

Saturday, October 10

Second Day

privilege of hearing and understanding the gospel, we as a family, without a doubt, would still be in the darkness of the world, but because they accepted the gospel, it is possible now for all of us to go into the marvelous light of the Church, the marvelous light of Jesus Christ himself.

We have a great responsibility of so living the gospel that it will be a great source of inspiration and divine guidance to all of those with whom we come in contact.

In the final analysis, as we live the gospel, it is a wonderful thing to think of the words of Jesus Christ, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall

make you free." (John 8:32.) That is the promise and the blessing that each and every one of us may live and understand—that we shall know the truth and the truth shall make us free.

May the Lord continue to inspire us in all of our endeavors, I humbly ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Bishop Joseph L. Wirthlin, Presiding Bishop of the Church, has just addressed us. We shall now hear from Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve.

ELDER ELRAY L. CHRISTIANSEN

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I humbly pray, my brothers and sisters, that what I say may give encouragement and fortitude to someone. We have had some marvelous addresses given, some wonderful music, all of which should inspire us to go forth and live better lives.

I believe that each of us needs a spiritual checkup just about as often as we need a physical checkup; that each of us, the young, and the rest of us, needs to make an appraisal of himself as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, and as the head of a family, or as a member of a family, from time to time to determine the degree of our fidelity and our allegiance and adherence to the accepted rules and doctrines of the Church.

One of the ancient prophets of whom Elder Kimball spoke, had this day in mind—when he said:

"Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; . . .

"And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at

last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God." (2 Nephi 28:7-8.)

Is this prediction of Nephi coming to pass in our day? Are there those of us who would justify ourselves in committing a little sin? Are there those of us who would yield to the enticement and the pressure of acquaintances and associates to "eat, drink, and be merry," on certain occasions? Would we, for instance, when in the company of certain others, forsake principles, propriety, and decency in order to conform with and be accepted by the group? So-called social drinking, for example? Would we forsake the high principles of conduct which we as a people espouse and yield to the unapproved practices when we know that to do so weakens one's character, discredits his family name, and will bring sorrow and unhappiness in place of joy and peace?

"We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men. . . . If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." (Thirteenth Article of Faith.)

This being the case—this being our standard, could it be then that any of us would lie a little, or take advantage of one because of his words, perhaps by misquoting or exaggerating what he said? Are there any of us who would

figuratively dig a pit for his neighbor, hoping that he will fall into it? Perhaps by taking unfair advantage of him, by shrewd maneuvering, thinking that as long as one gets away with it that he is a trustworthy and honest man.

"Make of yourself an honest man," said Carlyle, "and then you may be sure that there is one rascal less in the world."

Are there any of us who would justify ourselves in any of these things, these wrongdoings? If there be, let us repent as of today. Farther on, this same great prophet, Nephi, points out that those who feel justified in sinning a little, being enticed by the vain practices of the world, are placing themselves in a position where, he says, "the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them carefully down to hell." (2 Nephi 28:21.) How well put that is, and how true!

The evils and the vanities of the world, and the corruption thereof are thrust close to our lives. Enticings and pressures to depart from the right are found on every hand. Some of these wrongdoings are almost glorified.

Realizing this, we must, as Latter-day Saints, young and old, be firm for that which we know to be right, and in the right be steadfast and immovable. Each of us must set his own course. Each household must determine whether its members will follow the worldly pattern of loose, reckless living, or be obedient to the commandments of the Lord.

When the tribes of ancient Israel inclined their hearts toward the worship of heathen gods, forsaking God-given principles, you remember that Joshua, their leader, fearing for his people, ". . . gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God." (Joshua 24:1.) Then it was that he pointed out to them what was happening among them, and admonished them to put away their strange gods and their evil ways, and he called upon them to repent, exhorting them to serve the Lord God of Israel with sincerity. Then in the majesty of his calling as a prophet, he said to them, ". . . choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . but as for

me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (*Ibid.*, 15.)

Just as Israel in that day had to make that decision, so must that decision be made by us today. I must make that decision. You must make that decision. For example, in this day of widespread desecration of the Sabbath, when it is considered merely a part of a weekend, and when it is used by many for amusement and pleasure-hunting, shopping, etc., do I, do you, serve the Lord by being where we ought to be, doing what we ought to do, on his holy day?

Again, when friends or acquaintances urge the use of tobacco or intoxicating liquor, do we yield just to be sociable? If I and my house are determined to serve the Lord in the law of health, there will be no yielding to such pressures.

When marriage is contemplated, will the plan be a temporary legal arrangement where eternal association is forfeited, or will it be administered according to the ordinances of God; according to his sweet and wonderful way of making possible a grand family reunion in the resurrection? That is the question we must determine when it comes to that occasion, or before it comes to that, for we must plan ahead of time for that great episode in our lives.

One other matter—the destroying sin of unchastity and moral laxity has been one of the dominant factors in the downfall of many proud people and many great empires. Among the people today, this same destroyer of happiness presents a dismal picture for the safety and peace of this and future generations.

A few years ago the First Presidency issued a warning to the Latter-day Saints and to the world generally against this sin. Among other positive statements they made, they said this: "The doctrine of this Church is that sexual sin, the illicit sexual relationship of men and women stands in its enormity next to murder. The Lord has drawn no essential distinction between fornication, adultery, and harlotry or prostitution. Each has fallen under his solemn and awful condemnation. You youth of Zion," they pleaded, "you cannot associate in illicit sex relationship, which is fornication, and escape the judgments and punishments of the Lord which he

has declared against this sin. The day of reckoning will come just as certainly as night follows day."

A similar warning was given to those husbands and wives who break the moral laws. Then, by the right they have as leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ, spokesman for the Lord himself, they gave this solemn warning, along with a plea for strict morality: "By virtue of the authority vested in us as the First Presidency of the Church, we warn the people of the degradation, the wickedness, the punishments that attend upon unchastity. We urge you to remember the blessings which flow from the living of a clean life. We call upon you to keep, day in and day out, the way of strict chastity, through which only God's blessings can be achieved and received, and his Spirit abide with you. How glorious it is to him who lives the chaste life. He walks unafraid in the glare of the noonday sun, for he is without moral infirmity."

Now, will we listen to those who would minimize the seriousness of this transgression and who would have us believe that the Lord has changed his mind in regard to it? Will we listen to those who say that chastity is outmoded and old-fashioned? Each of us must stand for and encourage such principles

as honesty, trustworthiness, virtue. Let us turn a deaf ear to the advocates of wrongdoing, and be prepared with Joshua to say, as he did to his people: "... choose you this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15.)

May we so do, I pray humbly, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President David O. McKay:

Elder ElRay L. Christiansen, Assistant to the Twelve, has just concluded speaking. The University of Utah Choral Society, with the Bonneville Strings and the Congregation, will now sing, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet," conducted by Professor David A. Shand.

The University of Utah Combined Choruses, accompanied by the Bonneville Strings, and the Congregation sang the hymn, "We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet."

President David O. McKay:

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our next speaker. He will be followed by Elder Henry D. Taylor.

ELDER DELBERT L. STAPLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters, I am happy indeed to extend the hand of fellowship to Elder Howard W. Hunter, called this day as a member of the Council of the Twelve. I look forward with joyous anticipation to association with him in that council. I assure him of my support and my love and my help.

Today I feel to share with you my witness and humble testimony that this Church is the true Church of Christ, established upon the earth in this dispensation of God's providence for the last time. It was divinely set up by our Lord, and possesses every truth, principle, and ordinance for the salvation and exaltation of those who receive and obey its plan of life.

I solemnly testify that every President of this Church has been called of God,

and sustained by him and by the faithful Church members who, with uplifted hands before God, angels, and fellow disciples, agreed to accept and sustain their leader as prophet, seer, and revelator. We so sustain our beloved President David O. McKay today. According to the spirit of truth within me, I accept him in this high position of prophet, seer, and revelator with all my heart, and uphold him without question and without reservation. I say to you, my brothers and sisters, that if everyone would keep his eyes on the President of this Church and follow his example, he would never go wrong. I have that faith and confidence, and so testify to you with full knowledge that ultimately I must answer to God for my teachings and personal acts.