and protect that child from its own whims and the whims of others?

Are you willing to stand at the crossroads with your child and protect him

or her from the temptation and degradation that usually accompanies early and steady dating? Are you willing to do for your child what the Lord asks you to do, to rear that child as a faithful Latter-day Saint, a good citizen, and give him an opportunity to work out his future successfully?

You as parents hold the key to the situation. You are the custodians and the guardians of your own children. If you do not guard and protect and rear them, who will?

I humbly and earnestly pray that we will assume the responsibility which is ours, and love our children well enough to train them and guide them, and give to them the leadership and direction which most young people expect of their parents, and this is my humble and earnest prayer, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### President David O. McKay:

He to whom we have just listened is Elder Mark E. Petersen of the Council of the Twelve. The Relief Society Singing Mothers will now favor us with, "Incline Your Ear and Come Unto Me," conducted, as announced, by Sister Florence Jepperson Madsen. The closing prayer will be offered by Elder Carroll William Smith, president of the Klamath Stake, after which this Conference will stand adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon. The Singing Mothers will again be with us.

---

The Singing Mothers sang the selection, "Incline Your Ear and Come Unto Me."

Elder Carroll William Smith, president of the Klamath Stake, offered the closing prayer.

Conference adjourned until 2 o'clock p.m.